

By Given O. Blakely

“Tit 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness” (Titus 1:1)

INTRODUCTION

The epistle to Titus is one of the few Scriptural books written to an individual. Others individuals are Theophilus (Luke and Acts), Timothy, Philemon, a sister referred to as *“the elect lady”* (2 John), and Gaius (3 John). In Scripture, this is itself a unique situation. Under the Old Covenant, books identified with the name of an individual (Samuel, Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc) are either about that person or were written by them. They were not the individual to whom the book was written. This circumstance provides some insight into the nature and superiority of the New Covenant, and the relationship the people themselves have with God through Christ Jesus. While there is a certain uniqueness given to certain people who are in Christ (the apostles, certain spiritual leaders, etc), it is of a different order than that which was extant during the Law. In Christ Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, there is a commonness among the people that did not exist before Him. They all share a *“common salvation”* (Jude 1:3) and a *“common faith”* (Tit 1:4). Too, they comprise *“one body”* (Rom 12:5; Eph 4:4), and are united by the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:4) and their faith (Eph 4:13). Under this economy, waywardness is the exception to the rule, and the constituents of the covenant are admonished to see to it that an *“evil heart of unbelief”* is not found in them (Heb 3:12). All of this means that, by virtue of their oneness, all may profit from what it is said to either an individual believer, or a congregation comprised of believers. If a rebuke is delivered, all may learn from it – either to recover from the condition or to avoid it. Because faith essentially uproots a people from this world and identities them with heaven, instruction, exhortation, comfort, etc. bring mutual benefit to all who read or hear. All of this is buttressed by the working of the Holy Spirit who causes the Word to sustain life in the people. Thus, when we read a letter written to Titus, there is a very real sense in which it has been written to all believers, for Titus is part of Christ’s body, and does not stand alone. This is a marvelous circumstance, bringing great advantage to the people of God. It removes the necessity of spending an inordinate amount of time on historical backgrounds, personal traits of the individual, and unique circumstances. While such things are certainly not to be altogether ignored, they are on the periphery of benefit, and not at its heart. All of this will be abundantly confirmed as we launch into the perusal of this brief but pungent epistle.

Titus 1:4a *“To Titus . . .”*

Although there is a commonness among those who are in Christ Jesus, there is a subordinate sense of individuality – that is the marvel of being in Christ Jesus. It is what allows apostolic writing to be addressed to a single person, even though it brings spiritual profit to the entire body of Christ within every age. Here is a letter written to a certain person sometime (as it is generally assumed) between 56 and 64 A.D. It is also thought that this was the first of three, what is called, “the pastoral epistles” (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus)– that is, letters written to spiritual leaders concerning their conduct and teaching. Yet, this letter written nearly two thousand years ago remains relevant to the believers of our time. Nothing in it is archaic, even though particular circumstances were addressed. No part of it has been rendered obsolete by custom, environment, technology or social advance. This confirms that sound teaching deals with situations in such a way as to profit all generations of believers. “*Good doctrine*” (1 Tim 4:6) is not tailored for a certain time, culture, or circumstance. It rather addresses life primarily at the level of principle, and after that touches upon needful particulars (such as the fornicator in Corinth, the defections of Corinth and Galatia, the intrusion of philosophy in Colossae, etc). This is why it is important to take due note of HOW holy men of God addressed problems in the Scriptures. It also mandates that we pick up on their emphasis – the focus and direction of their teaching.

TITUS. Titus was not a Jew, but was an uncircumcised Gentile. Furthermore, when Paul was pressured by the Jews to have Titus circumcised, he refused to do so (Gal 2:3-5). All of this suggests that Titus was not a Jewish proselyte, or had not officially converted to Judaism. We know nothing of the time and place of the conversion of Titus – only that this was done through Paul, who referred to him as his own “*son after the common faith*” (Tit 1:4). It was sometime after Paul was converted, and before fourteen years of Paul’s newness of life had passed. Galatians 2:12 informs us that fourteen years after Paul had spent time in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:30), he went up to Jerusalem, taking Titus with him.

Titus is mentioned thirteen times in Scripture (2 Cor 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18; Gal 2:1,3; 2 Tim 4:10; Tit 1:4). He is the one Paul trusted to report on the condition of the church in Corinth (2 Cor 2:13; 7:6,13,14). He also gave Titus the responsibility of finalizing the gathering of the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem that had been delayed in Corinth (2 Cor 8:6). This man had an earnest care for the church in Corinth – a care that God had put into his heart (2 Cor 8:16). Paul referred to him as “*my partner and fellow helper,*” particular regarding the troublesome circumstances in the Corinthian church (2 Cor 8:23). Titus was faithful, at no time exploiting the people of God (2 Cor 12:18). When Paul went to Jerusalem to report the work that Christ had done through him among the Gentiles, he took Titus with him (Gal 2:1). Toward the close of Paul’s ministry, Titus “*departed to Dalmatia,*” a region in Europe (Austria) (2 Tim 4:10). According to the Scriptural records, it is certain that Titus was with Paul when he went from Antioch to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1). If the first letter to the Corinthians was written in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8), it is also certain that Titus spent time with Paul there, from which he was sent to Corinth (2 Cor 7:13; 8:23). This epistle also refers to Paul sending Titus to Crete “*to set in order the things that are wanting, and to ordain elders in every city*” (Tit 1:5). Church history affirms that Titus was the spiritual leader on the Island of Crete, dying there at the age of ninety-four.

Thus we are introduced to a man noted for his spiritual sensitivity (2 Cor 7:15; 8:16), godly reputation among the churches (2 Cor 8:23), and faithfulness in labors (2 Cor 8:23). He was also noted for accepting and responding to exhortation (2 Cor 8:16-17). He himself was a comforter, encouraging the apostle Paul himself (2 Cor 7:6), and was refreshed and made joyous by the progress of the saints (2 Cor 7:13).

It ought to be noted that none of these qualities rank highly in a institutional environment. And yet, they were distinguishing traits to Paul, and worthy of mention. The inclusion of Titus in the Scriptural record verifies the focus of apostolic preaching and teaching, of which Titus was himself a product. There is absolutely no reference to anything in Titus that is common in the *Christianity* of our day. Were Titus to seek admittance into a theological school, these are not the areas that would be stressed. If he were to seek to be a leader in the

average church, these are not the qualities on which he would be judged. However, this is the kind of man through whom the Lord consistently works. Let every young man be encouraged to be noted among godly men and women for faith, trustworthiness, sensitivity, and eagerness to do the will of the Lord. Let them, like Titus, choose to spend time with men of faith and insight, and to learn to be responsible in the handling of the truth, fulfilling godly assignments, and being discerning in their observations. One ounce of qualities like these outweighs a ton of academic expertise and worldly acumen.

“ Titus 1:1a Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .”

PAUL, A SERVANT. Other versions read “*bond-servant of God,*” NKJV “*God’s slave.*” CJB “*Servant,*” “*bond-servant,*” “*slave*” – it should be obvious that this is not speaking of mere employment, or of a mildly preferred occupation. All of these expressions speak of a decision that has been first made by a superior One, and then accepted by the inferior. The interests of another are being served. There is an absence of self-will and self-interest, as the individual is actually being governed by a will perceived as being higher than his own. In this case, of course, the will of God is actually superior to all other wills. That means that any failure to acquiesce with that will is an act of rebellion, for when God wills something, there is no provision made for men to reject it with impunity.

The word “*servant*” is translated from a word having the root meaning, “ subject to ,” THAYER “ subservient ,” FRIBERG and “ completely controlled by someone.” LOUW-NIDA As used here, it means “one who gives himself wholly to another’s will,” THAYER “one who serves in obedience to another’s will.”FRIBERG In this case, the fact that the “*servant,*” or “*bondslave,*” is a willing one, does not diminish the fact that God’s will is the compelling principle in the matter of that choice. The religious climate of our day has greatly diminished the possibility of forming a proper concept of the will of the Lord. There is too much allowance for self-will, rejection, delay, and half-heartedness. However, in the Divine economy, there is no tolerance at all of either the ignorance of God’s revealed will, or a failure to wholly subscribe to it and do it. Further, that will is to consistently be done “*from the heart*” (Eph 6:6). Any approach to preaching and teaching that does not foster this frame of mind, and insist that it be carried out consistently, not only is not of God, it tends to put the individual at variance with God.

OF GOD. Paul affirms that he is the “*servant of God .*” But, what does that mean? These days religious men are prone to formulate their own plans based on their own desires, and then claim they are serving God. While there is an element of truth to such a view, it is by no means a thorough one. For example, we are to do everything “*in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*” (Col 3:17). This, however, is not the precise intent of this expression. Here, Paul is referring to his placement in body of Christ. He knew “*now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him*” (1 Cor 12:18). His servanthood refers particularly to the function he was given to fill in the body of Christ. It is more particularly detailed in the following expression.

AND AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST. Other versions read, “*emissary of Yeshua the Messiah,*” CJB “*legate of Jesus the Messiah,*” MRD (a “legate” is an official emissary, or designated representative), “*messenger of Jesus Christ,*” LIVING and “*apostle (a special messenger).*” AMPLIFIED As used here, an “*apostle*” is one sent forth directly by Christ as His representative and messenger. Such are **given** a message to declare, and they are sent forth to declare it. Paul is, then, stating that he is writing as a duly empowered messenger of Jesus, delivering the word given to him by Jesus Himself.

Like a “*servant of God,*” the “*apostle*” is serving the interests of another – delivering the messenger of another. He is even delivering it as directed by the Head of the body, which often involved where to go, when to go, and to whom the message was to be delivered. There are “*false apostles*” who claim they are sent from

Christ, but are not, but were “*transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*” (2 Cor 11:13). Jesus told the church in Ephesus that they had been subjected to some who said they were apostles, but were not (Rev 2:2). For this reason, Paul referred to “*the signs of an apostle*” which confirmed that the message he delivered was, in fact, from the Lord Jesus (2 Cor 12:12). Although there are some in our day who refer to themselves as “*apostles,*” that certainly does not make them so. Barnabas was an “*apostle*” sent forth by the Holy Spirit (Acts 14:14). That text stands as the solitary example of the use of this word to anyone other than the twelve apostles and Paul. “Apostle” is not an appropriate title for men to arrogate unto themselves.

Paul was writing within the framework of his apostleship. That means that what he wrote had everything to do with turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It had to do with the forgiveness of sins and the obtaining of an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18). There is no form of friendship or earthly acquaintance that can supercede that kind of relationship. That is because it has to do with man and God, as compared with man and man. In my judgment, there is room for considerable improvement in this area among those professing faith in Christ. There is an inordinate regard for men after the flesh, and it is the source of all manner of trouble.

As Paul wrote to Titus, he did not do so merely as his friend or colleague, and Titus was not to regard his letter in such a manner. In the kingdom of God, interpersonal relationships are not to be considered “*after the flesh*” (2 Cor 5:16). Jesus affirmed, “*the flesh profiteth nothing*” (John 6:63). It appears to me that Paul takes great care to discourage that kind of assessment of himself.

Titus 1:1b “ . . . *according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.*”

Paul continues to elaborate on his servanthood and apostleship – the One whose interests He is serving, and the One who sent Him forth with particular insight into the Gospel and Divine intention. He will accent the focus of his labors, which serves to clarify exactly what God is doing among men, for the message is inexorably tied to God’s purpose.

ACCORDING TO THE FAITH OF GOD’S ELECT. Other versions read, “*for the faith of those chosen by God,*” NASB “*for the faith of God’s elect,*” NIV “*for the sake of the faith of God’s elect,*” NRSV and “*to stimulate and promote the faith of God’s chosen ones.*” AMPLIFIED The words “*according to*” are translated from a single Greek word (**kata** .) that is “a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower.” THAYER The intention of the text is not say the faith of God’s elect was the impetus or cause for Paul’s apostleship. That is, he was not made an apostle owing to the faith of those chosen ones. Here, the meaning is that the purpose for Paul’s apostleship was to promote faith, and the direction of that intention was “*God’s elect.*” God knew who these people were, and thus directed Paul in his labors through the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the initiation of faith was not the total purpose, but the maintenance of that faith as well. This accounts for his many epistles to the churches. Paul is saying that being a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ was in strict accord with the development and furtherance of faith within God’s “*own elect*” (Lk 18:7).

There are several Pauline expressions that confirm the truth of this statement. For example, Paul said he wrote the Corinthians in order that their “*faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*” (1 Cor 2:5). This is why he sent Timothy to Thessalonica to “*comfort*” them “*concerning*” their “*faith*” (1 Thess 3:2). It is why he wanted to know about their faith (1 Thess 3:5-7). This is the reason he endeavored to see to it that nothing was “*lacking in*” their “*faith*” (1 Thess 3:10). This purpose dictated Paul’s exhortation for the people of God to “*stand fast in the faith*” (1 Cor 16:13), examine themselves to determine if they were “*in the faith*” (2 Cor 13:5), and to “*continue grounded in the faith*” (Col 1:23). It is why he taught believers that

they were to be “*established in the faith*” (Col 2:7), and be “*sound in the faith*” (Tit 1:13).

A purported Christian ministry that does not target the maturity of faith is not in synch with Divine objectives. The godly minister has not been sent to resolve interpersonal relationships and personal moral and spiritual deficiencies. Faith can do all of that, and is designed to do so. This is because faith puts us into a productive relationship with the living God. Whatever involvement we have with the people, it cannot overshadow this fundamental work.

THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH. Other versions read, “*the knowledge of the truth,*” NASB “*full knowledge of what is true,*” BBE “*recognition of religious truth,*” NAB “*teach them to know the truth,*” NLT “*fully understand the truth,*” IE “*full knowledge,*” WEYMOUTH and “*lead them on to accurate discernment and recognition of and acquaintance with the Truth.*” AMPLIFIED

The idea here is that of spiritual cognition in which there is an understanding of both the nature and direction of the truth. This involves the removal of unnecessary mystery or enigma. There is an understanding of the truth that goes deeper into the human spirit, and broader into both heart and mind. The idea is that there are wonderful realities imbedded in the truth, and acknowledging the truth has to do with recognizing them – seeing the value and necessity of them. For example, when a person who has been taken captive by the devil at his will, finally acknowledges the truth, confidently perceiving it, he will recover himself from the devil’s snare (2 Tim 2:25-26).

Those precious souls who are sensing the magnitude of the truth and are engaged in a fervent quest to take hold of it, are beginning to *acknowledge the truth* . In the English language “acknowledge” means “to recognize as genuine or valid.” Synonyms for *acknowledge* include the following: admit and own. This is when knowledge flowers out into spiritual understanding, and the sense of truth is discerned. Until this is experienced, spiritual growth will, at the very best, be minimal. Paul labored to dispel spiritual ignorance, and so must we.

WHICH IS AFTER GODLINESS. Other versions read, “*accords with holiness,*” NKJV “*leads to godliness,*” NIV “*in harmony with,*” BBE “*leads to a godly life,*” GWN and “*which belongs to and harmonizes with and tends to godliness.*” AMPLIFIED Proper teaching leads to and promotes godliness, or god-likeness. Any message that, when embraced, does not lead a person to be increasingly godly, cannot possibly be from God or sanctioned by Jesus. The growing presence of ungodliness within the professed church proves that a flawed message is being presented. Sound doctrine, as that presented by Paul and other inspired men, tends to strengthen faith and promote godly living. Furthermore, as illustrated in this text, this needs to be stated to the people of God, just as surely as Paul rehearsed it to faithful Titus.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 1:1b . . . according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began ” (Titus 1:1b-2)

INTRODUCTION

Apostolic writing is always placed within a God-ordained context. The context is what shapes what is understood. It is the background that is kept in consideration. It is the setting in which a precious jewel is positioned that holds it in place and provides the means through which the jewel can be best seen and appreciated. It often identifies the writer, why he has written, and the kind of people for whom his message is tailored. For example, Romans opens by focusing on the Gospel that was promised by the prophets in the Scriptures, which concerned Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1-3). First Corinthians presents the church as being given grace, enriched, and waiting for the coming of Christ, who would confirm them to the end (1 Cor 1:4-8). Galatians is written with the fact of deliverance from the world in mind, and the danger of embracing another kind of Gospel (Gal 1:4-7). Ephesians begins by stating where God has placed us in Christ Jesus, what is to be found there, and the appointed glorious outcome of it all (Eph 1:4-6). This approach to apostolic writing is not only found in the letters to the churches, but to individuals as well. This is because it is the manner of the Kingdom to direct the thoughts of the people to central matters – matters that have been established as central by the God of heaven. Grammatically, this is called objectivity – aiming at a specific target, and seeking to develop a godly and profitable focus. This is done in a remarkable way in this brief letter to Titus. I say “brief” by way of comparison to some of Paul’s other epistles. If we consider this as a letter – which it is – it is remarkably long: 942 words, and 77 sentences. All of this confirms that God has an abundance to say to those who are in Christ Jesus – and it is all said in a concise manner that requires extended consideration, or contemplation. Our text is an excellent demonstration of this. It includes a spiritual nomenclature that is to be common among the faithful, and a statement of Divine intent that is critical to spiritual understanding. In this lesson I will spend some time in the development of “*the elect*,” and the purpose for which they have been placed into that category – “*eternal life*.” Both of these matters will be seen to be other-worldly, having to do with things that are unending – things for which we are readied in the salvation of God.

Titus 1:1b “ . . . *the faith of God’s ELECT* . . . ” Having only introduced this terminology in our last

lesson, I felt it necessary to say more about it. The word “*elect*” is not in the vocabulary of the average professing *Christian*. What is more, the words of the average preacher and teacher make rare mention of this word – if, indeed, any mention of it is made at all. However, the word “*elect*” is mentioned seventeen times in Scripture; four times in Isaiah, and 13 times from Matthew through Third John.

Prophetically, Isaiah referred to the Messiah as God’s “*Elect*” (Isa 42:1; 65:9). Jacob is referred to as God’s “*elect*” (Isa 45:4) with reference being made to the nation of Israel as well (Isa 65:22). Jesus referred to the saved as “*the very elect*” (Matt 24:24), “*His elect*” (Matt 24:31; Mk 13:27), “*the elect*” (Mk 13:2), and God’s “*own elect*” (Lk 18:7). Paul referred to those in Christ as “*God’s elect*” (Rom 8:33; Tit 1:1), and “*the elect of God*” (Col 3:12). He also referred to “*elect angels*” (1 Tim 5:21). Peter referred to the saved as “*elect according to the foreknowledge of God*” (1 Pet 1:2), and to Jesus Himself as the “*Elect*” One (1 Pet 2:6). John wrote to an unnamed woman he called “*the elect lady*” (2 John 1:1), and also referred to her “*elect sister*” (2 John 1:13).

Three times Scripture refers to things done “*for the elect’s sake*” (Matt 24:22; Mk 13:20; 2 Tim 2:10). Peter refers to the church in Babylon as having been “*elected*” (1 Pet 5:13). Paul associates the word “*election*” with the purpose of God (Rom 9:11), the grace of God (Rom 11:5), those who obtain the promise (Rom 11:7), and the act of God (Rom 11:28; 1 Thess 1:4). Peter associated “*election*” with God’s calling, and speaks of believers being sure about it (2 Pet 1:10). I given you twenty-seven references to the concept of “*election*.”

The NASB uses the word “*elect*” in its varied forms 8 times, the NIV 14 times, and the NRSV 16 times. Other versions often substitute the word “*chosen*” for “*elect*” – but not always with consistency. The NASB translates the same Greek word “*elect*” in Romans 9:33, and “*chosen*” in the following texts: (Col 3:12; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 2:10; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2:6; 5:13; 2 John 1:1,13). It consistently translates the word “*election*” as “*chosen*.” This is done, even though there is a separate Greek word for “*chosen*” (*ai`reti,zw*), as compared to the word for “*elect*” (*evklekto,j*). Lexically, the word “*elect*” means “*picked out*,” THAYER while the word “*chosen*” means “*to choose or select for the purpose of showing special favor to or concern for*.” LOUW-NIDA The word “*elect*” accents **the fact** of God picking out. The word “*choose*” emphasizes the **intention** – to show favor.

The word “*elect*,” in all of its varied forms never applies to the act of men – never! It always has to do with what God has done. The word “*chosen*” applies to human choices as well as Divine ones (i.e. Lk 10:42). I question the wisdom of taking words that uniquely apply to God, and representing them with words that can also apply to the activities of men. In my judgment, that can result in eventually diluting the truth.

The Word of God makes a doctrinal point of the choice of God in the salvation of men. While this truth can be distorted by erroneous views, the expression of it must not be avoided. We are taught that God has “*appointed*” us to “*obtain salvation*” (1 Thess 5:9). Those in Christ are told they were “*from the beginning chosen . . . to salvation through*” the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and “*the belief of the truth*” (2 Thess 2:13). Paul said that he endured “*all things*” for “*the elect’s sake*,” in order that they might “*obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*” (2 Tim 2:10). We are also told that those who are “*called*” were first “*predestinated*” (Rom 8:30). Predestination is also said to be in order “*to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ*” (Eph 1:5). That predestination is also declared to be “*according to the purpose*” of God, not according to human response (Eph 1:11).

The pre-determinations of God are said to account for the working out of all things for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28-30). That is, they become a basis for confidence and assurance, not of doubts and fears.

In order to tutor us in Divine manners, we are told of Divine choices that were independent of human

qualification. God did “*choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham*” (Neh 9:7). It was not because of who he was or what he had done – that is why he changed his name. God made Abraham what he was! God also chose the nation of Israel. He did not do so because of who they were or what they had done, but because He desired to do it in honor of the commitment He made to Abraham (Deut 7:7-8).

When it comes “*God’s elect*,” we are taught to associate Divine choices with Christ Jesus: i.e. we were chosen “*in Him*” (Eph 1:4). Our text also associates it with “*faith*.” The point of the doctrine is to account for salvation, not communicate a cold and lifeless doctrine. It is not intended to explain who is not accepted, but who is accepted. It further explains why Paul was made an apostle – to initiate and maintain faith in those whom God elected.

“**1:2a In hope of eternal life . . .**” Other versions read, “*a faith and hope resting on the hope of eternal life*,” NIV “*and which are based on the certain hope of eternal life*,” BBE “*My message is based on the confidence of eternal life*,” GWN “*and to give them the hope of the eternal life*,” NJB and “*[Resting] in the hope of eternal life*,” AMPLIFIED

Here the “*hope of eternal life*” is set forth as the ultimate objective of Paul’s ministry. The obtainment and nurturing of faith, together with the recognition of the truth which is integrally associated with godliness, is intended to produce a strong and unwavering hope. The forgiveness of sins is essential – but that is not the fundamental aim. Knowing the truth, and being able to handle it profitably is an unquestionable essentiality – but it is not the end of the matter. Godliness is an absolute necessity, for without holiness, no man will see the Lord – however, even that is not the final intention. The aim of it all is realized “*in hope of eternal life*” – or the firm persuasion that we “*have eternal life*” now, and that it will be fully realized at the coming of the Lord (1 John 5:13; Mark 10:30; 1 Pet 1:7).

IN HOPE. In the flesh, hope is viewed as something that is uncertain and unsure. It is something that is desired, yet may not at all be certain. However, this is not the way in which the word is used in Scripture. In apostolic doctrine, “*hope*” speaks of certitude, confidence, and sureness. Lexically, the word means, “*expectation of good . . . confident expectation*,” THAYER and “*to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial*.” LOUW-NIDA

Doctrinally, “*hope*” is described as “*an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil*” (Heb 6:19). That is, it perceives by faith what is in heaven awaiting the sons of God, and is a firmly fixed there. For hope, there is no question about the future. That is why “*we are saved by hope*” (Rom 8:24). Now, Paul’s ministry was calculated to produce this hope – this certainty of the future. That is why he writes as he does. It is why he accents eternal things, and solemnly warns of an inordinate attachment to this world. One of the great deficiencies of our time is the near-total lack of reference to what is “*in heaven*.” Men are being taught as though this world was primary, and worldly benefits had the priority. Jesus spoke of a “*reward in heaven*” (Matt 5:12), laying up “*treasures in heaven*” (Matt 6:20), and His followers being confessed before His “*Father which is in heaven*” (Matt 10:32). He spoke of names being “*written in heaven*” (Lk 10:20). Paul spoke of “*the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*” (Col 1:5), and of having “*in heaven a better and an enduring substance*” (Heb 10:34). Peter taught of an “*inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Pet 1:4).

However, if these things are not taught with insight and power, how can hope be birthed and nourished? Hope cannot be anchored in heaven – “*within the veil*” – if all men hear about is matters pertaining to this world. Hope is faith in its forward posture, and faith must have a word, for it comes “*by hearing*” (Rom 10:17).

The result of this hope is certain stability – like a ship remaining in one place during a fierce and relentless storm. Hope is so strong that it compels the one possessing it to “*purify himself, even as He is pure*” (1 John 3:3). This is a “*good hope,*” and it is given to us “*by grace*” (2 Thess 2:16). Paul ministered to foster this hope in the hearts of those chosen by God.

ETERNAL LIFE. This hope does not pertain to gaining possessions or status in this world. It rather has to do with “*eternal life*” – that is, life that has no end or terminal point. Because life has to do with reciprocity, or response to one’s environment, “*eternal life*” has essentially to do with one’s association with God Himself. Jesus defined eternal life as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, who was sent by Him (John 17:3). In this case, knowing speaks of acquaintance, familiarity, and understanding. It is the result of being taught by Jesus, who has come to give us “*an understanding,*” that we might know God (1 John 5:20). People sin because they do not know God as they should. All slothfulness, indolence, worldly-mindedness, and spiritual retardation are owing to a lack of familiarity with God Himself. Even though God has revealed a staggering abundance concerning Himself, His character, His will, and His objectives, the modern church suffers from minuscule views of Him. This is all in spite of the seeming success of contemporary Christianity.

There are forty references to eternal life from Matthew through Jude: 21 in the Gospels, 2 in Acts, and 17 in the Epistles. Believers are said to possess it now (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47,54; 1 John 5:11,13). There is no substitute for knowing you have eternal life. That is the other side of the coin of salvation, which involves knowing God Himself – being comfortable in His Presence, and seeking His kingdom and righteous above everything else. A lack of assurance in this area constitutes a point of vulnerability, and Satan will not fail to take advantage of it.

Therefore Paul ministers with the objective of enabling people to navigate through life with the “*full assurance of hope*” (Heb 6:11), knowing that those who know where they are going will be sure to make all of the preparations required to dwell forever with the Lord.

1:2b “ . . . which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”

The subject now developed is that of “*eternal life.*” Paul will show that his aim is to produce and sustain the “*hope of eternal life,*” because that is God’s objective as well. We will find that the promises of God boil down to a single commitment – “*eternal life.*” Whatever does not summarize into that statement cannot be presented as the purpose of God. This being true, health, wealth, financial security, earthly well being, and other matters that have to do exclusively with this world and time, cannot possibly be within the framework of an “*eternal purpose*” (Eph 3:11). We cannot afford to be simplistic in this matter. This representation does not mean that God is indifferent to the circumstances of His people in this world. It does mean that His response to those circumstances will be in harmony with His “*eternal purpose.*” It will not be merely to correct a temporal condition. In other words, God gives no unqualified guarantees in such matters. When we speak of “*eternal life*” we are addressing a matter that extends beyond time and the existence of the heavens and earth “*which are now*” (2 Pet 3:7).

GOD THAT CANNOT LIE. Other versions read, “*who does not lie,*” NIV “*who never lies,*” NRSV and “*the ever truthful God Who cannot deceive.*” AMPLIFIED The Scriptures say of the living God, “*Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name*” (Psa 138:2). The Amplified Bible reads, “*You have exalted above all else Your name and Your word and You have magnified Your word above all Your name!*” Spurgeon wrote, “*Revelation excels creation in the clearness, definiteness, and fulness of its teaching.*” Apart from what God has said about Himself, we are confined to the room of ignorance. He even has to tell us what can be seen of Him in His own creation, else we would not see it (Rom 1:20). In this text, however, the commitments of God are the particular emphasis – what He has declared He will do. While God makes assessments of men, and is

completely accurate in them, that is not the focus here. Also, God has told men what He requires of them, and there is no chance that those requirements are flawed or unreasonable. Yet, that is not His point in our text, or in the Psalm just referenced.

The subject is “*eternal life*,” and the fact that God has promised it is the emphasis. The reality that He has said it makes it true. The fact that He has promised it means there is no justifiable reason to disbelieve it, ignore it, or fail to seek after it with the whole heart. God has placed within the human nature the desire to live, and when men are reasoning properly, they will do everything in their power to extend life, placing a value upon it, because it is a gift from God. However, how does a person reason about “*eternal life*?” That is something that is outside the perimeter of natural experience. In fact, it is beyond the ability of the natural man to think in terms of eternity. However, God stretches the minds of men by not only speaking of eternal life, but actually making a promise concerning it. The fact that God “*cannot lie*” means there is no possibility that the promise of eternal life is not true, or is overstated, or misrepresented. Yet, judging from the response of the Christian world, His promise is not considered to be true. At the best, some consider it an idea – a religious point that is not relevant to everyday life. However, that assessment suggests that God has not told the truth, or that He has not spoken clearly enough on the subject. I will leave to your own judgment to determine just how serious such a supposition is.

PROMISED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. Other versions read, “*promised before time began*,” NKJV “*promised long ages ago*,” NASB “*promised before the beginning of time*,” NIV “*promised before the ages began*,” NRSV and “*promised before the world or the ages of time began*.” AMPLIFIED

This means that the “*promise*” of eternal life antedated the articulation of it to anyone, or by means of the Scriptures. Before man was created, the determination of “*eternal life*,” which is knowing God, was made. In other words, while man was made to have dominion over the works of God’s hands (Gen 1:26-28), that was not the ultimate reason for his creation. Furthermore, it is a serious error of judgment to approach life as though living in this world was in any sense the endmost aim of the Living God.

“*Eternal life*” was not an after-thought, but a forethought. It was not a response, but an objective. This objective was expressed in the prayer of Jesus on the eve of His betrayal. “*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent . . . Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am*” (John 17:2-3,24).

Now, we have eternal life in the bud. The flower will bloom when we are clothed with immortality and are “*ever with the Lord*” (1 Cor 15:53; 2 Cor 5:4; 1 Thess 4:17). If this is not realized, all of life has been pointless. The time given to every person will, in such a case, have been squandered and wasted, and they will be forever removed from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (2 Thess 1:9). Paul’s ministry was devoted to making that circumstance less likely to happen. He labored so “*the elect*” would know more fully what God is doing through Christ Jesus, and thus prepare themselves for eternity with the Lord.

By; Given O. Blakely

“Tit 1:3 But hath in due times manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior” (Titus 1:3)

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of God is one that is moved along by Divine purpose. This is declared in the marvelous statement of Ephesians 1:11, which identifies God as *“Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will”* (Eph 1:11). Another version reads, *“works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.”* NIV As used in that Ephesians text, the word *“counsel”* means “purpose . . . especially the purpose of God,” THAYER or “to purpose, to plan, to intend.” FRIBERG The use of this word is linked to the purposeful death of Christ (Acts 2:23; 4:28). It is also declared to be the subject of preaching – *“the whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27), and is affirmed to be unchangeable: *“the immutability of His counsel”* (Heb 6:17). This means that Divine associations with men are not driven by human need, or even human request. While this does not mean our prayers are pointless, it does mean that the guarantee of their acceptance is determined by their conformity with the will of God (1 John 5:14). The burden of true preaching and teaching is to affirm, or assert, what the God is doing in Christ Jesus. This circumstance requires that those who preach and teach have a working understanding of what God is doing in Christ Jesus. This fact is strongly supported by the text on which this lesson focuses. It has become fashionable in Christian circles to allow personal and social circumstances to dictate what is preached and taught. Although the Epistles may appear to justify such a conclusion, it is a wholly erroneous one. When specific issues were addressed in letters to the churches, it was because they were at variance with God’s revealed purpose, and therefore thrust the people into jeopardy. Apart from this circumstance, holy men of God did not spend time writing to satisfy the curiosity of men, or discuss various personal opinions. It is essential that any attempt to *handle* the Word of God be *right*, and in concert with the revealed purpose of God (2 Tim 2:15). When men take it upon themselves to *“wrest”* or twist the Scriptures, it is revealed that they do so *“to their own destruction”* (2 Pet 3:16). With these things in mind, the sobriety of this text will be very apparent.

Titus 1:3a “ *But hath in due times . . .* ” Other versions read “*proper time,*” NASB “*appointed season,*” NIV “*His own seasons,*” ASV “*in His time,*” BBE “*His own time,*” CSB “*its own due season,*” DARBY and “*just the right time.*” NLT

DUE. The word “*due*” is translated from a word meaning “pertaining to one’s self, one’s own.” THAYER That is what dictated the ASV expression “*His own seasons.*” That is, the determination was made by God Himself, and in strict accord with what He had purposed. God is, in fact, directed by His own will, which is referred to as His “*good pleasure*” (Eph 1:5,9; Phil 2:15; 2 Thess 1:11).

There is a general sense in which God’s “*will*” is declared in Scripture. It is a sense that is not related to time. For example, “ **this is the will of God** , even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication ” (1 Thess 4:3). And again, ‘*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*’ (1 Thess 5:18). And again, “*For so is the will of God* , that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men ” (1 Pet 2:15).

However, the word “*due*” speaks of a higher view of God’s will that is directly related to Divine purpose, and indirectly associated with men. Specifically, it has to do with God working out a predetermined purpose in a defiled realm, among fallen men, and with the aggressive influence of Satan and his hosts. He will bring that purpose to its intended culmination at a precise time, thereby totally frustrating all of His foes.

TIMES. The word “*times*” comes from a word meaning, “a fixed and definite time . . . the right time.” THAYER This is a time decided by God – a time when what He has determined comes to pass. We therefore read of “*the fulness of the time*” – a time set in place beforehand when the Christ was to come into the world (Gal 4:4).

When God promised Abraham that Sarah would bear a son through him, he said it would be “*at the time appointed*” (Gen 18:14). During the judgment of the ten plagues upon Egypt, it was said that “*the Lord appointed a set time*” for them to take place (Ex 9:5,14,18). On one occasion, God judged the people of Israel, sending a pestilence upon them that resulted in the death of 70,000 men. It was said of that plague that it commenced in the morning, and extended “*to the appointed time*” (2 Sam 24:15). Paul declared to the Athenians that “*all nations of men*” were put in “*exact places*” NIV on the earth according to “*the times before appointed*” (Acts 17:26). These are times that cannot be delayed, changed, or obviated.

The Word of God also speaks of this kind of appointment as a “*set time.*” The birth of Isaac was said to be at a “*set time*” (Gen 17:21; 21:2).

This kind of appointment is involved in the saying “*bring it to pass.*” That is, what God has appointed will be fulfilled at the precise time determined, even though all of earth and hell are aligned against it. Thus the living God challenged Israel by saying “*I am God, and there is none like Me.*” He said He declared “*the end from the beginning,*” affirming “*My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.*” He even added, “*I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it*” (Isa 46:9-11).

Again, and in keeping with our text, specific times are referred to as “*due time*” – a circumstance that God purposes to take place at a certain time. Therefore we read, “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*” (Rom 5:6). And again, “*Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time* ” (1 Tim 2:6). Believers are even told that their exaltation will be at a specific time. Therefore, they are to humble themselves as those who are being directed and prepared by the Lord: “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time*” (1 Pet 5:6).

TIMES AND SEASONS. Jesus declared to His disciples that “*times and seasons*” have been put in place

by the Father Himself. “*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power ,*” or “*has fixed by His own authority*” NASB (Acts 1:7). The word “*put*” means put in place, or “*reserved.*” AMPLIFIED

Examples of appointed, or fixed times include: (1) The Christ coming into the world (Gal 4:4). (2) The death and resurrection of Christ (John 17:1). (3) The second coming of Christ (Matt 24:36). (4) The day of judgment (Acts 17:31). When Daniel declared that God changed “*the times and the seasons,*” he was referring to the alteration of human decisions in history, not to the Lord changing His own appointments (Dan 2:21).

REDEFINES RELEVANCY. The Scriptural view of Divine appointments, times, and seasons, alters how we think about, what men call, relevancy. Ordinarily, the hub around which men define what is relevant is human circumstances and objectives. However, in the Divine economy, everything is measured by the will of the Lord – particularly as it regards His eternal purpose as established in Christ Jesus. Nothing that is out of harmony with that purpose can be either right or crucial. All of this requires that men come into an understanding of what God has purposed, ordering their lives by it (Rom 12:1-2). This is underscored by the fact that we are living in the time God has chosen to make these things known.

“ 1:3b . . . *manifested His word through preaching . . .* ”

THE POINT OF REFERENCE. The thing that is being opened up is “*the hope of eternal life*” that God “*promised before the world began*” (1:2). That is the bottom line of what is brought within the reach of men through Jesus Christ. That grand objective is the appointed answer to sin, through which death entered into the world. If men do not obtain eternal life, nothing else really matters. In such a case, life is being lived in opposition to the will of God, and is at variance with His “*eternal purpose.*” I do not believe this is generally known.

Keep in mind that the aim of Paul’s apostleship was to promote “*the faith of God’s elect,*” in strict accord with “*the truth that leads to godliness*” NIV (1:2). This means that eternal life has everything to do with faith, truth, and godliness, so that none of those things can be sustained while a person remains in ignorance concerning “*the hope of eternal life.*” It is apparent that speaking in this manner sounds strange in our present religious environment.

MANIFESTED HIS WORD. Other versions read, “*brought His word to light,*” NIV “*revealed,*” NRSV “*made clear,*” BBE “*made public,*” CJB “*made this message evident,*” NET and “*opened.*” TNT Something that is “*manifested*” was formerly hidden, and beyond the ability of men to know. Prior to it being manifested it was “*kept secret since the world began*” (Rom 16:25). Among other things, this means that what was hidden could not be deciphered by human wisdom. That is the very condition that caused it to be hidden. This purpose was not imbedded in the creation. It was not resident in the human nature. There simply was no way to discover it. Job might have reasoned that if there was hope for a tree that had been cut down, there was also hope for men (John 14:7-12) – but that is a far cry from discerning “*the hope of eternal life.*” He was speaking more of existence than of what occurred during that existence.

Note precisely what is said to now be “*manifested,*” or made known. It is “*His word*” – what He has to say – and He has *magnified* His Word above all of His name (Psa 138:2). In other words, this is what God has to SAY about “*the hope of eternal life.*” This is what is designed to bring about and fuel the faith of God’s elect. It is the pivot on which the doctrine is suspended that leads to godliness.

The fact that this word has been “*manifested*” means “*the hope of eternal life*” is not a subject about which men are to speculate. Neither, indeed, is it something that can be ignored – for men are not permitted to be indifferent about something God has made known. I have noted over the years that the subject of “*the hope*

of *eternal life*” is rarely developed. It certainly is not the subject of much preaching, and what little that is said about it tends to be shallow and unproductive. Such circumstances contradict the fact of the manifestation of our text.

THROUGH PREACHING. Other versions read, “*proclamation,*” NASB “*the message,*” ASV “*the good news,*” BBE “*spreading His word,*” GWN and “*announcement.*” MRD

And how is “*the hope of eternal life,*” revealed in “*His word,*” made known? How is it placed before the people? It is in “*preaching,*” proclaiming, or announcing. This is not the declaration of a stipulation or requirement, but is the message of an accomplishment. It is not a message of direction but of **provision** . It is not the announcement of what can be done, but what has been done. Faith requires a word like this, for it cannot take hold of possibilities or probabilities.

The kind of preaching referenced in this text is articulated well in the tenth chapter of Romans. There, the person bringing the good news is called a “*preacher*” (v 14). The message delivered is referred to as “*the gospel of peace,*” “*glad tidings of good things,*” “*the gospel,*” and “*our report*” (vs 15-16). Confirming the relationship of this message to faith, it is written that “*faith comes*” NKJV through the hearing of it (v 17).

By saying His word concerning “*the hope of eternal life*” is “*manifested through preaching,*” the involvement of Deity in the preaching is assumed. The mere declaration of the message does not induce faith, for, speaking of this very thing, Isaiah affirms that all did not believe the report (Isa 53:1; Rom 10:16,18). The meaning is that this is the message with which God works to open the door of faith (Acts 14:27). This is what He employs to give men “*to believe*” (Phil 1:29), and to do so “*unto the saving of the soul*” (Heb 10:39). Take this preaching away, and faith becomes impossible, for faith “*comes by hearing,*” not by seeing.

If, then, men are fundamentally ignorant of “*the hope of eternal life,*” they are not be able to be godly. This is the cause for all moral failure and lapses into carnality, for men are “*saved by hope*” (Rom 8:24). It is because of their hope “*in Him*” that they purify themselves, “*even as He is pure*” (1 John 3:3). To such people, godliness not only makes good sense, but is their preference, for they know that without it, no man will “*see the Lord*” (Heb 12:14) or forever be “*with the Lord*” (1 Thess 4:17). It is no wonder that the Gospel, which is the subject of the preaching, is referred to as “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom 1:16). God has, as already affirmed, magnified His word above all His name – and the Gospel of Christ is the most lofty, concentrated, and productive expression of His word.

1:3c “ . . . which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.”

Paul now elaborates on how the Lord manifested His word through preaching, particularly in regard to himself. He is showing that God not only determined that His purpose would be made known, and set a particular point in time when that revelation would commence, He also decided WHO would make the preaching know. It is written, “*how shall they preach, except they be sent*” (Rom 10:15). This message is of such a lofty nature, that no one can preach it discerningly and powerfully unless they have themselves been given to see it, and have been commissioned and empowered by the Lord to declare it.

WHICH IS COMMITTED UNTO ME. Other versions read, “*I was entrusted,*” NASB “*I became a preacher,*” GWN “*confided to me,*” MRD and “*trusted to do this.*” LIVING Here is an example of what is involved in stewardship. Something that belongs to Another is given to the steward for him to handle and use in such a manner as is conducive to increase. Jesus spoke of this Divine manner in likening the Kingdom of God to “*a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods*” (Matt 25:14). This distribution was made in accordance with their “*ability*” in the prospect that, after a long time, he would return and settle accounts with them (25:19). While he was gone, these servants were responsible for

what they had been given, and were to labor in the prospect of giving an account to their master.

Elsewhere Paul affirms that the Lord considered him to be a faithful servant, and therefore placed him in the ministry. He confessed, “*He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*” (1 Tim 1:12). He also traced this to the mercy of the Lord, declaring he spoke “*as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*” (1 Cor 7:25). In other words, the Lord knew that Paul would faithfully declare that was shown to him – that was his propensity, and therefore he received mercy to carry that inclination out to the fullest.

DID PAUL EXPRESS MERE OPINIONS? There are some who say that Paul frequently gave his opinion on matters, and that such words were not inspired by God. They cite passages like the following in substantiation of their view. (1) “*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*” (1 Cor 7:25). (2) “*But to the rest speak I, not the Lord*” (1 Cor 7:12). (3) “*But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor 7:40). (4) “*That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord*” (2 Cor 11:17).

In these texts Paul is saying that the Lord did not command him to say these things. However, he did speak as one who had been given mercy to be faithful – not only to speak what was revealed to him, but to also make appropriate observations concerning it. Those observations were only incumbent upon men to the degree that they were able to see them.

ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF. Other versions read, “*by the command,*” NIV “*by the order of,*” BBE “*according to the ordinance,*” PNT and “*according to the charge.*” YLT

Paul was not an apostle because he volunteered. Like the twelve apostles, the Lord could say to him: “*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain*” (John 15:16). It is good to remember that when the Lord sends someone with a message, He does not give the option of failing to declare it. As it is written, “*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Cor 4:2). That is why He sends them forth by commandment, thereby impressing upon them that this is His work into they have entered. Whatever a person may think about the will and choice of men, in the Kingdom of God only the will and choice to serve the Lord are acceptable. All other expressions of human preference are to be mortified, as exhibited in Jesus Himself (Lk 22:42).

GOD OUR SAVIOR. Other versions read, “*God our Deliverer,*” CJB “*our Savior God,*” DARBY and “*God our life-giver.*” MRD

The Lord Jesus is often referred to as “*Savior*” (Act 5:31; 13:23; Tit 1:4; 2:13; 2 Pet 1:1). However, God the Father is also spoken of in this manner. This is because He is the Architect of salvation, while Jesus is the Executor of it. David referred to God as “*my Savior*” (2 Sam 22:3). In speaking of the deliverance of Israel, the 106 th Psalm refers to “*God their Savior*” (v 21). God Himself said to Israel, “*I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior*” (Isa 43:3). Isaiah confessed to God, “*O God of Israel, the Savior*” (Isa 45:15), also describing Him as “*a just God and a Savior*” (Isa 45:21). When Mary received word that she was to give birth to the Messiah, she responded, “*And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior*” (Luke 1:47). When writing Timothy, Paul also referred to “*God our Savior,*” as well as “*the Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3). He stated that “*God . . . is the Savior of all men, specially of those who believe*” (1 Tim 4:10). He also referred to “*the doctrine of God our Savior,*” emphasizing the necessity of proclaiming God’s role in salvation (Tit 2:10). Ultimately, salvation is traced back to “*the God of salvation*” (Psa 68:20). Any failure to receive Christ and the salvation He authors constitutes a direct rejection of God the Father Himself (Heb 5:9).

by Given O. Blakely

“Tit 1:4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.” (Titus 1:4)

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the New Covenant, there are personal relationships that are formed. These have to do with ones identity with God, for we have been reconciled to God. They are also through Jesus Christ, who is the great Author and Finisher, implementing and completing the work of salvation in the individual. They are also by the Holy Spirit, who is the Administrator of spiritual life, for we are *“born of the Spirit,”* and led to spiritual maturity through His work. We also come into this spiritual affiliation through the ministry of Christ’s ambassadors – those who labor together with God. Thus it is written, *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”* (1 Cor 3:5). It ought to be abundantly apparent that salvation is wholly of the Lord. **There is no legitimate human response to the Gospel that cannot be traced back to Divine influences.** Conviction comes through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11), repentance is given (Acts 5:31), it is given to men to believe (Phil 1:29), and no man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3). All of these are accomplished by God working in men, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:13). Yet, men are not passive in all of this. Their hearts, souls, minds, and strength are integral to the process of salvation. Their will is involved as they aggressively pursue what God has promised. This is confirmation of the nature of the New Covenant, in which God writes His laws upon the hearts and minds of His people (Heb 10:16). They are willing in the day of His power, as the Psalmist prophesied (Psa 110:3). If the people are alive, it is because God has raised them up from death in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). If the word of God is in their hearts and their mouths, it is because God has brought it near to them (Rom 10:8). If they are in Christ, it is because God has put them there (1 Cor 1:30). Yet it was all with their hearty consent, and in none of these marvelous relationships were they mere robots, nor were they forced into areas they did not earnestly desire. Paul wrote to Titus with all of these things in mind. That is why there is a demanding tone in what he says, even though it is tempered with gentleness. It will be apparent that God expects results in those in whom He has worked.

Titus 1:4a “*To Titus, mine own son after the common faith . . .*”

In the Scriptures, letters to individuals (Theophilus, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Gaius, and the “*elect lady*”), have to do primarily with identity in Christ. Impersonal formal introductions are never used, and people are not addressed according to the flesh. Rarely are there any references to social conditions at the time. An exception is a reference Paul made to the Corinthians concerning “*the present distress,*” which did bear upon the decision to marry (1 Cor 7:26). These personal letters are an excellent example of the kind of communications believers are to culture, living out the truth that from now on, we “*know no man after the flesh*” (2 Cor 5:16). This is not to be enforced by a religious code, nor does it suggest that there is no practicality in the life of faith. It does confirm there is a higher view of life that is to be nurtured – a view that shapes the very concept of practicality thereby sanctifying the whole of life.

Additionally, the authors of these personal epistles wrote as representatives of Christ, and not merely as a friend or acquaintance. The things of God are primary, and the objective is to bring spiritual clarity, encouragement, and growth to the individuals being addressed. All of this is very apparent in these introductory words to Titus.

MINE OWN SON. Other versions read, “*a true son,*” NKJV “*my true child,*” NASB “*my loyal child,*” NRSV “*my beloved son,*” DOUAY “*my natural son,*” GENEVA “*a genuine child,*” GWN “*a real son,*” MRD “*truly my son,*” LIVING and “*my one true child,*” WEYMOUTH

Paul views Titus as his own genuine son – not in the flesh, but in the spirit, for Paul remained unmarried, having the gift of celibacy (1 Cor 7:7). As with the Corinthians, Paul had evidently begotten him “*through the Gospel*” (1 Cor 4:15). He did the same with Onesimus, begetting him through the Gospel while he was in prison (Phile 1:10). He also referred to Timothy as “*my own son in the faith*” (1 Tim 1:2).

This goes beyond the relationship of a teacher and student, or master and disciple. It involves more than Paul being an example to Timothy, or guiding him in his decisions. The presence of spiritual life in Titus was owing to the work of God through the Holy Spirit, for the people of God are “*born of God*” (1 John 3:9), and “*born of the Spirit*” (John 3:6). However, the new birth is accomplished through “*ministers,*” whom the Lord “*gave to every man*” (1 Cor 3:5). The means God employed was the message delivered by the minister.

However, in this expression, as well as that in First Timothy 1:2, the emphasis is not on the initiation of spiritual life, but on the confirmation of it in the life of the one addressed. Some versions accent this by using the word “*true,*” “*loyal,*” “*beloved,*” and “*real.*” By way of comparison, the Corinthians had a legitimate beginning through Paul, but were not conducting themselves as real sons. Therefore Paul wrote, “*For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me*” (1 Cor 4:15-16). That is, their lives were to be a testimony of the genuineness of their birth, not a contradiction of it.

Our text infers that Titus was, in fact, living consistent with the Gospel through which he had been begotten by Paul. He had proved to be a genuine son, walking in newness of life, and not being turned aside by those with a spurious gospel. Let it be clear, there are not differing kinds of sons. The genuineness of the new birth is confirmed in the new life.

AFTER THE COMMON FAITH. Other versions read, “*in our common faith,*” NKJV “*in the faith we share,*” NRSV and “*the faith common to us.*” DARBY The “*common faith*” in this text equates to the “*one faith*” of Ephesians 4:5, and “*the faith*” of Colossians 2:7 and Jude 1:3. Just as there are not different kinds of sons, neither are there different kinds of faith. Faith may be different in measure – from “*weak in the faith*” (Rom 14:1) to “*strong in faith*” (Rom 4:20) – but there is only “*one faith.*” Those with any measure of faith are

enjoined to receive one another (Rom 14:1).

Titus had a family resemblance, being of one accord with other believers – striving for the same goal, renouncing the flesh, and cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart. He had a common faith: he was growing up into Christ (Eph 4:15), being changed from glory unto glory (2 Cor 3:18), and was perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1) – “*common faith*.”

Here the reference is to “*common faith*” because that is the factor that binds the children of God together, making them one. The children of God are not bound together by their theological position, but by their faith. This does not allow for weak and even flawed theological views, for faith is the means by which we come to understand (Heb 11:3).

It is a serious error to speak of different faiths. The question is often asked in the religious world, “Of what faith are you?” or “What is your faith?” These are really asking about the theological persuasion of the individual, or what denomination they prefer. A person’s “*faith*” is in God, has to do with their perception of the truth, their spiritual understanding, and their persuasion of the truth God has revealed. If, in our society, “*faith*” was the basis of fellowship (which it emphatically is in Christ), the ramifications would be staggering.

“**1:4b . . . Grace . . .**”

What we read here is not a mere formal salutation, like “I hope all is well with you.” This is Kingdom-talk, and has to do with the maintenance of spiritual life. In our time the necessity of sustaining spiritual life has been greatly understated, and sometimes left off altogether. Judging from the way some professing Christians live, you might get the idea spiritual life is on some kind of automatic pilot. The average diet that is being served up from the pulpits of the land leaves people with that conclusion also. Too often, it appears that maintaining earthly relationships and status is the emphasis being delivered to the people. This is a serious error in judgment and confirms the near-total absence of spiritual understanding. Paul writes to Titus with the nature of spiritual life in his mind, and what is required to maintain that life. Also, the work of the Lord can only be sustained with these things in mind.

GRACE. Prior to the coming of Christ, the word “*grace*” was equated with “*favor*,” and is so translated in modern versions. Occasionally, it did have reference to having favor with God (Gen 6:8; Ex 33:12-13,16-17; 34:9; Judges 6:17; Ezra 9:8; Psa 84:11; Prov 3:34; Jer 31:2; Zech 12:19). Even in these cases, “*grace*” generally had to do with being exempted from wrath, or with some other form of Divine leniency. Of the other twenty-six times “*grace*” is used in Moses and the Prophets, it has to do with man’s favor upon man.

“*Grace*” is mentioned 131 times from Luke through Revelation – and it is consistently translated “*grace*” in the various versions. The word is mentioned only four times in the Gospels (Luke 2:40; John 1:14,16,17) – all having to do with Jesus. It is mentioned ten times in the book of Acts (4:33; 11:23; 13:43;14:3,26; 15:11,40; 18:27; 20:24,32) – all having to do with God’s grace upon men: “*grace of God*,” “*word of His grace*,” and “*grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*,” The remaining 116 references to the grace of God are found in Romans through Revelation – **which means this is a key point of apostolic doctrine.**

While the key thought of “*grace*” prior to Christ was the withholding of wrath and judgment, after Christ it carries the idea of **giving an abundance** . It has to do with obtaining, not being excluded from. It deals with possessing, not escaping. In the New Covenant, “*grace*” always has to do with something that is being done, not something that is not being done.

Lexically, grace means “good-will, loving-kindness, favor,” THAYER and “helpfulness.” FRIBERG Doctrinally, this is favor that springs forth from God’s will – it is something that pleases Him as well as benefits

man. The view is that life can only be lived properly when Divine resources are given to men from God, and because He is pleased to give them.

While there is a sense in which God “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim 2:4), there is also a sense in which God “*is angry with the wicked every day*” (Psa 7:11), and His wrath abides on those who do not believe (John 3:36). This is where the accomplishments of the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into the picture. Grace cannot be given to those toward whom God is not pleasingly inclined – for grace is an expression of His favor – His **willing** favor. This circumstance required the removal of sin, else “*grace,*” in the New Covenant sense of the term, could not be given.

When Jesus “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Heb 9:26), God was “*satisfied*” (Isa 53:11), and “*the throne of grace*” (Heb 4:16) was pointed toward mankind. The wrath of God against sin was expended upon Christ Himself, who tasted “*death for every man*” (Heb 2:9). Therefore, sin being “*condemned in the flesh*” of Christ (Rom 8:3), Divine favor could be extended toward men – **not to tolerate them, but to enrich and enable them!**

Strictly speaking, “*grace*” is not unmerited favor, for in Christ God has “*qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance*” (Col 1:12). It is said of those who “*have not defiled their garments, they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy*” (Rev 3:4). It is God’s grace that saved them (Eph 2:5,8) and provided them with what was required to “*walk worthy of the Lord*” (Col 1:10). Initially they “*believed through grace*” (Acts 18:27) – that is, God’s favor enabled them to believe. The saved receive “*the gift of righteousness*” “*by grace,*” being given it because God was pleased to do it through their faith (Rom 5:15,17). We were given “*everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*” (2 Thess 2:16), in order that we might possess the assurance required to live unto the Lord.

Grace brings required resources to us from a God who is pleased to give them – please because of what Jesus accomplished, and pleased because we believe – for salvation in all of its marvelous complexities is always “*by grace through faith.*” Grace enables us to labor extensively (1 Cor 15:10). Grace supplies help in the time of need (Heb 4:16).

When Paul refers to grace coming to Titus, he is speaking of the life-sustaining favor of God. He includes everything that is required to carry out the work of Lord, all the while resisting the devil, and being conformed to the image of God’s Son. That is what the marvelous grace of God accomplishes! Let no person speak disparagingly of the grace of God!

1:4c “ . . . mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”

These resources – grace, mercy, and peace – are for all who are of the “*common faith.*” These are household benefits, part and parcel of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal life. They are not luxuries, but necessities. Spiritual life cannot be maintained without them.

MERCY. This word is omitted in later translations, which read, “*Grace and peace.*” The same expression “*grace, mercy, and peace*” is also used in 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:1, and 2 John 1:3). The versions that omit the phrase in the Titus text, include it in those verses. I take it as a legitimate expression in this text.

“*Mercy*” has to do with kindness and compassion that is aroused by the affliction of the dire circumstances of an individual. FRIBERG Lexically, it means “to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need,” LOUW-NIDA It contains the idea of pity, or sympathy for the one in distress. In this sense, Paul said that when Epaphroditus, who was near death, was restored, God “*had mercy on him,*” and on Paul as well, lest he

have “*sorrow upon sorrow*” (Phil 2:27). Thus, even though God had not promised comfortable circumstances to Paul and Epaphroditus, yet because of their faith and willingness to expend themselves in His service, He had pity upon them. His heart was touched with them suffering for righteousness sake, and therefore He relieved their situation. Strictly speaking, it was not deserved, yet because of the weight of the suffering, their situation was made better, bringing them joyful relief.

There is also the idea of clemency, or the willingness to be lenient and longsuffering toward an offender. An example of this is seen in the publican who prayed, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*” Jesus said the man “*went down to his house justified*” (Lk 18:13-14). Thus, the contrition of heart found in the publican – something of great value before God – moved him to withhold punishment for him being a sinner, and grant him justification, which he did not deserve.

Under the Old Covenant, God’s dealings with the people were primarily merciful – withholding His wrath, and bearing their wayward manners with longsuffering. They did not have new hearts or spirits, and were fundamentally “*a stiffnecked people*” from the very beginning (Ex 32:9). The word “*mercy*,” in its varied forms, is used 268 times from Exodus through Malachi – the history of God’s dealings with the Israelites. This accented the fact that it was, as men are prone to say, *unmerited favor*. That is an appropriate description of “*mercy*,” not “*grace*.”

By way of contrast, the Gospels refer to mercy 23 times, once it is mentioned in Acts, and 38 times in the Epistles and Revelation. There are two major applications of mercy.

First, it accounts for us being forgiven of our sins, and accepted in Christ, though formerly alienated from God. This would also account for the forgiveness of confessed sin by believers. (Rom 11:30-32; 15:9; Eph 2:4; 1 Tim 1:13,16; Tit 3:5; Heb 8:12; 1 Pet 1:3; 2:10).

Second, it accounts for the Lord being touched with the feeling of infirmities, adverse circumstances, debilitating disadvantages, unwanted weaknesses, and the need for more strength (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 7:25; 2 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 4:1; 2 Tim 1:16; Heb 2:17; 4:16; James 5:11; Jude 1:21). Thus the Lord, through His mercy, makes life more bearable for His children.

PEACE. Those who are justified by faith “*have peace with God*” (Rom 5:1). Here, however, we have a broader meaning of “*peace*.” Regarding our affiliation with the Lord, it involves an awareness of our reconciliation to Him – i.e. being spiritually minded (Rom 8:6). This is also the “*peace*” that comes from “*believing*” (Rom 15:13).

There is also a “*perfect peace*,” or inward stillness and calm, that comes from keeping our focus upon the Lord. “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee*” (Isa 26:3). This is the peace that will keep our “*hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Phil 4:7). This is a peace that is conferred upon those who walk by the “*rule*” of new creatureship (Gal 6:15-16). We are admonished, “*let the peace of God rule in your hearts*” (Col 3:15), confirming that what is received from God is to be kept and nurtured.

There is also the matter of the maintenance of a tranquil environment, for “*the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace*” (James 3:18). We are admonished, “*if it be possible*,” to “*live peaceably with all men*” (Rom 12:16), and to “*follow after the things that make for peace*” (Rom 14:19). The “*unity of the Spirit*” is said to be maintained “*in the bond of peace*” (Eph 4:3). Thus we are admonished to “*be at peace*” among ourselves (1 Thess 5:13).

All of these various views of peace postulate that it comes from God. No person can manufacture peace,

he can only receive it from God, then faithfully keep it.

FROM GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. The meaning of this expression is not that God the Father gives us grace, mercy, and peace, and that Jesus does as well – giving us a kind of double supply. Rather, this refers to the means through which these benefits are conferred. They come through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Point at which they are distributed. This further confirms that in the entirety of salvation, God never operates independently of Jesus – either initially, in it being worked out, or in its culmination.

by Given O. Blakely

“Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee .” (Titus 1:5)

INTRODUCTION

In the Kingdom of God, those who are chosen and given spiritual insight are also given responsibilities. This manner was revealed at the dawn of creation, when Adam, created in the image of God, was given the responsibility of dressing (cultivating) the garden and keeping (taking care of) it. Man was not made to be a mere spectator. He is also charged with the responsibility of seeing what God is doing, and hearing what He is saying. This is one reason why our fellowship encourages some form of regular participation. The truth of God will not work effectually in an environment of idleness. Jesus once said, *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”* NKJV (John 5:17). During our time a *“form of godliness”* is being cultured that does not encourage productive involvement in the church – i.e. involvement that profits the entire body of Christ. That is the intention that drives the Divine placement of every member in Christ’s body (1 Cor 12:7,18). Jesus likened His own work to *“a man taking a far journey, who left His house, and gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch,”* or *“stay on the alert”* NASB (Mark 13:34). That is, while the work is being carried out, there are assigned laborers who are to watch for the return of the Lord, alerting the workers to the signs of the times, and indicators that bear directly upon the nature and intensity of the labors. If, for example, it is perceived that the coming of the Lord is near, it is certainly not the time to be diverted to lesser things. There must be a concentration on being ready for His return – fulfilling one’s ministry, finishing the course, and seeing to it that no part of the assigned work is left undone. There will come a time when needed oil will no longer be able to be procured, as confirmed in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13). It ought to be evident that idleness is conducive to spiritual slumber, and that slumber leads one into a state of alienation from God and consequent condemnation at the Lord’s return. This teaching will be fortified in our text.

Titus 1:5a *“ For this cause left I thee in Crete . . .”* Other versions read, *“I left you behind in Crete,”* NIV *“I did not take you with me when I went away from Crete,”* BBE and *“I did not take you with me when I went away from Crete.”* LIVING

CRETE. So far as the Scriptural record is concerned, we know very little about this place. On *the day of Pentecost there were present devout Jews*” from this region – “*Cretes,*” or “*Cretans*” NKJV (Acts 2:11). During Paul’s final voyage to Rome as a prisoner, they sailed close to Crete, passing by it, even though Paul had recommended they remain there during the winter (Acts 27:7,12,13,21). Paul also refers to a Cretian prophet who once said, “*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*” – and Paul said “*This witness is true*” (Titus 1:12). Historians have also written about the “notoriously bad character of this people.” McCLINTOK

Crete is an island that forms a continual bridge between Greece and Asia Minor. The center of the island has “a mountain chain rising to the height of 8,193 feet in Mount Ida, and fringed with low valleys beside the coast.” ISBE It is 160 miles long, and from 6-35 miles wide, one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea. Homer says that it had 100 cities around the time of our text. SMITH’S BIBLE DICTIONARY This island was located about 600 miles into the Mediterranean Sea from Jerusalem.

THE GOSPEL AND CRETE. We do not know why or when Paul was in Crete, or when he departed, leaving Titus there. Nor, indeed, do we know how the Gospel had come to this large island. There were Jews from this area present on the day of Pentecost. Undoubtedly, if and when they returned to their homes, they brought the Gospel with them. It is also possible that Paul, after his first imprisonment in Rome, was released, and passing by this island, preached the Gospel there. However this is all conjecture, and there is no need to dwell further upon it. We have no record of any planned initiative to preach the Gospel in Crete. We have no record of anyone ever preaching the Gospel there, or establishing a church there. Yet, the work of the Lord was accomplished there, the Lord Jesus Himself orchestrating the events from heaven. There are other churches of which nothing of their origin is provided: Rome and Colossae. Paul planned to go to Rome, but the church there preceded his arrival (Rom 1:11). When Paul wrote to the Colossian brethren, he had never been there (Col 2:1).

There is, however, something to be learned from all of this. Among other things, this indicates that the work of the church is not centralized on earth. That is, it is not an institution with headquarters. Although the church at Jerusalem was, by virtue of the presence of the apostles, often involved in serious issues (Acts 8:14; 11:22; 15:2), it did not dictate the affairs of the all of the churches. A spiritual freedom existed that allowed for the formation of groups of believers in remote areas – like Crete. While this made no provision for heretical doctrines, it was the context within in which godly men labored.

LEFT IN CRETE. We do not know the age of Titus at this time – but we do know his trustworthiness. It is evident that he could be trusted to do the work of the Lord, and to do it wisely and in strict conformity with the will of the Lord. Like Paul, he had “*obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful,*” and had responded acceptably to it (1 Cor 7:25). Faithfulness is a trait of those who possess a strong faith. Abraham, the father of the faithful (Rom 4:16), is referred to as “*faithful Abraham*” (Gal 3:9). Tychicus is referred to as being “*a faithful minister*” (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7), as well as Ephaphras (Col 1:7), and Onesimus (Col 4:9). Silvanus is referred to as “*a faithful brother*” (1 Pet 5:12).

To be “*faithful*” is to be trustworthy: persons who “show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.” THAYER This is a requirement of stewards, and there are no exceptions. “*Moreover it is **required** in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Cor 4:2). The NIV reads, “*those who have been given a trust **must** prove faithful.*” This is a Divine requirement, and men will be judged in strict accord with it. When Jesus, told Paul, “. . . *the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*” (Acts 26:17-18), that is precisely what he was required to do. Jesus Himself set the standard for Kingdom labors, placing God’s will above His own, and proving absolutely faithful to His mission. No other posture is acceptable.

It is in the context of responsibility that a person's faithfulness is confirmed. Faithfulness really does not mean anything if there is not something that is to be done. Furthermore, being faithful involves more than avoiding falling away. It requires completing the assignment given in a manner that pleases the Lord. Thus Titus was left by Paul in Crete to do something. This was not intended to be a leave of absence or a sabbatical. There were some things that needed to be done, and Paul was not able to personally do them at this time.

“ 1:5b . . . thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting . . .” Other versions read, “*set in order the things that are lacking,*” NKJV “*straighten out what was left unfinished,*” NIV “*amend what was defective,*” RSV and “*set right what was defective and finish what was left undone.*” AMPLIFIED

PAUL'S PRIORITIES. Immediately we see the priority that Paul placed upon the churches themselves. It was essential that they be properly ordered – not from the standpoint of mere organization, but with regard to the formation of an environment conducive to edification. If the purpose of the church is to orient people for glory, edifying and maturing them so they are filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col 1:9), then things must be put into place that contribute to that objective. The Lord has revealed the ultimate objectives for the body of Christ. Among them are “*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*” (Eph 3:19), “*builDED together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Eph 2:22), and “*that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*” (Col 4:12). Where these things are not taking place, something is “*wanting,*” or “*lacking.*” Paul will not have this condition to continue, and therefore leaves Titus behind to address such matters.

We do not know if Paul left the area because he was driven out, as in other places (Acts 9:26; 13:50; 17:10), or was called to another work, as he was in Antioch (Acts 13:2), Troas (Acts 20:11), Jerusalem (Acts 22:21), and Tyre (Acts 21:3-6). Whatever the reason, Paul could not allow the work commenced on Crete to remain unattended. The people there were evidently not mature enough to continue on their own.

THINGS THAT ARE WANTING. These were things relating to the revealed purpose of God for the church. While it is possible that some matters of immorality existed, as at Corinth (1 Cor 5:1-5), and Thessalonica (2 Thess 3:6-7,11), these matters were not the point at issue. Those could have been settled with an epistle, as they were in both Corinth and Thessalonika. Both of those churches had competent disciples who could expound letters written by Paul. It appears to me that this was lacking in Crete. It seems demeaning to the ministry of Paul to view him being absorbed with stabilizing families, relieving the poor of the community, or ensuring that the young people had some place to meet. Those are all matters that must be resolved on a higher level.

I am persuaded that there are a staggering number of congregations who are so lacking of spiritually minded people they would not know what to do with a letter from Paul, such as was delivered to Rome, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, or the Hebrews. The general attitude towards epistles such as these appears to justify that conclusion. You may recall that when Jesus sent letters to the seven churches of Asia, each one was addressed to a specific individual in those congregations: “*the angel of . . .*” (Rev 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). This could not have been a holy angel from heaven, for that would mean an angel told John to write letters to other angels (Rev 1:1). Beside that, angels are never depicted as being ignorant of the affairs of men. John wrote to key individuals who were charged with informing the congregation of the mind of the Lord concerning their condition – whether good or bad.

It appears to me that the phrase “*things that are wanting*” had to do with matters regarding the maintenance of a proper environment and focus within the churches. As will be developed in the next verses,

this will include the matter of establishing qualified leadership in the churches, in order that the word of God might be declared and expounded, shedding light on the matters with which they may have been contending.

LACKING. The very concept of “*lacking*” is an intriguing one – particularly when we are speaking of the body of Christ. The word itself suggests an unrealized objective. A young man who asked Jesus concerning obtaining eternal life sensed that he was lacking something (Matt 19:20) – although he proved unwilling to resolve that issue. Jesus spoke of the certain hearers of the Word who were rocky soil that “*lacked moisture,*” thereby prohibiting growth (Lk 8:6). Paul expressed concern about the Thessalonians being *lacking* in their faith (1 Thess 3:10). James said it was possible to “*lack wisdom*” (James 1:5). Peter referred to required traits of character that could be *lacking*, indicating that the individual was blind, could not see afar off, and had forgotten he was purged from his own sins (2 Pet 1:9).

I do not doubt that one of the matters to be set in order involved a charge that was also delivered to Timothy: “*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*” (2 Tim 2:2). There will not be much legitimate work accomplished in Jesus’ name until this is done.

There is an environment in which spiritual retardation is least apt to occur. It is one in which the people are “*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Cor 1:10). One in which the people are “*able to admonish one another*” (Rom 15:14), and where the people, holding to the head, experience the ministration of “*nourishment*” through the various members (Col 2:19). “*Things that are lacking*” involve this category of things.

1:5c “ . . . *and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*” Other versions read, “*appoint elders,*” NKJV “*placing men in authority,*” BBE “*appoint congregation leaders,*” CJB “*appointing spiritual leaders,*” GWN “*appoint presbyters,*” NAB “*appoint pastors,*” LIVING and “*confirm elders.*” IE

Following the preaching of the word in Derby, Lystra, and Antioch, Paul and Barnabas “*ordained them elders in every church*” (Acts 14:23). Other versions read “*appointed.*” NKJV/NASB There is no record of anyone choosing elders by voting or casting lots. Prior to Pentecost, the brethren cast lots to see who would replace Judas, calling upon the Lord to show them by that means the one whom He had chosen (Acts 1:24-26). The early church chose out from among themselves seven men whom the apostles appointed over the daily distribution of food. They were instructed to choose men “*full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom*” (Acts 6:3). However, no such procedure is ever recorded concerning the appointment of elders.

ORDAIN. As used here, the word “*ordained*” means, “to set in place, set one over a thing, appoint one to minister an office,” THAYER and “set in an elevated position.” FRIBERG David, for example, “*ordained,*” or put in place, certain who were to attend the sacrifices with rejoicing, singing, and instruments (2 Chron 23:18; 29:27). Jesus “*ordained*” the twelve apostles (Mk 3:14; John 15:16). The apostle who took Judas’ place was to be “*ordained*” (Acts 1:22). Jesus Himself was “*ordained*” to be the Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42). Paul was “*ordained a preacher and an apostle*” (1 Tim 2:7). High priests were “*ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices*” (Heb 8:3). In all of these instances, there was a choice by someone with insight – God and Jesus being the primary Ones, and holy men being the secondary. Also, the ones who were “*ordained,*” or appointed, were set apart for a specific work or activity. None of the men were mere figureheads, and none of the offices were honorary or merely organizational.

ELDERS. Precisely what does Paul mean when he says “*elders*” ? Is he speaking of an institutional office? Does this refer to a head of the business affairs of a congregation, or those through whom all questions are to be passed, and all decisions made? I ask these questions because this is what the modern church means when they say “elders.” The question here is whether or not that is what our text means.

First, let us establish that there is no authoritarian office in the body of Christ – at least not as men consider authority. Jesus made this plain when He said to the apostles, who are “*first*” by rank in the church (1 Cor 12:28). “*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant*” (Mat 20:25-27). In the body of Christ, those who “*have the rule over you*” are the ones who have “*spoken unto you the word of God,*” whose faith can be followed (Heb 13:7). They are those who are responsible for the progress of the saints, who watch for their souls, and will give an account to God for their labor among them (Heb 13:17). Peter, even though he was an apostle, referred to himself as an “*elder,*” and admonished other elders to “*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof*” (1 Pet 5:2). That is, the body of Christ is so arranged that those who have the greater insight, and are able to declare the truth with power and effectiveness, default to the leadership.

As used in this text, “*elders*” means “*advanced in life.*” THAYER This, however, is not confined to being of advanced natural age. We know this is true, because one of the stipulations concerning an elder is the subjection of his children (1 Tim 3:4), a circumstance that does not ordinarily apply to men old in the flesh.

We know from Scripture that it is actually the Holy Spirit who makes “*overseers*” – another term for “*elders.*” It is written, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which **the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers** , to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood*” (Acts 20:28). Titus, then, in ordaining elders, was required to recognize the placement of men by the Holy Spirit. He had to be able to recognize who had a grasp of the things of God, coupled with a profound care for the flock of God. Where such men cannot be found, it would be absurd to ordain elders, for there is no such thing in the body of Christ as a leader who is fundamentally ignorant of the things of God and unconcerned about the spiritual advancement of the people. If such individuals are found, they are imposters, and are not to be tolerated for a moment.

EVERY CITY. Notice the elders are not to be ordained in every church, as in Acts 14:23, but “*in every city.*” This also means that at that time, elders were not in every city, and in Acts 14 they were not in every church. This does not mean that it is optional to have spiritual leaders who feed the flock of God. It does mean that such a function can only be fulfilled by spiritually competent men. Paul will elaborate on this in the verses that follow, confirming the kind of men that God designates as leaders and feeders of His flock. What he says will not blend well with contemporary notions, but it is the unvarnished truth.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 1:5b . . . ordain elders in every city . . . 6 IF any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.” (Titus 1:6-7)

INTRODUCTION

The body of Christ is well ordered – like the human body. This order is living, not stagnant, and is characterized by spiritual productivity and growth. The particular members of the body are put in place by the Lord Himself, and in strict accordance with His will (1 Cor 12:18). At no point are men at liberty to guess or presume concerning these placements. This is why Paul instructed both Titus and Timothy on making appointments of men to be elders (Tit 1:5-10; 1 Tim 3:1-7). There is a direction in which the stated requirements are pointed. None of them are ends of themselves, and all of them are pointless if the intended work is not accomplished. Elders are not figureheads, nor are they intended to be men who appoint others to do the work that has been assigned to them – a practice that has become altogether too common in the churches. It will further be shown that although the Holy Spirit makes men overseers in the body of Christ, it is still a good work that can be desired. As it is written, *“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work”* (1 Tim 3:1). I understand that such a desire, if springing from faith in Jesus and love for God, can be a personal attestation of one’s placement in the body. All of this presumes the one desiring the office of a bishop – who should be the only one appointed to that function – has a strong faith, a godly disposition, and a fundamental and consistent interest in the maturity and stability of the church. It will also become apparent that the individual must also possess an understanding of the things of the Spirit of God, being noted for, *“rightly dividing,”* or *“handling accurately”* NASB the word of God. These attributes cannot be learned academically, or developed and handled institutionally. They are evidence of spiritual life.

Titus 1:5b “ . . . ordain elders in every city . . . *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having*

faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”

Paul left Titus in Crete to “*set in order the things*” that were “*lacking*” NKJV (v5a). I do not doubt that Titus was already aware of the kind of men that were to be ordained. It is inconceivable that Paul would have left him to do such a thing if all of this was new to him. The instructions that follow do not assume that Titus was ignorant of them, or that he was just then learning them. What Paul is doing is stirring up Titus’ pure mind, and reaffirming the truth lest it be overshadowed by any circumstances in Crete. The very concept of faithfulness assumes that the person knows what he is to do. However, spiritual duty is always fulfilled in the environment of truth – and truth must be continually affirmed because of the competitive surroundings in which lives are lived unto the Lord. This is why Paul also wrote to Titus of things he was to “*affirm constantly,*” or “*stress*” NIV (Tit 3:8). While theoretically it may appear as though a single declaration of the truth is sufficient, that is really a thorough misconception. The nature of spiritual warfare, the presence of the old man, and the principalities and powers against which we wrestle, demand the reiteration of what we already know. This is why the expression “*we know*” is used 23 KJV times in the epistles (30, NKJV , 27. NASB 36, NIV 32. NRSV).

One other consideration: many of these requirements are not unique to elders. Their existence does not suggest that a person can be pleasing to God and lack these qualities. However, due to novicehood, and sometimes to an unbecoming lack of interest, they may require considerable development. But this cannot be the case with elders.

IF. The ordination of elders was not something that was to be done unconditionally – that is, Paul was not saying that Titus was to make sure elders were established in every city. Here he states a condition that will determine whether or not Titus is to do this.

BLAMELESS. Other versions read “*above reproach,*” NASB “*having a good record,*” BBE “*free from all charges against him,*” DARBY “*without crime,*” DOUAY “*unreproveable,*” GENEVA “*have a good reputation,*” GWN “*a man of irreproachable character,*” NJB and “*faultless.*” TNT In his letter to Timothy, Paul also cites this as a requisite for being an elder (1 Tim 3:2), and a deacon as well (1 Tim 3:10).

Moral uprightness is an absolute requisite. Nothing that is perceived as a good talent or aptitude can offset being blameable, or found with moral flaws. For example, there have been men who were morally defiled, and yet they were accepted as elders because they supposedly had expertise in Scripture. A defiled life negates any claim to spirituality. Salvation makes no provision for continuing in sin – none at all. At the point sin enters the life, it is to be confessed and abandoned with immediacy and forthrightness. That is true of all believers – but especially for those who are elders. They cannot be men who are in the state of recovery, with all manner of moral weakness still clinging to them. I will deal more extensively with this trait in the next verse

THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE. **This does not mean an elder has to be married, but that if he is married, he can only have one wife – something** that is still unusual in foreign cultures, and even among some in this country who continue to practice bigamy, even though it is against civil law, as well as the law of God.

This does not mean that a widower who remarries is excluded, although some may consider him to have had two wives. We know this is the case because such are neither warned nor upbraided in Scripture. Neither does this exclude those who have been divorced, if that divorce was in accord with Scriptural stipulations. Two conditions are said to be capable of dissolving the marital union: (1) fornication (Matt 5:32), and an (2) unequal marital yoke in which the unbeliever is not content to dwell peaceably with the believer (1 Cor 7:12-13,15). It goes without saying that a great deal of wisdom and discretion is required even where the dissolution of a marriage is technically acceptable. If the condition causes the person to be perceived as blameable, due thought must be given to the matter.

This requirement also includes not being involved in adulterous affairs. The literal rendering of the expression here is “*a one woman man.*” INTERLINEAR

HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN. These are children who remain under the care of their parents. They are to be faithful, believers, and trustworthy – that is, as they come of age, they are to have been so taught that they themselves embrace the Lord, and, in accordance with their understanding, conduct their lives in a godly manner. They are not to be noted for being loose in their morals and conduct, or unruly and disorderly. AMPLIFIED Children being directed by the one who is an elder cannot be boisterous (riot), fundamentally wayward, and questionable in morals. When writing to Timothy Paul adds, “*For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?*” (1 Tim 3:5).

“**1:7a** *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God . . .*”

A BISHOP. Previously Paul told Titus he had left him in Crete to “*ordain elders in every city.*” He was to do this “*IF any be blameless.*” Now he elaborates on the matter by referring to the requirement of “*a bishop.*” The word “*elder*” refers to personal age or tenure in the Kingdom – one who is of spiritual age. Here we have a different word referring to the same function. In his writing to Timothy, Paul refers to “*the office of a bishop,*” or “*overseer*” NASB (1 Tim 3:1). While “*elder*” has more to do with character and personal spirituality, “*bishop*” has to do with function, or what elder does.

Peter wrote that elders were to take “*the oversight*” of “*God’s heritage,*” not in the sense of managing “*the flock of God,*” but rather in the sense of feeding it and “*being examples to the flock*” NKJV (1 Pet 5:2). When speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus, Paul said that the Holy Spirit had made them “*overseers, to feed the flock of God*” (Acts 20:28).

A “*bishop*” is “*an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent.*” THAYER “*one who watches over the welfare of others.*” FRIBERG Doctrinally, the Scriptures speak of bishops as those who “*have the rule over you . . . for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . .*” (Heb 13:17).

The gravity of this office is confirmed by the general state of the church of our day. It is too often marked by spiritual immaturity, Scriptural ignorance, disinterest, and moral failure. It has become the prey of false prophets and religious opportunists. The level of interest in the things of God, and the deplorable level of a hunger and thirst for righteousness are at staggeringly low levels. And why is all of this so? Much of the blame can be laid at the feet of a recalcitrant eldership. They have neither watched nor fed the flock of God. In the elders, or bishops, God has provided for the growth and stability of His people.

MUST BE BLAMELESS. This removes any question concerning the necessity of elders, or bishops, being blameless – morally pure and upright in a manifest and unquestionable way. This is something that must be perceivable.

As used here, the word “*blameless*” means “*beyond reproach, without fault.*” FRIBERG This has to do with one’s outward, or expressive, life. There can be no obvious clash with Divine requirements in the person’s conduct. This word describes a state in which all believers are to be found: “*blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 1:9), and being presented “*unblameable and unproveable in His sight*” (Col 1:22). This was a description of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist (Lk 1:6). It is described as the manner in which we are to live before men – “*blameless and harmless*” (Phil 2:15). It is equivalent to being holy, or possessing holiness – “*without spot and blameless*” (2 Pet 3:14), remembering that without holiness, “*no man shall see the Lord*” (Heb 12:14).

Paul said that before he was in Christ, he was “*blameless*” regarding “*the righteousness which is in the law*” (Phil 3:6). That is, there was no activity that it required that he did not do: keeping the Sabbath day and the feasts, tithing, not infringing on the rights of his neighbor, etc. There was no glaring contradiction of the law in the life of Saul of Tarsus. He lived with an acute consciousness toward God, and was thus blameless as the Law defined life (Acts 23:1).

In this text, being blameless would involve a total separation from immorality, faithfulness in assembling with the saints, providing for his own, being obviously separate from the world, not contradicting the Word in his living, not holding to false doctrine, etc. As stated to the Philippians, this would be “*without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation*” (Phil 2:15). No person whose moral fabric is questionable can be permitted to lead or feed the flock of God. Not only is that unlawful, such people are not capable of the required work.

AS THE STEWARD OF GOD. Other versions read, “*God’s steward,*” NASB “*entrusted with God’s work,*” NIV “*as God’s servant,*” BBE “*entrusted with God’s affairs,*” CJB “*God’s manager,*” CSB “*a supervisor appointed by God,*” GWN “*God’s representative,*” NJB “*the minister of God,*” TNT “*watches over God’s work,*” IE “*God’s administrator,*” ISV and “*God’s trustee.*” WILLIAMS

Lexically, the word “*steward*” means “*manager of a household or of household affairs.*” THAYER Such a person is made responsible for the affairs of God’s house – like the vice president of a company, or a member of the president’s cabinet. For example, Eliezer was Abraham’s “*steward,*” and the manager of the affairs of his house (Gen 15:2). In his governmental position in Egypt, Joseph had a “*steward*” who headed up the affairs of his house (Gen 43:19; 44:1,4). Jesus gave a parable of a vineyard, and the “*steward*” who was responsible for it and those who labored in it (Matt 20:8).

Not only is the bishop to be personally “*blameless*” in moral conduct, but in the affairs related to taking care of the church of God. He is to be “*blameless*” in the matters of feeding and caring for it as God’s appointed representative. Be sure of this, there is no room for wicked and slothful servants in this office, or in any other function in Christ’s body.

1:7b “*. . . not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.*”

The requirements for “*the office of a bishop*” are suitable to the work that is fulfilled by it. These are traits in which the elders must excel and be exemplary. They must not be areas in which the individual struggles and is “*easily beset.*” They are also areas in which the required control is obvious. You will note that none of them are facets of life in which the rest of the members of the body can be loose. They are not areas of liberty in which license is given to be slipshod. While some of the members of the household may be in the process of perfecting holiness in these areas, the man who is an elder must have made very apparent progress in them all. Because he is an example to the flock, he is not allowed the luxury of being deficient in any of them.

NOT SELF-WILLED. Other versions read, “*overbearing,*” NIV “*arrogant,*” NRSV “*pushing himself forward,*” BBE “*headstrong,*” DARBY “*proud,*” “*froward,*” GENEVA “*stubborn,*” PNT and “*self-pleased.*” YLT The word “*self-willed*” means “*self pleasing or arrogant.*” THAYER This is a trait in which the individual prefers what he desires to the will of the Lord. While it may involve wanting his own way in the context of the views of others, it more particularly relates to his will being set against that of the One whom he is serving. In other words, the self-willed person employs his own criterion in caring for the flock of God, ignoring the revealed Divine agenda of caring for and feeding the house of God. Such a person refuses to yield to the Lord, or to the truth as stated by someone other than himself.

NOT SOON ANGRY. Other versions read, “*quick-tempered*,” NKJV “*irritable*,” GWN “*prone to anger*,” NET and “*hot-tempered*.” NJB The words “*soon angry*” come from a single word that means “prone to anger, irascible” THAYER (“Irascible” = hotheaded, argumentative, contentious, disputatious, and touchy). MERRIAM-WEBSTER The elder must be temperate, or self-controlled, not bursting forth in wrath, for “*the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*” (James 1:20). This is the kind of anger that is to be put from the individual (Eph 4:31) – the kind that causes anger to become sin (Eph 4:26). The elder must be a stabilizing influence, not a volatile one. Again, this requirement does not suggest there are some people who can be “*soon angry*.”

NOT GIVEN TO WINE. Other versions read, “*not addicted to wine*,” NASB “*not given to drunkenness*,” NIV “*a drunkard*,” RSV “*brawler*,” ASV “*drink excessively*,” CJB “*disorderly through wine*,” DARBY and “*drink too much*.” GWN The expression “*given to wine*” is translated from a single word meaning, “one who sits long at his wine, and is quarrelsome over wine: hence brawling, abusive.” THAYER Paul’s letter to Timothy also included this stipulation (1 Tim 3:3).

This requirement is not set within the context of an indulgent society. This is said to a society where “new wine,” or freshly pressed wine, was a common drink (Neh 10:39; Prov 3:10; Isa 65:8). Both “*wine and new wine*” are said to “*take away the heart*,” or “understanding” NASB (Hos 4:11). When ingested in abundance, “*new wine*” would cause drunkenness (Acts 2:13). This is because it ferments in both bottles and the belly (Matt 9:17). Too, wine was used for medicinal purposes, but was to be used in small quantities (1 Tim 5:23). The elder must not have an appetite for things that produce mental and spiritual weakness. That is the point of the text. There is no suggestion that moderate drinking is acceptable. Like the priest and the king, the elder was to avoid things that tended to distort judgment (Lev 10:9-10; Prov 31:4).

NO STRIKER. Other versions read “*violent*,” NKJV “*pugnacious*,” NASB “*moved to . . . blows*,” BBE “*a bully*,” CSB “*hands swift to strike*,” MRD “*aggressive*,” NAB “*fighter*,” TNT and “*brawling, violent*.” AMPLIFIED Paul also gave this requirement to Timothy (1 Tim 3:3). Of all people, those who feed the flock of God must be keenly aware that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph 6:12). It is therefore wrong to engage in physical activities that are conducted as though that was not the case. Whether it is a “*fist*” (Ex 21:18; Isa 58:4), or a “*weapon*” that is formed (Isa 54:17), these are not to be employed in the affairs of God’s people. Any man that is prone to such behavior is excluded from the office of a bishop. Again, this does not insinuate that other members of the body of Christ can be strikers, resorting to physical violence to settle their disputes.

NOT GIVEN TO FILTHY LUCRE. Other versions read, “*greedy for money*,” NKJV “*fond of sordid gain*,” NASB “*pursuing dishonest gain*,” NIV “*greedy for gain*,” NRSV “*desiring profit for himself*,” BBE “*seeking for gain by base means*,” DARBY “*shameful ways to make money*,” GWN “*sordid gain*,” NAS “*avaricious*,” NJB and “*grasping and greedy for filthy lucre (financial gain)*.” AMPLIFIED

The words “*filthy lucre*” come from a single Greek word meaning “eager for base gain,” THAYER “covetous of,” FRIBERG “greedy of material gain,” UBS and “greedy for money.” GINGRICH Some of the versions, as well some lexicons, leave the impression that there are lawful ways to desire money. I am not sure that can be established by Scripture. Those who “*will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition*” (1 Tim 6:9). Such gain is also called “*uncertain riches*” (1 Tim 6:17), and “*deceitful riches*” that choke the word of God (Matt 13:22). Jesus also said that it is more difficult for a “*rich man*” to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (Lk 18:24). No person can afford to have an aim to be rich, but this is particularly unlawful for those who are elders.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 1:8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

(Titus 1:6-7)

INTRODUCTION

Lest Titus be distracted by the outward attractiveness of those charged with feeding and caring for the flock of God, and that he not be unduly influenced by personal friendship or acquaintance, Paul continues to define an elder, or bishop, according to the nature of the office. Because Titus will make these things known, they will also direct the hearts of those who are not yet suitable for this work, yet, in a wholesome way, “*desire the office of a bishop*” (1 Tim 3:1). The body of Christ, particularly on the local level (1 Cor 12:27), is to be kept aware of Divine requirements, both for the flock itself, and those who are leading it. All congregations are being led by someone. Some kind of agenda has been adopted, and there is some direction in which the people are being led. If the people themselves are not mature, then any person who is assertive will, in some way, assume the leadership. The danger of such a circumstance is seen in the fact that Christ Jesus alone is “*the Head of the body, the church*” (Col 1:18). His direction and ministry takes place through those who are holding to the Head (Col 2:19), availing themselves of His fellowship, and cleaving to Him with purpose of heart. Our text is providing some of the details of such an involvement. Apart from insightful fellowship with the Son of God, the proper leadership of the people of God is not even possible. In such a case, the church will inevitably be led astray. Not only is this fact generally unknown in church circles, it is contrary to the methodologies that have been put into place. Organizational skills, and principles that are adopted by the world, whether in government, business, or scholastic environs, are not adequate to bring proper functionality to the body of Christ. Note that the characteristics that are mentioned in our text could never be used to organize a successful business, government, or school. That is because these qualities assume the productive involvement of the elder with Christ Himself, and those with the body of the people.

Titus 1:8 “*But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.*”

Paul is giving Titus a description of a man that is suited to feed and care for “*the flock of God*” (1 Pet

5:2) , or “the church of God” (Acts 20:28). It is of interest that both of these descriptions relate the saints to God Himself. That is, the “elder,” or “bishop,” is caring for the people that have been “begotten of God” (1 John 5:18), or “born of God” (1 John 3:9). This is “the household of God” (Eph 2:19), among whom He resides, and over whom He presides. Even among men, if a family hires a baby-sitter, they take care to inform the individual of what is required in their household, and how to care for their children. Ordinarily, the babysitter would not be allowed to simply carry out their own will. Yet, when it comes to the “family” of God, which is named after Christ (Eph 3:14-15), there are professed leaders who care for the flock as though they were their own. The enormity of such a transgression cannot be overstated.

Paul has already affirmed what the one who cares for the flock must NOT be: “self-willed,” “soon angry,” “given to wine,” “a striker,” and “greedy of filthy lucre,” or unlawful gain (1:7). Just as surely as those cannot be in the man, the following **must** be found in him.

A LOVER OF HOSPITALITY. Other versions read “hospitable,” NKJV “opening his house freely to guests,” BBE “harberous,” GENEVA “enjoy having guests in his home,” NLT “a lover of strangers,” YLT and “hospitable (loving and a friend to believers, especially to strangers and foreigners).” AMPLIFIED Paul also told Timothy the bishop must be “given to hospitality” (1 Tim 3:2). The word “hospitality” comes a word meaning “generous to guests.” THAYER In English it means, “given to generous and cordial reception of guests.” WEBSTER Again, this is not to be a characteristic of elders alone, for all saints are admonished to be “given to hospitality” (Rom 12:13), to “use hospitality one to another without grudging,” and “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb 13:2). Some may need some improvement in this area, but the elder must be exemplary in it. He must find delight in this exercise of love and concern. This confirms his lack of self-centeredness, in that he considers his home as a stewardship. In my judgment, a person who is lacking in this quality has a serious deficiency that requires immediate attention.

A LOVER OF GOOD MEN. Other versions read, “lover of what is good,” NKJV and “a lover of goodness [of good people and good things].” AMPLIFIED The word from which this phrase is translated means “loving goodness.” THAYER Technically, this speaks of loving what is itself good, and accents the expression of the goodness, rather than a mere theoretical view of goodness. In this case, what is “good” is actually done, or expressed, by men. The love of such people confirms the bishop’s love of good itself, which endears the individual to him. From the standpoint of language, something that is “good” is upright, sound, wholesome, and advantageous. THAYER The phrase “lover of good men” correctly depicts the meaning of the Greek word, which means to love the expression of goodness, which comes through men. The men themselves are not the point, but the goodness that they express. The love for that goodness is thus confirmed in the valued treatment of those who express it. These are people whose expressions are upright, bringing spiritual advantage to men.

SOBER. Other versions read “sober-minded,” NKJV “sensible,” NASB “prudent,” NRSV and “sober-minded (sensible, discreet).” AMPLIFIED To be sober involves thinking in view of ultimate reality, not being distracted by appearance or wayward desires. A person who cannot think properly, or in strict harmony with the mind of the Lord, cannot possibly feed and care for the flock of God. Flawed thinking, or defective reasoning, is one of the worst of all handicaps. How could such a person carry out the responsibility of taking care of God’s household?

JUST. Other versions read “upright,” NIV “righteous,” CSB and “upright and fair-minded.” AMPLIFIED This has to do with being holy or godly, living in a manner that is in strict harmony with the revealed will of God. As used here, this has particularly to do with the execution of judgment or evaluation – doing so with godly fairness and equity, and not with partiality. It is the opposite of respecting men’s persons, and rendering preferential treatment upon the basis of some standard other than God’s Word. As used here it means “rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in

words or shown by the manner of dealing with them.” THAYER That means that such an individual is not sectarian or one who judges according to appearance.

HOLY. Other versions read “*devout*,” NASB “*pious*,” DARBY and “*a devout man and religiously correct*.” AMPLIFIED This is a broader word than “*just*,” having more to do with character than judgment. Here, the whole of one’s life, even apart from the context of the flock of God, is being lived into the Lord in a very apparent and incontestible way.

TEMPERATE. Other versions read, “*self-controlled*,” NKJV “*disciplined*,” NIV and “*keeping himself in hand*.” AMPLIFIED This is the person who keeps under his body, bringing it into subjection (1 Cor 9:27). He does not yield to the impulses of the “*old man*,” but puts him off (Eph 4:22). The “*temperate*” man has put on “*the whole armor of God*” (Eph 6:11), and is not given to excesses.

“ 1:9a Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught . . . ”

The person who feeds and cares for the flock of God cannot be weak in the Word, neither knowing what it says or what it means. He must be a person who can handle the Word of God with spiritual expertise (2 Tim 2:15). He lives “*by every Word of God*” (Lk 4:4), and regularly obtains the benefits that are brought through it (2 Tim 3:16-17).

HOLDING FAST. Other versions read, “*hold firmly*,” NIV “*have a firm grasp*,” NRSV “*clinging to*,” DARBY “*embracing*,” DOUAY and “*cleaveth unto*.” TNT These are translated from a single word that means, “hold to firmly, cleave to, pay heed to,” THAYER “devoted to,” FRIBERG “cling to,” LIDDELL-SCOTT and “take an interest in, pay attention to.” GINGRICH This is the opposite of letting something “*slip*,” or get away from us (Heb 2:1). The person who holds fast does not forget, abandon, or allow other things to upstage the matter. He lives with a clear view of the thing that is being held. This refers to an acute consciousness or awareness of something.

THE FAITHFUL WORD. Other versions read, “*trustworthy message*” NIV “*the word that is trustworthy*,” NRSV “*the sure word*,” RSV and “*sure and trustworthy Word of God*.” AMPLIFIED The “*faithful word*” is embodied in the Scriptures, which have been given by the inspiration of God, and are profitable to accomplish Divine objectives (2 Tim 3:16-17). They are what testifies of Christ (John 5:39). They contain the promises of “*the Gospel of God*” (Rom 1:2), and are the means through which “*patience and comfort*” produce “*hope*” within the believer (Rom 15:4). Through them, the “*mystery*” that was “*kept secret since the world began*” is now made known (Rom 16:26). They alone make men “*wise unto salvation*,” enabling them to appropriate and maintain that salvation (2 Tim 3:15).

Particularly, “*the faithful Word*” equates to “*a more sure word of prophecy*” – an inspired declaration that has been fulfilled (2 Pet 1:19). That is the word that concerns Jesus Christ – the Gospel – and is the appointed means through which spiritual enlightenment comes, when the day dawns and the Day Star rises in the heart.

The person who is “*holding fast the faithful Word*” bases his reasoning upon it. He defaults to that Word for the final statement of the case. He repudiates anything that contradicts that Word, and views it as the premier characteristic of God Himself. This is done in strict accord with the express statement, “*You have magnified Your word above all Your name*” NKJV (Psa 138:2). Whatever the Word of God says on something is “*the conclusion of the whole matter*” (Eccl 12:13), and is so viewed by the individual who is holding it fast.

Holding fast the faithful Word involves the refusal to be “*turned aside unto vain jangling*” (1 Tim 1:6). Such a person is not “*tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men*” (Eph 4:14). They are

not deterred by the religious novelties of the day, popular books, or fads and trends that are being embraced by the uninformed. The person who cares for and feeds the flock of God has a confident grasp of the truth, rejoices in it, and is made stable by it. It is not possible for any other type of person to “*take care of the church of God*” (1 Tim 3:5).

AS HE HAS BEEN TAUGHT. Other versions read, “*in accordance with the teaching,*” NASB “*as it has been taught,*” NIV “*according to the doctrine taught,*” DARBY “*according to doctrine,*” GENEVA and “*as he was taught it.*” AMPLIFIED

It is true that the elder, or bishop, is one who has himself been taught. However that is **not** the point of this statement. Rather, the emphasis is placed upon **what** he was taught, not the fact that he was taught. The word “*taught*” is translated from a noun, not a verb (**didach.n**). It might be expressed as “*the thing taught.*” The immediate reference is to “*the faithful word,*” which is what he had been taught. The expression presumes that he was taught correctly with “*the teaching,*” or “*the faithful word.*”

In an institutional setting, the leader must adhere to the party, or sectarian, line. Thus a true Baptist must hold to the teaching that produces Baptists, the Christian Church to the teaching that harmonizes with their thrust, etc. However, “*the faithful word*” does not produce sectarian or denominational believers. That is **not** what it is designed to do, and that is not what it does. The person who really does hold fast the faithful word has no interest in the opinions of men. The Word itself, being pure milk, satisfies the soul, as well as providing the exclusive means of spiritual growth (1 Pet 2:2). It is not possible to promote growth in Christ by means of the word or wisdom of men. Further, if that assessment is true, then it is not possible to “*feed the church of God*” with something that is not itself found in the Word – “*the faithful Word,*” which is an unchanging and complete word.

In the final analysis, the “*teaching*” of reference is “*the apostles’ doctrine.*” They are the ones entrusted with the revelation of the mystery (Eph 3:4-5), and believers are noted for continuing in their word (Acts 2:42). Paul said that any purported Gospel that was at variance with what he preached was really no gospel at all (Gal 1:8-9). Therefore, a man who is ignorant and unlearned in the apostles’ doctrine cannot possibly feed the flock of God.

1:9b “ . . . *that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*”

The instructions concerning elders, or bishops, are not an end of themselves. These are not intended to be a listing of mere qualifications. The “*office of a bishop*” is, in fact, a “*good work*,” or “*noble task*,” NIV (1 Tim 3:1). By definition, a “*work*” is “*that with which anyone is occupied,*” THAYER “*activity,*” FRIBERG and “*that which one undertakes to do, an enterprise, undertaking*” STRONG’S And precisely what is that “*work,*” “*activity,*” or “*undertaking?*” It is feeding the flock of God, over which the Holy Spirit has made one an overseer (Acts 20:28). It is watching for the souls of the saved as those that “*must give an account*” (Heb 13:17). It is eagerly taking the oversight of “*the flock of God,*” feeding it in recognition of the fact that it is “*God’s heritage*” (1 Pet 5:2-3).

THAT HE MAY BE ABLE. Other versions read, “*so that he can.*” NIV Now, having been described as one who is holding firmly to the faithful word in strict accord with the apostles’ doctrine, what is the elder expected to do. What kind of ability is required of him? Whatever the activity is, He must be able to do it! There is aptitude associated with what he is required to do. He cannot “*feed the flock of God*” and care for “*God’s heritage*” by simply reading the Bible to them. He must be able to do something with “*the faithful word.*” What is here declared will give us an idea of the kind of environment in which this work is carried out.

BY SOUND DOCTRINE. The means through which the elder carries out his work is not authority! His

responsibility is not to cast the determining vote, for the office he holds is not an authoritarian one. In Christ Jesus “oversight” does not carry with it dictatorial rights. The means through which he rules, or takes the oversight, is “sound doctrine.” Other versions read, “right teaching,” BBE “sound teaching,” CSB “wholesome doctrine,” GENEVA “accurate teaching,” GWN “healthy teaching,” NET and “wholesome learning.” TNT

“Sound” doctrine is wholesome, without flaw, and with no fleshly admixture. It is doctrine that can hold up under Divine scrutiny, and is in strict accord with both the text and meaning of Scripture. It is teaching that is not defective or contaminated. There is no corruption in it, no guesswork, and no private interpretation.

“Doctrine” is teaching. It is the message that is being delivered and the point that is being made. “Doctrine” refers to emphasis, and the direction in which the teaching points. It is what drives the conclusion and causes what is said to hold together. “Doctrine” not only includes **what** is said, but **why** it is said. There is an ultimate objective that drives what is being said. “Sound doctrine” is expressed in God-approved words, and is within the context of His eternal purpose.

TO EXHORT. The ability to employ “sound doctrine” applies to exhortation. Exhorting is appealing to the people, beseeching them to act upon what they have heard. It has to do with encouraging them, or providing them with sound reasons why the stated action is required. For example, it is not enough to exhort young people to avoid fornication so they will not contract a deadly disease. It is totally out of order to admonish people to be faithful in their marriage and varied responsibilities in order to be happy and satisfied. True exhortation – and the flock of God requires exhortation – requires a firm grasp of the Word of God, and the ability to use it effectively. Exhortation assumes the interest of the person being exhorted, and, most of the time, that they are in Christ. It is an ordained means of awakening lethargic spirits, and moving people to act upon the truth.

AND TO CONVINCING THE GAINSAYERS. “Convince the gainsayer.” Other versions read, “convict those who contradict,” NKJV “refute those who contradict,” NASB “refute those who oppose it,” NIV “overcome the arguments of the doubters,” BBE and “refute and convict those who contradict and oppose it [showing the wayward their error].” AMPLIFIED Convincing the gainsayer involves the presentation of powerful arguments that cannot be successfully contradicted. This is casting down imaginations and high thoughts (2 Cor 10:4-5).

The “gainsayer” is one who speaks against the “sound doctrine,” contradicting and opposing it. It is one who declines to obey the doctrine, and refuses to submit himself to it. When Stephen was preaching in the synagogue, he encountered those who disputed with him – they were “gainsayers” (Acts 6:9). Paul encountered some in Antioch who were described as “contradicting and blaspheming” – they were “gainsayers” (Acts 13:45).

These texts confirm that the opposition of reference was public. It involved the presentation of erroneous teaching that would corrupt the minds of the flock, and lead them to erroneous conclusions. The elder must be able to confront such public contradictions with irrefutable “sound doctrine.” As used here, the word “convince” does not mean the opponent was persuaded that he was wrong. Even in the English language, the word “convince” has the following primary meaning: “To overcome by argument.” WEBSTER Here it means the opponent is not able to resist the wisdom delivered, or punch holes, so to speak, in the doctrine. The purpose of the overthrow of the contradiction is the protection and instruction of “the flock of God.”

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 1:10 *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. 12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*” (Titus 1:10-12)

INTRODUCTION

Paul has left Titus in Crete to “*straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town*” NIV (1:5). This was in order to the spiritual maturity and stability of the saints, a most critical matter on the revealed Divine agenda. Throughout his prodigious ministry, even until the time he was offered to God in martyrdom (2 Tim 4:6), Paul maintained a prevailing interest in the churches. All of his epistles were written to them, as well as a considerable portion of his time. For example, for “*a whole year*” he remained with Barnabas, assembling with the church in Antioch (Acts 11:26). He remained with the church in Corinth for “*a year and six months*” (Acts 18:11). He was with the church in Ephesus for “*three years*” (Acts 20:31). He and Barnabas remained with the church in Antioch for “*a long time,*” possibly as long as 5-8 years (Acts 14:28). That accounts for about 12-15 years of His ministry. Additionally, Paul and Barnabas spent some time “*confirming the souls of the disciples*” in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:22). Paul and Silas spent considerable time “*confirming the churches*” in Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41). After adding Timothy to his entourage, Paul spent some time establishing the churches “*in the faith*” (Acts 16:5). Taking initial disciples in Ephesus to the “*school of Tyrannus,*” he remained for two years “*reasoning daily*” NKJV in that school (Acts 18:10). During two different imprisonments (2 years in Judea, Acts 24:26 and an estimated 3 years in Rome, 2 years of which was spent in his own hired house, Acts 28:30), Paul wrote extensively to the churches (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and possibly Second Timothy). Add to this the “*daily*” concern Paul had for the “*churches*” (2 Cor 11:26), and the thrust of Paul’s ministry is clear. This prevailing interest in the churches is confirmed in Paul’s letter to Titus. It deals solely with the building up of the saints, and the establishment of an order that guaranteed their protection and edification.

Titus 1:10 “ *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.*”

Paul has reminded Titus that those who care for and feed the flock of God must be able to “*exhort and convince the gainsayer*” – overturning their arguments against the truth, and showing the error of their teaching.

This can only be done by those who are “*holding fast the faithful word as they have been taught*” by apostolic doctrine(1:9). Among the redeemed, there must be zero-tolerance for doctrinal error – for such error inevitably leads one astray. God does not sanctify and build up His people through error and erroneous views, no matter how cherished they may appear. This may seem rather stern – and, indeed, it is, for we are dealing with the souls of men and their apprehension of the truth that sanctified (John 17:17,19).

Now Paul launches into a description of these “*gainsayers*” – men who resist and speak against “*sound doctrine.*” He will speak of them from a spiritual perspective, identifying them according to the effects they produce, rather than their appearance. The fact that they were not readily detected by some indicates that they were not outwardly offensive—at least not to the novice and the immature. This is why Paul speaks so candidly about them, describing how they are to be seen. Jesus did this same thing when he referred to false prophets as “*ravening wolves*” (Matt 7:15), and the scribes and Pharisees as “*serpents*” and a “*generation of vipers*” (Matt 23:33). He also referred to Herod as a “*fox*” (Lk 13:32). Paul referred to false teachers as having “*turned aside to vain jangling,*” and not understanding what they affirmed (1 Tim 1:7). Jude described false teachers as “*clouds without water,*” trees with withering fruit, “*raging waves of the sea,*” “*wandering stars,*” “*murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts,*” and those who spoke “*great swelling words*” (Jude 1:12-13,16). These are not personal vilifications, but spiritual assessments that reflect the adverse impact of the teaching of these men.

UNRULY. Other versions read “*insubordinate,*” NKJV “*rebellious,*” NASB “*not ruled by law,*” BBE “*disorderly,*” DARBY “*unsubmissive,*” MRD and “*disorderly and unruly.*” AMPLIFIED The word “*unruly*” comes from a word meaning “cannot be subjected or controlled.” THAYER In English the word means “not readily ruled or managed.” WEBSTER English synonyms are ungovernable, recalcitrant, and headstrong. This is not speaking of mere subordination to religious authority, or the professed leaders of the church. These men rather refuse to subject themselves to the laws and commandments of God, the directives of Christ, and apostolic doctrine. Sound teaching says not to seek one’s own interest – but they do. They are to feed the flock of God – but they do not. They are to speak in words that the Holy Spirit teaches – but they do not. They are crucify the flesh – but they refuse to do so. They are not to love the world – but they do. They refuse to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ. In a display of obstinance, they decline to seek the things that are above, choosing rather to settle down in this world. This is why their teaching is corrupt – it is because they are anchored to a corrupt realm, and refuse to leave it.

VAIN TALKERS. Other versions read “*idle talkers,*” NKJV “*empty talkers,*” NASB “*mere talkers,*” NIV “*vain speakers,*” DARBY “*speak nonsense,*” GWN and “*idle (vain, empty) and misleading talkers.*” AMPLIFIED Their words are not invested with power (1 Cor 4:20). They do not build up and fortify the people of God (2 Cor 13:10). They do not clarify the mysteries of the Kingdom (Eph 3:9). Their emphasis is not that of God. Their doctrine is not that of the apostles. They are of the world, and therefore they speak of the world, and the world hears them (1 John 4:5). They appeal to the lusts and covetousness of men, not to faith (2 Pet 2:3). In light of the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment, and eternity, their words have neither relevance nor weight.

DECEIVERS. Other versions read, “*seducers,*” DOUAY “*deceivers of minds,*” GENEVA “*mislead the minds,*” MRD and “*self-deceivers and deceivers of others.*” AMPLIFIED That is, they lead people to think incorrectly, and to arrive at the wrong conclusions. Perhaps it is that sin is not as serious as God says, or that God is tolerant of deviate behavior, or that a person cannot possibly depart from the faith (1 Tim 4:1), or fall from grace (Gal 5:4). Perhaps those who hear them conclude that God wants men to have the best of this world, even if it involves forfeiting their soul. Maybe it is that a believer does not really have to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Pet 3:18), or come out from among those who are unclean (2 Cor 6:17). If those who listen to these men and embrace what they say arrive at such conclusions, it is because they have

been deceived by these deceivers. Their emphasis was nothing more than a deception.

ESPECIALLY THEY OF THE CIRCUMCISION. The worst of all deceivers are religious people! The circumcision refers to the Jews – particularly Jewish teachers. They sought to enforce circumcision, because they could not believe it was no longer required (Acts 15:1). They sought to bind the distinctions of foods upon people (Rom 14:17; 1 Tim 4:13; Heb 13:9), and the observance of Jewish days (Col 2:16). Such teachers subverted the Galatians (Gal 3:1-2), intruded into Colossae (Col 2:16-20), and confused those to whom the epistle of Hebrews was written. This class of people has been enlarged to include Christian sectarians.

“ 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.”

It is essential that we remember Paul is writing concerning the work of elders – those who feed and care for the flock of God (1 Tim 3:5; 1 Pet 5:2). They are to see to it that the people are not led astray by false prophets – whether they be by means of personal exposure, literature, or communication media. In our time, the problem of vain talkers and deceivers has been exacerbated by literature and electronic media. Leaders in the body of Christ must not bury their heads in the sand of complacency, allowing opportunists to lead those astray who are under their care. This kind of attention is part of *“taking the oversight”* (1 Pet 5:2).

WHOSE MOUTHS MUST BE STOPPED . Other versions read, *“who must be silenced,”* NASB *“must be reprov’d,”* DOUAY and *“it is imperative to silence them.”* NAB If this is something that **“must”** be done, then it is important to consider **how** it is to be done. This is not to be done by fleshly means – physical force or outbursts of carnal anger. Men are not to resort to civil means, or the courts of the land, to stop the mouths of these men. That is a methodology the Jews used against both Christ and Paul, pursuing civil means to stop their influence.

Paul has already affirmed the means to be employed in this necessity: *“by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”* (Titus 1:9). They bring a cessation to the proclamation of erroneous dogma like Jesus did, so answering them that they have nothing more to say (Lk 20:40); or as Stephen did then his opponents were not able to resist the wisdom with which he spoke (Acts 6:10). This is what is involved in pulling down strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:4-5).

Spiritual leaders must not back away from this kind of work, for it is necessary to the proper care of the flock. The flock must not only be fed, but cared for – and caring for them involves not allowing poison to be fed to them, and forbidding the entrance and dignifying of teachers who *“have no understanding either of the words and terms they use or of the subjects about which they make [such] dogmatic assertions”* AMPLIFIED (1 Tim 1:7).

Do not doubt for a moment that the mouths of *“vain talkers and deceivers”* must be stopped! Do not imagine that everyone is smart enough to figure out the falsity of their dogma, and the erroneous nature of their emphasis. Those who are not equal to this challenge cannot be elders, or caretakers of the flock, or house, of God.

SUBVERT WHOLE HOUSES. Underscoring the impact of these unlearned and opportunistic teachers, Paul reminds Titus that they *“subvert whole houses”* with their teaching. Other versions read, *“upsetting whole families,”* NASB *“ruining whole households,”* NIV and *“mentally distressing and subverting whole families.”* AMPLIFIED The word *“houses”* refers to where the people congregate. While it can refer to a family dwelling,

it is not confined to that. There were people who had a “*church*” in their house (Rom 16:5; Col 4:15). “*House*” is also used for the gathering of believers: “*the house of God*” (1 Tim 3:15). The point here is that whole bodies of people have been infected by the teaching of such men, and thus have defected from Christ.

The mouths of those who are subverting the people “*must be stopped.*” Such mouths were not “*stopped*” in Corinth and, as a result, some embraced “*another Jesus,*” “*another gospel,*” and “*another Spirit*” (2 Cor 11:4). They were not stopped in Galatia, and a considerable number of people were “*bewitched,*” ceased to obey the truth, and fell from grace (Gal 3:1; 5:4). They were not “*stopped*” among many Hebrew believers, bringing them to a condition where, “*for the time,*” they ought to have been teachers, yet remained spiritual toddlers who needed to again be taught the “*first principles*” (Heb 5:12).

The reason for this circumstance is that the words of such men “*eat as a canker,*” “*spread like cancer,*” NKJV or “*spread like gangrene*” NASB (2 Tim 2:17). That is, they continue to work destructively in the individual long after they have been heard. I have heard destructive teaching during my lifetime that poisoned my thinking infinitely more than I imagined. Such patterns of erroneous thinking can be expelled only by extraordinary effort. They are related to those demons that can only be discharged by prayer and fasting (Matt 17:21).

TEACHING FOR FILTHY LUCRE’S SAKE. The term “*filthy lucre*” means unlawful gain. Thus, other versions read, “*dishonest gain,*” NKJV “*sordid gain,*” NASB “*base gain,*” RSV and “*for the purpose of getting base advantage and disreputable gain.*” AMPLIFIED This is not limited to financial matters, but includes gaining prominence, positions of leadership, and the likes. There are men, in our da – far more than we dare to imagine – that have obtained wealth and prominence by means of the perpetration of erroneous dogma. Some have gained it by exploiting the weak people in the church, marketing their self-conceived programs and plans. Others have built financial empires with their religion, while failing to stem the tide of iniquity or producing mature believers. These, as Jude would say, are “*spots*” in the religious activities of men (Jude 1:12).

1:12 “*One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*”

Paul does not limit himself to the corrupt Jewish teachers, as ordinarily perceived. He includes those from an especially evil environment – one that was readily recognized as such, even by those who had no identity with God or Jesus Christ. Such an environment is the epitome of wickedness, with no hiding veil or obscuring culture.

ONE OF THEMSELVES. “*One of themselves*” means one who was himself a Cretian. The statement made was made by Epimenides, purported to be one of the seven wise men from Greece, and born in Crete in B.C. 659. Paul refers to him as a “*prophet,*” not because he was a holy prophet of God, but because he spoke a truth about the Cretians nearly 700 years before Paul wrote this letter to Titus – precisely describing the nature of the Cretian people. He was, in this case, an unwitting prophet like Caiaphas (John 11:49-51). The Cretians bore the traits that he mentioned when he wrote, and they retained them for over seven centuries.

ALWAYS LIARS. Other versions read, “*are ever false,*” BBE “*are always mendacious,*” MRD “*never anything but liars,*” NJB and “*are all liars.*” NLT There are environments that are noted for particular sins. The Cretians were noted for lying. The Corinthians were noted for a licentious life. Gambling is identified with Las Vegas, and athletic enthusiasm with Chicago. There is such a thing as a “*lying spirit*” (1 Kgs 22:22), and wicked powers that appear to be over regions – like “*principalities*” (Eph 6:12), who were over Persia and Greece (Dan 10:20).

It appears that some spiritual power that promoted lying was over the region of Crete. Like the devil

himself, he influenced men to withdraw from the truth and give themselves to speaking lies, misrepresentation, exaggerations, and the likes. Although the flesh has this propensity to lie, even from a very young age, it can be accented and propelled into prominence by the powers of darkness. When Jesus was crucified, so far as men were concerned, it was through a lying accusation (Matt 26:61; Lk 23:2; John 19:7).

We might also look at this as declaring Crete to be a citadel of the devil himself – a place in which he was dominate in an unusual way. It is said of Satan, he “*abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*” (John 8:44).

Now, Paul warns Titus to take care in the appointment of elders. He is in an area noted for its misrepresentation. He cannot go by what people say, but how they live their lives, and whether or not they have a grasp upon the truth.

EVIL BEASTS. Other versions read, “*evil brutes,*” NIV “*vicious brutes,*” NRSV and “*hurtful beasts.*” AMPLIFIED Here is a picture of people whose passions carried them about like a wild and uncontrollable horse. They had no restraint, and did what they pleased, even when it was hurtful to others. Jesus referred to teachers who were “*ravenous wolves*” NKJV (Matt 7:15). In revealing the destiny of worldly kingdoms, the Lord depicted kingdoms as devouring beasts: a ravenous bear (Dan 7:5), a swift and ruthless leopard (Dan 7:6), and an exceeding strong and terrible beast (Dan 7:7). In all of this, there is a reference to destructiveness, tearing down, and senseless devastation. This can take place in a violent society (like that of the flood, Gen 6:11-13), ruthless nations (like the Amalekites, Ex 17:8; Deut 25:17), or spiritual destruction (as when the foundations are destroyed, Psa 11:3). Some have said that “*evil beasts*” implies “brutality, stupidity, unreasonableness, and mischief.” PULPIT COMMENTARY

SLOW BELLIES. Other versions read, “*lazy gluttons,*” NKJV “*hating work,*” BBE “*idle gluttons.*” ERV These are people who love to eat, but hate to work. These are people “*whose god is their belly . . . who mind earthly things*” (Phil 3:19). This was a sin like that which was committed by Eli’s sons. They perverted the office of the priesthood, which allowed for the priest to have a portion of a man’s sacrifice. Not content with this, they forcibly took the meat while it was yet raw, refusing to have it offered to God (1 Sam 2:13-16). They were “*slow bellies,*” feeding their own appetites while offering nothing of substance to the Lord. The scribes and Pharisees fell into this category because they made it a practice to “*devour widows houses,*” taking from them for their own provision, while apparently abstaining from work (Matt 23:14). Ponder the religious leaders of our time who have taken the resources of the people to feed their own carnal appetites and desires. They are “*slow bellies.*”

WHEN RELIGIOUS MEN ADOPT THE CULTURE OF THE TIMES. Paul was not suggesting that Titus would be tempted to appoint elders from the heathenistic society of Crete. His reason for mentioning this is that some professing Christians might have adopted the heathen culture about them, while maintaining a “*form of godliness*” (2 Tim 3:1-5). This practice continues to our day, and is especially prevalent in our society. The professed church is becoming more and more like the world in both appearance and expression, in perspective and in reasoning. It’s leaders must not be garnered from this group.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 1:13 *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. 15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*” (Titus 1:13-16)

INTRODUCTION

In a time when scholastics have been unduly exalted, and spiritual shallowness is in vogue, an ungodly tolerance for doctrinal error is being fostered. Sectarianism has provided a way of people conveniently maintaining and teaching erroneous views of the things of God. Men are even taught to respect variant and contradicting views of the Word of God in the name of brotherly love. In all of this there are several underlying suppositions. First, that God is tolerant of corrupted views of something He has revealed. Second, that doctrine has no bearing on one's participation in the salvation of God. Third, that a person can remain in God's favor while adopting views of salvation that allow him to continue living in contradiction of that salvation. Fourth, that purity has nothing to do with teaching. Fifth, that the profession of knowing God equates to really knowing Him. Although such things may not be expressly taught, when erroneous teachings are embraced and perpetrated, they foster these conclusions, even if they are not expressed. If God is, in fact, “*a God of truth*” (Deut 32:4), and “*the Lord God of truth*” (Psa 31:5), then any misrepresentation of Him or His will contradicts His Person, as well as His will. On this matter it ought to be noted that, in strict accord with the statement of Jesus, a tolerance of error is fostered by an ignorance of Scripture and the power of God (Mk 12:24). This text will state the danger of error and the nature of those who perpetrate it with great pungency. In addressing Titus, who is to set in order the things that are wanting in Crete, Paul will leave no doubt concerning his posture toward those who continue to obstinately teach error to the brethren.

Titus 1:13 “ *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*”

THIS WITNESS IS TRUE . The witness to which Paul refers is, “*The Cretians are always liars, evil*

beasts, slow bellies" (1:12). There are people who have group characteristics. The Anakims were noted for their height (Deut 2:10-11). There was a whole generation of Israelites who "*erred in their heart*" (Psa 95:10). Israel was once referred to as "*a nation laden with iniquity*" (Isa 1:4). The Chaldeans were described as "*a bitter and hasty nation*" (Hag1:6). Solomon spoke of a generation that "*cursed their father, and doth not bless their mother*" (Prov 30:11). It is not that no one can be delivered from such environs. Rather, it is that extra effort must be given to remain undefiled by these bodies of people. This is the reason for the next admonition.

REBUKE THEM SHARPLY. Other versions read, "*severely,*" NASB "*say sharp words,*" BBE "*be severe in correcting,*" NJB "*speak to the Christians there as sternly as necessary,*" LIVING "*refute them sharply,*" ISV and "*deal sternly, even severely with them.*" AMPLIFIED The word "*sharply*" means abruptly, precipitously (straight to the point), severely, and curtly (to the point). THAYER Paul told Timothy to "*rebuke before all*" (1 Tim 5:20). Casual reprimands in an aggressively sinful society are out of order! When cancerous inroads are made into thinking, it cannot be dealt with as though it was harmless.

Being in the household of God involves being able to receive sharp and pointed words when necessary. To be sure, they are not to be uttered hastily and with no regard for the welfare of the individual. However, neither are rebukes and warnings to be taken as an insult. The next clause informs us concerning the reason for such an approach.

THAT THEY MAY BE SOUND IN THE FAITH. The "*they*" of reference is the flock in assembly. The picture is of the false teachers speaking out in the assembly, and Titus abruptly and severely exposing their error. It is done in order that the people of God may be "*sound in the faith, and free from error.*" AMPLIFIED In other words, corrupt teaching directly impacts upon one's faith. Jesus once said of the generation to whom He spoke, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matt 15:9). When, for example, Jesus gave a scathing rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees, it was in the presence of a "*multitude*" (Matt 23:1, 12-36). This circumstance confirms the deteriorating effect that false teaching has upon those who hear it. That kind of teaching is like a consuming cancer (2 Tim 2:17).

NOT GIVING HEED TO JEWISH FABLES. Other versions read "*myths,*" NASB "*fictions,*" BBE "*folk tales,*" LIVING and "*legends.*" IE Paul also warned Timothy of listening to "*fables*" (1 Tim 1:4). These were fictitious stories that shaped the thinking of men, yet were not revealed in Scripture. They may have been altogether lies, or exaggerated accounts of historical occurrences. There are religious movements that are based upon what reported took place independently of Scripture: the Cain Ridge Revival (1799-1803), The Azusa Street Revival (1906-1915), The Vineyard Movement (1982-1997), The Reformation Movement (1517), the Restoration Movement (early 1800's). These were very real events, yet are often by exaggerated statements, misrepresentations, and human interpretations. The grounding of one's faith, and the basis of one's doctrine upon such movements is wrong. So far as doctrinal presentation is concerned, all of them are mingled with fables. As is the case with all teaching, what is true is to be embraced.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. These are requirements that men have invented. They may involve interpretations, various forms of logic, and what is conceived to precedents and inference. However, they are commandments that men have developed, and they are not to be heeded. Such commandments void worship (Matt 15:9). They represent an addition to God's Word, which is strictly forbidden (Deut 12:32; Isa 29:13; Rev 22:18). These commandments may have to do with the observe of days, following humanly-conceived plans and procedures, and even the obtaining of salvation.

THAT TURN FROM THE TRUTH. This is a description of the men who create and/or teach fables and the commandments of men. Such are men who "*turn from the truth,*" or "*reject the truth.*" NIV They have "*turned away their ears from the truth*" in order to embrace fables and man-made commandments (2 Tim 4:4).

They have refused Him who speaks from heaven in order that they may hear those who speak from earth (Heb 12:25). If they ever did embrace the truth, they have turned from it to return to the broken cistern of human wisdom. The Amplified Bible says they “*turn their backs on the truth.*” That is, before a person can take hold of error, they must let go of the truth. It is not possible to hold the truth with one hand and error with the other. A person cannot straddle a subject by hanging one foot on the side of error and the other on the side of truth. When a preacher or teacher declares something that is not true – even if it is unintentional – some aspect of the truth is forfeited. This is why Apollo had to be “*more perfectly*” in “*the way of God*” (Acts 18:26). Something was forfeited by continuing preach John’s baptism after Jesus had been exalted. If that was true of Apollo, whose heart was right, how much more is it true of those who promote the fables, traditions, and commandments of men. Oh, how our day needs the instruction of these verses!

“ 1:15 *Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*”

Paul now elaborates on the criticality of both those who teach error, and those who embrace it. He will address the subject of purity, which is the essence of the experience of salvation.

UNTO THE PURE. In this word, Paul is dealing with procedural religion, which is driven by man-made ordinances and rules – particularly regarding food and drink (1 Tim 4:3; Mk 7:15; 1 Cor 8:8). He will show that defilement cannot proceed from outside the body to within the heart. A person who is clean within cannot be defiled by external influences. Such influences must be imbibed, or taken within, before they can have a defiling effect. This is why Jesus said, “*These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man*” (Matt 15:20). Contradicting the ceremonial law the traditions of men, Paul said: “*For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving*” (1 Tim 4:4). Even foods forbidden by the Law of Moses are “*sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*” (1 Tim 4:5).

In view of this, one might reason that continued exposure to false teachers cannot defile the person. However, such a view contradicts the very passage with which we are dealing. That would make sharp rebukes pointless, and soundness in the faith needless. The mitigating factor in false teaching is that it eats like a cancer, working its way into the inward parts (2 Tim 2:17). This text is addressing erroneous teaching concerning foods, particularly perpetrated by some Jewish teachers. This does not have to do with morality, for having purity within does not make fornication pure. “*All things*” does not refer to what a person does, but to impersonal things that are outside of the person. Particularly, in Christ there are no unclean foods, and those who teach to the contrary are fundamentally wrong and worthy of sharp rebuke.

Faith has a sanctifying effect upon the soul. Therefore the Word speaks of “*them that are sanctified by faith*” in Christ (Acts 26:18). That circumstance frees us from bondage to the laws and commandments of men, but not from a refusal to submit to false teachers.

THEM THAT ARE DEFILED. This is a most remarkable statement: “*but to the defiled and corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure.*” AMPLIFIED Notice that corruption is linked to unbelief! This is because it is faith that purifies the heart (Acts 15:9). Corruption or defilement within, therefore, is the result of a lack of faith. If faith can ever be overthrown (2 Tim 2:18),. When a person is “*defiled and unbelieving,*” everything they say and do is impacted by their condition. Properly viewed, nothing can be lawfully ingested, for it is contaminated by their condition. There is not outward substance or deed that can alter their condition. There is no procedure or set of rules that can change their character or alter their disposition before God. Even “*the plowing of the wicked is sin*” (Prov 21:4). Even their religious activity becomes iniquity, as declared in Isaiah 1:13: “*Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting*” (Isa 1:13). Again it is written, “*The sacrifice of the*

wicked is abomination“ (Prov 15:8; 21:27). Paul also wrote, “*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith : for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (Rom 14:23). When a person’s religion is framed by human tradition, it is made void. There Jesus said, “*Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*” (Mark 7:7).

Keep in mind, Paul is not speaking of those in the world, but of those within the church. He is admonishing Titus to take action to ensure that believers are “*sound in the faith.*” Therefore, as used here, the phrase “*defiled and unbelieving*” applies to professing believers – those who have been adversely impacted by erroneous teaching from those “*whose mouths must be stopped.*”

THE MIND AND THE CONSCIENCE. Other versions read, “*they become unclean in mind and in thought,*” BBE “*understanding . . . conscience,*” MRD “*defiled and polluted,*” AMPLIFIED “*dirty mind and rebellious heart,*” LIVING and “*consciences and the way they think.*” IE Their corrupted minds and consciences are the fountain from which all they say and do flows. Their “*mind*” speaks of the way they think, how they reason, and the process by which they reach conclusions. Their “*conscience*” is where their final conclusions are stored, which, in their case, sear the conscience making it worthless because of its loss of sensitivity (1 Tim 4:2). The conscience is where moral right and wrong are defined.

There are teachings that corrupt the mind, leading men to think and reason incorrectly, assuming what it is not true, and avoiding what is true. When the conscience is defiled, it leads the person to imagine that his thinking is right, and therefore it does not condemn him when he speaks or acts in contradiction of God. For example, a person may think imagining that it is not possible “*depart from the faith*” (1 Tim 4:1), or be dominated by “*an evil heart of unbelief*” (Heb 3:12). This conclusions of this manner of thinking is then transferred, as it were, to the conscience that grants inner approval to violate the will of the Lord. All of that is the effect of receiving unsound doctrine. It is why the mouths of such must be “*stopped,*” and those who insist on perpetrating such dogma much be publically and sternly rebuked.

1:16 “*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*”

Paul continues to comment on those whose mouths “*must be stopped,*” who are teaching things they ought not in order to obtain unlawful gain. He is uncovering their true character, for what a person teaches really makes known what they are. If they merely do not know, yet have a pure heart and a strong desire to know, they have been misled and will be able to be easily corrected, as was Apollo (Acts 18:25-27). However, this is not the type of teachers being addressed in this text. These are men who are seeking gain, not those who have a heart for the truth – and those who attitudes cannot be homogenized.

THEY PROFESS THAT THEY KNOW GOD. The Amplified reads, “*to recognize, perceive, and be acquainted with Him.*” These teachers, whose mouths “*must be stopped,*” maintain that they are acquainted with God. They may even say God has spoken to them, or revealed some new thing to them. Before giving his advice to Balak, Balaam said about himself, “*The utterance of him who hears the words of God, And has the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty*” NKJV (Num 24:16). Isaiah referred to those “*which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness*” (Isa 48:1). Jeremiah spoke of a prophet named Shemaiah who “*prophesied*” to the people and caused them to “*trust in a lie.*” God told Jeremiah He would punish that false prophet “*because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord*” (Jer 29:31-32).

Paul is speaking of those who come in the name of the Lord, yet He did not send them. They profess they have a message from God, but He has not given them one. He will not tell us how we can recognize such prophets – and they must be recognized if their mouths are to be stopped.

IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM. Other versions read, “*by their deeds,*” NASB “*by their actions,*” NIV and “*the way they live.*” NLT To “*deny Him*” means to turn their backs on Him, BBE and “*disown and renounce Him.*” AMPLIFIED In other words, what they do negates their profession, proving they do not know God at all. They are like the fig tree laden with leaves, but having no fruit (Mk 11:13). They have a “*form of godliness,*” but because of their works it is evident that they are among those who “*deny,*” or reject, “*the power thereof*” (2 Tim 3:5).

There is a direct correlation between the knowledge of God and the works of those professing it. If the works do not match the profession, the profession is false, for it is not possible to know the Lord, yet live in stark contradiction of Him. This is why those religious merchants who teach people to say they know and love the Lord, yet are continually overcome by sin are so wicked. Lest we be indifferent about this, the Spirit moves Paul to elaborate on the matter.

THEY ARE ABOMINABLE AND DISOBEDIENT. Other versions read “*detestable and disobedient,*” NASB “*rotten and disobedient,*” LIVING and “*detestable and loathsome.*” AMPLIFIED The word “*abominable*” means “*detestable,*” THAYER “*abhorrent,*” FRIBERG “*vile,*” UBS and “*disgusting.*” LIDDELL-SCOTT And who is it that regards these teachers in such a manner? First and foremost, it is the Lord Himself. There are people who will have their part in the lake of fire that are referred to as “*the abominable*” (Rev 21:8). The book of Job refers to men who drink iniquity like water as being “*abominable and filthy*” (Job 15:16). Solomon referred to a “*false witness*” and “*he that soweth seeds of discord among brethren*” as “*an abomination*” (Prov 6:16-18). It is possible for the Lord to “*abhor*” people who have been called by His name (Deut 32:19; Psa 106:40; Zech 11:8). Our text states clearly, “*THEY . . . being abominable!*” – loathsome and detestable to God Almighty.

Here their abomination is joined to disobedience. They are fundamentally wayward, recalcitrant, and insistent upon going their own way – even though they profess that they know God. Disobedience is what characterizes people who are NOT in Christ (Tit 3:5). It is what constrains men to disallow, or reject, the Stone that has been made “*the Head of the corner*” (1 Pet 2:7). This is the word that characterized those who were destroyed in the flood (1 Pet 3:20).

REPROBATE TO EVERY GOOD WORK. Here the apostle affirms that those in question are incapable of doing good works – they are simply not adapted for them. The word “*reprobate*” means “*failing to stand the test, unqualified, worthless, disqualified, useless.*” THAYER This is stated doctrinally in Jeremiah 6:30: “*Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them .*” To be “*reprobate to every good work*” means to be rejected as a suitable person to do a good work. Other versions read, “*disqualified for every good work,*” NKJV “*worthless for any good deed,*” NASB “*unfit for doing anything good.*” NIV and “*unfit and worthless for good work (deed or enterprise) of any kind.*” AMPLIFIED God will not allow this kind of people to do, what He refers to as, “*good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Eph 2:10). The corrupt thinking, conscience, and manners of those in question have disqualified them for Divine employment. Their claim to know God is false through and through, and what they confirm that to be true. That is why their mouths must be stopped. Is why they are a liability to any people who hears them. Men may postulate that God loves such men, but God says they are an abomination and have been rejected.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” (Titus 2:1-3)

INTRODUCTION

Having left Titus in Crete to finish the things that had not yet been completed, Paul is instructing him in how to conduct himself while there, and how to speak. This particular part of his instruction is in view of the Cretian culture, which was decadent and indulgent: i.e. *“Cretans are always liars, hurtful beasts, idle and lazy gluttons. And this account of them is [really] true”* AMPLIFIED (1:12-13). While the Gospel itself is not to be shaped by the culture, the manner in which the preacher and teacher speaks takes the culture into account – particularly when that culture is one like that existing in Crete. There are societies that are barbaric, where crime is rife and pleasure and indulgence are the quest of the people. Other cultures, though dead toward God and sinful, have more sophisticated flesh, with a penchant for lawfulness, industry, and general social virtues. Both of these are spiritual quagmires, yet appeal to differing parts of the fallen nature. One appeals to raw emotion and the senses, while the other appeals to the thoughtful and productive part of that nature. It is out of order to speak to the barbarian as though he was always thoughtful, reasoning things out. Equally true, it is wrong to speak to the thoughtful person as though he was driven by particularly degenerate desires. In this text, Paul addresses this matter. He does not advocate shaping the Gospel itself for the people. The message must remain pure and undiluted, for it is adapted for the general condition of humanity. Paul is now dealing with handling the implications of the Gospel – how it is to be lived out. This is the part that, in the beginning, is difficult for those who have been liars, harmful in their manners, refusing to work, and enslaved to lower forms of fleshly indulgence. Paul does not assume that such people, once made new, will automatically see how newness of life is to be lived out. They will require some initial direction which will enable them to grow up into Christ in all things. We must not be naive in these matters, supposing that once a person is baptized into Christ they automatically think correctly. The *“new man,”* at once received in regeneration, is complete in one sense, yet not fully grown in another. It is, after all, the *“new man”* that really grows, gaining the practical dominance over the flesh.

Titus 2:1 “ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”

It is possible for the preacher or teacher to be so loose in their speaking that they actually awaken sinful propensities to which the people were once enslaved. You cannot speak to the Corinthians like you would to the

Philippians, or the Galatians as you would the Ephesians. It would be wrong to address the church in Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13) in the same manner as the church at Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22). In all of these cases, the Gospel itself was undiluted and pure. It was how it was being lived out that was either commended or condemned. For example, the Corinthians had to be especially taught about fornication (1 Cor 6:13-20). Some in Ephesus had to be admonished not to steal (Eph 4:27). Some in Thesslonica had to be told to work, otherwise they could not eat (1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:10-12).

SPEAK THOU. Other versions read “*teach,*” NIV “*let your words,*” BBE “*explain,*” CJB “*tell,*” GWN “*you must say,*” NAB “*communicate,*” NET and “*promote.*” NLT Here, speaking does not have to do with casual conversation, but with formal teaching, or elaborating on the word of the Gospel, and expounding both the nature and the implications of the New Covenant. The picture here is not that of assessing what the people want to hear, or what is more apt to please them. It is rather speaking in view of the real circumstance, which was to be discerned by Titus. This is an especially appropriate word for our time, when speaking is taking second place to other activities. The primary gifts that Jesus has given the church all have to do with speaking: “*And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers*” (Eph 4:11). Every one of these have to do with communicating in words – insightful words. The church is never weaker than when it has no appetite for “*speaking the truth in love*” (Eph 4:15). While there are certainly ministries that have to do with activity, like relieving the fatherless and widows in their affliction (James 1:27), long-term and increasing benefits will come from speaking, not from doing. It is the WORD of God that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb 4:12). Those who grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will experience an increased interest in speaking. That is the nature of life in Christ. While that speaking is, indeed, proportionate to their role in the body of Christ, it is something in which all in Christ are involved (1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:15,25; 5:19).

THE THINGS. Other versions read “*what is,*” NIV “*your words,*” BBE “*the behavior,*” NJB “*that,*” TNT “*the right living,*” LIVING and “*in a manner.*” WEYMOUTH Technically, the words “*the things*” are not in the text. They are what we would call an elaboration of the term “*speak,*” or “*teach.*” In other words, this pertains to WHAT is being said in the elaboration of the Gospel itself. These had to do with godly conclusions, holy amplification, and insightful commentary. A good teacher knows how to “*handle aright*” the Word of truth (2 Tim 2:15). For example, Paul was speaking “*things*” when he told the Corinthians it was out of order for them to sue one another before worldly judges (1 Cor 6:1-8), or that under the distressful circumstances that existed at the time, it was best not to marry (1 Cor 7:26). These were not matters that were regulated by specific commandments from God. Rather, they, like many other practical matters, were governed by the spirit of the truth, the nature of newness of life, and the entailments of the New Covenant. Men may refer to this as the practical aspect of spiritual life – how it is to be lived out. James, speaking in view of the condition of the people to whom he wrote, said, “*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*” (James 1:27). This had to do with the expression of spiritual life, not merely keeping a Divine directive – and there is a vast difference between those two matters.

WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE. Other versions read, “*proper for,*” NKJV “*fitting for,*” NASB “*in accord with,*” NIV “*consistent with,*” NRSV “*benefits,*” RSV “*in agreement with,*” BBE “*goes along with,*” CSB “*which befit,*” ERV “*belong to,*” MRD “*reflects,*” NLT and “*fitting and becoming to.*” AMPLIFIED Here Paul refers to things that are said that are separate from, yet are to be in concert with, “*sound doctrine.*” Sound doctrine is proper, or correct teaching – primary, pivotal, or central teaching. Jesus spoke of a person knowing “*THE doctrine*” (John 7:17). Scripture refers to “*the doctrine of the Lord*” (Acts 13:12) and “*the doctrine of Christ*” (Heb 6:1; 2 John 1:9). Paul told Timothy to take heed “*to the doctrine*” (1 Tim 4:16). “*Sound doctrine*” is particularly the teaching concerning Christ Jesus and the salvation that is found in Him. It pertains to justification, being a partaker of the Divine nature, obtaining an eternal inheritance, and other such

things. All speaking, or teaching, is to strictly conform with the doctrine of Christ. It cannot be earth-centered, man-centered, or self-centered. If men elaborate on what will take place when Jesus comes, it must be in accord with “*sound doctrine.*” If they speak of how men can live God-honoring lives, it must be in harmony with “*sound doctrine.*” When they refer to God’s attitude toward humanity, and what He desires for them, it cannot be at variance with “*sound doctrine*” – it cannot contradict the nature of Christ, the character of faith and hope, or the revealed objectives of the New Covenant.

“ 2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.”

Again, Paul is speaking with the nature of the Cretians in mind. This certainly does not mean these words are not for every person in all of time that falls into this category. No “*aged man*” is exempt from these requirements. However, they were particularly critical for those in Crete. For example, every person is to abstain from the appearance of evil, but that word has particular importance to those in a society that flaunts wickedness before the people continually. Now Paul gives an example of speaking things that are becoming of, or in harmony with, “*sound doctrine.*” These are not the doctrine itself, but are “*things*” that are implied by the doctrine.

THE AGED MEN. Other versions read, “*older men,*” NKJV “*old men,*” BBE and “*elder men.*” GENEVA Although the word used here is a form of the one translated “*elders*” in verse five, here it refers to men who are old in the flesh. He is **not** speaking of Titus exhorting those in the office of elder. He has already addressed their manner. Now he moves to a consideration of men who are advanced in years. The law referred to such men as “*the hoary (gray) head,*” and “*the old man*” (Lev 19:32). The book of Job refers to such a man as “*the ancient*” (Job 12:12). The Psalms refer to such as those of “*old age*” (Psa 92:14). How are such men to be admonished?

SOBRIETY. “*Be sober.*” Other versions read “*temperate,*” NASB “*simple in their tastes,*” BBE “*serious,*” CSB “*watchful,*” GENEVA and “*reserved.*” NJB The word used here is rather extensive. On the one hand, it refers to a state of mind that is not numbed by some form of indulgence. On the other hand, it speaks of a mind that is vigilant, alert, and keenly aware of what is going on around and within the individual. Age does not bring to the person freedom from alertness, or a state in which there is no longer a need to be watchful and in possession of a sound mind.

GRAVE. Other versions read, “*reverent,*” NKJV “*dignified,*” NASB “*worthy of respect,*” NIV “*serious,*” NRSV “*sensible,*” CJB “*to use good judgment,*” GWN “*honest,*” TNT and “*unruffled.*” LIVING The word “*grave*” is the opposite of levity and light-heartedness. Frothy speech and tendencies, and attempting to appear young in appearance and manners are not to be characteristic of “*aged men.*” Their very presence should be conducive to seriousness, and promote sober mindedness or earnestness. There are enough distracting influences in society that make for surface thought and self-centeredness. “*Aged men*” are not to contribute to those influences.

TEMPERATE. Other versions read, “*sensible,*” NASB “*self-controlled,*” NIV “*prudent,*” NRSV “*discreet,*” DARBY “*to use good judgment,*” GWN and “*moderate.*” NJB As used here, the word “*temperate*” means “*curbing one’s desires and impulses, self-controlled.*” THAYER This does involve prudence – perceiving the defiling and enslaving effects of indulgence. It also involves moderation – not being excessive, or going beyond the boundary of profit or benefit. A temperate person is not one that requires constant exhortation and assistance to avoid indulging the lusts of the flesh. Such a person is one who, through godly wisdom, can recognize the difference between what is helpful and that which gives the flesh the upper hand. A temperate person keeps under his body, bringing it into subjection (1 Cor 9:27).

SOUND IN FAITH. Other versions read “*true in faith,*” BBE “*well-grounded in faith.*” GWN

Soundness has to do with spiritual health. It is a state in which the heart and mind are not sick, infirm, and unhealthy. Age may be accompanied by decrepitness of body, but it must not yield a weakness in faith (Rom 14:1), so that a person is not able to commit himself to the Lord (1 Pet 4:19), trust in Him with all of the heart (Prov 3:5), or be strong in faith, giving glory to God (Rom 4:20). As a man becomes advanced in age, the eye of faith must not grow dim. The “*full assurance of faith*” (Heb 10:22) must not fade. The ability of the “*aged men*” to “*see afar off*” (2 Pet 1:9), and to “*see Him who is invisible*” (Heb 11:27) must not diminish. To be “*sound in the faith*” involves a firm grasp of the truth, spiritual understanding, and a strong confidence.

SOUND IN CHARITY. The word “*charity*” occurs 28 times in the KJV (1 Cor 8:1; 13:1,2,3,4,8,13; 14:1; 16:14; Col 3:14; 1 Thess 3:6; 2 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 1:5; 2:15; 4:12; ; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:10; Tit 2:2; 1 Pet 4:8; 5:14; 2 Pet 1:7; 3 John 1:6; Jude 1:12; Rev 2:19) It is always translated from the Greek word *agape* , and was therefore assigned a unique word. Another Greek word for love (phileo) is used 26 times in Scripture, and is translated “*love.*” As used in our text “*charity*” is a unique kind of love that reaches out, and does not think only of self. It goes beyond companionship and preference, seeking to benefit the one who is loved. The “*aged man*” must be healthy in this manner of love, not having respect of persons or withholding from the brethren when it is within their power to assist them. A “*sound,*” or healthy love is toward “*all the saints.*”

SOUND IN PATIENCE. Other versions read “*perseverance,*” NASB “*endurance,*” NIV and “*steadfastness.*” RSV This is endurance in the “*good fight of faith*” (1 Tim 6:12), and the race “*set before us*” (Heb 12:2). The older men must not cease to “*run with patience*” because they are old, withdrawing from the service of the Lord, and becoming spiritually idle. The society in which they live might not honor the aged, or rise up before the hoary head, but they must not cave in to social pressure, becoming less active in living unto Him who died for them and rose again.

2:3 “*The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.*”

Women are not excluded from exhortation and teaching, because they too are members of the body of Christ. A society that places value only on young and beautiful women will not respect “*aged women,*” or consider them as a valuable resource. However, this must not be the case in the church of the living God. Here, therefore, is a word to the women of seasoned years.

IN BEHAVIOR. Other versions use the word “*the way they live,*” NIV “*demeanor,*” ASV “*deportment,*” DARBY “*in holy attire,*” DOUAY and “*such raiment as be cometh holiness.*” TNT The word “*behavior*” has to do with “*conduct, with focus upon the demeanor of an individual.*” LOUW-NIDA This is a manner of life, demeanor, or deportment that is apparent to others. In English, the word speaks of their “*outward manner.*” WEBSTER It speaks of a direction of life that shapes everything “*the aged women*” do – even down to the clothes they wear (1 Tim 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3-4). “*Behavior*” has to do with actions, responses, and how one reacts to their environment.

What kind of life is to be lived by the “*aged women*” – keeping in mind that these women lived in a decadent society? Their demeanor, or the way they carry themselves publically, is to be in a manner that “*becometh holiness,*” or is “*reverent,*” NASB as “*people living a holy life should.*” CJB Other versions read, “*that shows they are dedicated to God,*” GWN and “*fitting of those who are holy,*” NET or belong exclusively to the Lord. If their hope is in heaven, their lives are not to be lived as though they were at home in this world. If they seek for God’s approval, they must not conduct their lives to gain the approval of men. If they claim to be seeking things that are above, and laying up treasures in heaven, they are not to be known for being covetous. Keep in mind that no child of God is allowed the luxury of behaving themselves in contradiction of holiness. This is a special word to “*aged women*” that takes into account a special effort by the powers of darkness and a

decadent society to provoke them to live otherwise.

NOT FALSE ACCUSERS. Other versions read, “*not slanderers,*” NKJV “*not malicious gossips,*” NASB “*not saying evil of others,*” BBE “*gossips,*” GWN and “*scandal-mongering.*” NJB Having been freed from some of the obligations of younger women, motherhood, and the likes, the “*aged women*” are not free to indulge in idle talk and involvement in the business of others. Because they are older they are not at liberty to take up false accusations, misrepresent people, or join the devil in becoming accusers “*of the brethren*” (Rev 12:10). This requirement is also bound upon deacon’s wives, who were younger women (1 Tim 3:11). Of course, it gives no license to any member of the body of Christ to slander, misrepresent, or assassinate the character of others. If accusations are made, they must not be false. The idea here is that of the “*aged women*” avoiding the propensity to idle and profitless talk. Such inevitably degenerates into making false accusation, and thus opening the door for the wicked one to work more extensively. All of this is accented when the society around you is like that of the Cretians.

NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE. Other versions read, “*enslaved to much wine,*” NASB “*addicted to much wine,*” NIV “*slaves to drink,*” NRSV and “*slaves to excessive drinking.*” CJB The words “*given to*” speak of being reduced to bondage, giving oneself wholly to something, and making oneself a slave to something. THAYER The idea here, as with “*aged men,*” is that a reduction in responsibility can bring a corresponding inclination to unprofitable, and even sinful, things. Those with a lot of time on their hands are, in a very real sense, at risk, and are traversing on treacherous terrain. Again, this text does not suggest that there are some within the body of Christ who can be given to much wine, or that it is ever right to be “*drunk with wine, wherein is excess*” (Eph 5:18). If, for example, wine is taken for the “*stomach’s sake,*” or some other infirmity, it is only to be taken in small quantities (1 Tim 5:23). This principle is seen in the medications of our time, which have a high alcoholic content, which makes the essential chemical palatable and digestible. Yet, there are some who become enslaved to medication, using it in unlawful ways. That is the kind of thing, together with the custom of drinking “*new wine,*” that is addressed here. This is not speaking of drinking for pleasure. That falls into the category of gluttony and rioting.

TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS. This is a most interesting word! Other versions read, “*teaching what is good,*” NIV “*teachers of what is right,*” DARBY and “*they are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble.*” AMPLIFIED This text confirms that unsound behavior directly impacts upon what is taught. It also establishes that a godly life adorns and buttresses sound teaching (Tit 2:10). It is assumed that those of age have something to say, and that their lives are a substantiation of the effectiveness of what they teach. “*Good things*” are things that are right, wholesome, and conducive to godliness and edification. They are things that are consistent with the nature of the redemption that is in Christ, and befitting of one who has been reconciled to God and is walking in the light (1 John 1:7). Things that are “*good*” hold true under the scrutiny of Divine light. They also glorify God, sustain the soul, and expose the works of darkness for what they really are. These are the kind of “*things*” that the “*aged women*” are to “*teach.*” What has been required in this text are implications of the Gospel.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:4 [The aged women . . .] That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:4-5)

INTRODUCTION

Paul has admonished Titus to speak *“the things which become sound doctrine,”* *“which are fitting for sound doctrine,”* NASB or *“what is fitting and becoming to sound (wholesome) doctrine.”* AMPLIFIED These *“things”* are not the doctrine itself, but are complementary of the doctrine. Later this is referred to as living in such a manner as to *“adorn the doctrine”* (2:10). The doctrine itself has to do with Christ, and is referred to as *“the doctrine of God our Savior”* (Tit 2:10), which is *“the doctrine of Christ”* (Heb 6:1; 2 John 1:9). Proper doctrine must be paired with appropriate lives, else God will not work through it. A woman who has the spirit of divination may speak of Paul and company saying, *“These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation”* (Acts 16:17). However, such words are not allowed, for they are coming from a defiled vessel. Paul, *“being grieved,”* commanded the evil spirit to come out of the woman, thus ending what she was saying. Admonishing the brethren in Crete to live properly was particularly important because of the culture there. It was like a great rock upon the soul, pushing it downward into the quagmire of sin. People must see that God neither dwells nor works in defiled vessels. This is one reason for the new birth, washing, and sanctification. It is one of the reasons for a new heart, new spirit, and new mind. The church is not to be tolerant of manners of life that actually disqualify people for the fellowship with Jesus into which they have been called. The truth of the matter is that there is a frame of heart and mind within which the Spirit works. This is why we are warned not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). *“The things that become sound doctrine”* have to do with maintaining a manner of life in which the Holy Spirit will work, changing the person from one stage of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). These *“things”* are exceedingly practical, which causes men to often treat them with unbecoming casualness. Paul has already addressed older men and woman. Now he will speak to the younger women and men.

Titus 2:4 *“ That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.”*

Older women are to be admonished to be holy, not false accusers, not given to much wine, and teachers

of good, or wholesome things. Not only is this kind of life necessary to walking in the light and fellowship with Jesus, it enables the older women to teach the younger women. This teaching is done by example as well as with words.

THAT THEY MAY TEACH. Other versions read, “*admonish*,” NKJV “*encourage*,” NASB “*train*,” NIV “*instruct*,” GENEVA “*show*,” NJB “*to make*,” PNT and “*wisely train*.” AMPLIFIED The word translated “*teach*” is not the ordinary word for teaching, as commonly understood. Technically, the word means “restore one to his senses; to moderate, control, curb, discipline; to hold one to his duty.” THAYER It has more to do with the **result** of the teaching than the act of teaching itself. This is not speaking of holding a class in which the nature of good behavior is outlined, although that may very well be involved. The idea here is that the older women, by their godly deportment, are to *effectively teach* what follows. The necessity of this kind of teaching lies in the fact that it is becoming of the sound doctrine, causing it to be seen as God intends for it to be seen.

THE YOUNG WOMEN. As is evident from the instruction that follows, these are not children, but mature women who are embarking on adult life. They are no longer under the care of their parents, and yet there is a sense in which they are not on their own. They too have a responsibility before God to live in such a manner as will not detract from the doctrine of Christ. In newness of life, there is no such thing as a freedom that allows the believer to live without due regard to the Savior, and the doctrine that expounds Him.

TO BE SOBER. Both by example and words, the older women are to effectively teach the younger women to be sober. Coincidentally, in this verse, the same Greek word is used for “*sober*” as that which is used for “*teach*.” As used in Scripture, the word “*sober*” means “freedom from any inordinate passion; that quiet self possession which enables one to devote himself to the matter in hand.” McCLINTOK That is the flip-side of the definition provided above: “restore one to his senses; to moderate, control, curb, discipline; to hold one to his duty.” In a society fitly described as being made up of “*liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies*,” this would prove to be quite a challenge. It would certainly put them out of synch with that indulgent society. Our nation has also become such a society, so that the threat of a depression is more foreboding than the thought of facing the God whom they offend. Pleasure has been deified, so that men seek it above all other things. However, it has impacted the way people reason: how they think about God, Christ, and the Scriptures. Whereas Christ is at the center of what God is doing, self is at the center of all pleasure and self-gratification.

Paul wrote to Timothy expressing his desire that “*the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*” (1 Tim 5:14). He also admonished him to treat the “*the younger as sisters, with all purity*” (1 Tim 5:2). Paul is doing much the same thing here, except it is against the backdrop of the decadent Cretian society. It especially required the younger women to be sober – alert and in their right and godly minds at all time, not degenerating into frivolous and fruitless frames of mind.

TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS. If younger women are to be effectively taught to love their husbands, it cannot be something that naturally occurs. Obviously, this is a rational, intelligent, and spiritual love. It is not raw emotion – something that is anchored to the soul rather than the spirit. Ephesians 5:33 reads that the wife is to “*reverence her husband*.” First Corinthians says that the wife is to render “*due benevolence [marital duty NIV] . . . unto the husband*” (7:3). Ephesians says the wives are to “*submit themselves to their own husbands, as unto the Lord*” (5:22-23). Colossians tells the wives “*submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord*” (Col 3:18). Peter admonishes wives to “*be in subjection to your own husband*” (1 Pet 3:1). All of this is to be done with the awareness that “*the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church*” (Eph 5:23).

Here we have the only place in all of the Bible where wives are taught to “*love their husbands*.” Every other place love is mentioned in association with marriage, it is the husband who is to love the wife (Eph

5:25,28,33; Col 3:19). Why does Paul write in this way to Titus, telling him the younger women are to be effectively taught to love their husbands? **Love is the fundamental principle that produces all of the other requirements associated with marriage.** Just as our love for God moves us to fulfill the other requirements, so the wife's love for her husband will compel her to fulfill the revealed obligations she has to him, doing good to him (Prov 31:12).

TO LOVE THEIR CHILDREN. Solomon said his son was to “*not forsake the law of thy mother*” (Prov 1:8; 6:20). A virtuous woman provides for her household, even when it is inconvenient (Prov 31:15,21,27). Loving her children has to do with raising them properly, like Jochabed did Moses, and Lois did Timothy. It has to do with preparing them for a spiritually productive life, for she is to “*guide the house,*” or “*manage the house*” NKJV (1 Tim 5:14). She is not the servant of her children, but they are her stewardship. Love will ensure she does her work well.

“ 2:5a To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands . . .”

There have been unusual women in Divine history – women who were leaders. They include Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, Phebe, Philip's four daughters, and others. God called all of them. We know that Deborah, Huldah, and Anna were married. Yet, with these noble women in the record, the younger women are not called to aspire to the greatness that God alone gives. They are rather admonished concerning, what we might consider, the normalities of life. It will be no different when Paul addresses younger men. There is a reason for this. **Those who do not do well in the ordinary responsibilities of life ought not seek for leadership in the body of Christ.** This is a rather personal matter, and I certainly do not mean to dictate in saying this. However, those who would be used by God in the church are to first learn to live honorably and for His glory. That is the kind of thing that is being addressed here.

DISCREET. Other versions read, “*sensible,*” NASB “*self-controlled,*” NIV “*sober-minded,*” ASV “*temperate,*” GENEVA “*use good judgment,*” GWN and “*live wisely.*” NLT English synonyms for “discreet” include careful, circumspect, and considerate . One who is discreet has a “*sound mind,*” which is the meaning of this word. Unlawful impulses are controlled, and the person is not pulled into improper involvements. A “*discreet*” wife can, as the virtuous woman, be trusted by her husband to make sound judgments (Prov 31:11). She will not squander their resources or be wasteful, nor does she require meticulous instructions on how to do her work. She can “*consider a field*” and “*buy it*” without being swindled (Prov 31:16). She can “*stretch out her hand to the poor*” without being unwise (Prov 31:20). She will provide adequate clothing for her family in the winter (Prov 31:21). There is such a thing as “*silly women laden with lusts, led away with diverse lusts*” (2 Tim 3:6) – but a “*discreet*” woman is not among them!

CHASTE. Other versions read, “*pure,*” NASB “*clean in heart,*” BBE “*morally pure,*” GWN and “*holy.*” MRD Chastity is something that is within – a frame of mind that keeps one from indulging in immorality. Being chaste deals with lust at the temptation level, rejecting its suggestions and choosing to remain “*pure and undefiled,*” and “*unspotted from the world*” (James 1:27). Those who fail morally first failed the test of chastity. They were impure within before they became defiled without. Like the Cretian society, our culture also targets foolish and vulnerable young women. The body of Christ is an environment in which young women can learn by both example and word the necessity of being chaste – having the kind of heart and mind to which the Lord can show life-sustaining spiritual realities.

KEEPERS AT HOME. Other versions read, “*homemakers,*” NKJV “*workers at home,*” NASB “*busy at home,*” NIV “*good managers of the household,*” NRSV “*domestic,*” RSV “*take good care of their homes,*” CJB and “*fulfilling their duties at home.*” NET

Being “*keepers at home*” does not imply always staying at home. It does mean the home is the base of

their operation, so to speak. They are responsible for their homes, and are to take that responsibility seriously. As confirmed in the inspired word concerning virtuous women, such can be found seeking wool and flax (Prov 31:13), bringing her food from afar (31:14), considering a field and buying it (31:16a), planting and caring for a vineyard (31:16b), stretching out her hand to the poor and needy (31:20), and selling and delivering merchandise (31:24). Such a wife is not driven by selfish personal interests, but by a high regard for her husband and interest in her household. Joanna, wife of Herod's steward, ministered to Jesus of her substance (Lk 8:3) – but certainly not to the neglect of her household.

GOOD. Other versions read, “*kind*,” NASB “*gentle*,” DOUAY and “*good-natured (kindhearted)*.” AMPLIFIED Inherent in this word is the thought of being useful, pleasant, agreeable, upright, and honorable. THAYER “*Goodness*” is part of the fruit of the Spirit, and the young women are to possess it (Gal 5:22). This is the opposite of being inconsiderate, harsh, harping, nagging, and volatile, like a volcano about to erupt. This has to do primarily with the environment of the home, and extends out to other relationships. While this virtue is not limited to young women, they are not to be like acid in their interpersonal involvements.

OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS. Obedience means willingly subordinate, for “*the husband is the head of the wife*” (Eph 5:23). This obedience is within the framework of one's identity with God. Thus other texts say of this obedience, “*as it is fit in the Lord*,” COL 3:18 and “*as unto the Lord*.” EPH 5:22 From the beginning, God intended that the wife's will defer to that of her husband (Gen 3:16). The only exception to this rule is found when the husband's will is in conflict with the will of the Lord. No husband can rule over his wife in matters pertaining to God. There are wives who, like Abigail, have more godly wisdom than their husbands. She acted in contradiction of her husband's will, who was “*harsh and evil in his doings*” NKJV (1 Sam 25:3-38). But that is not the rule. Rather, it is the condoned exception to the rule. As difficult as it may seem to those unduly impacted by our society, godly wives are to “*be obedient to their own husbands*,” never giving another man more honor and respect than they give to their own spouse. The older women are to live this out before the younger women.

2:5b “ . . . *that the word of God be not blasphemed.*” Other versions read, “*may not be dishonored*,” NASB “*that no one will malign*,” NIV “*may not be discredited*,” NRSV “*that no evil may be said of*,” BBE “*brought into disgrace*,” CJB “*that no one may reproach*,” MRD “*can't be spoken against*,” LIVING and “*not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited)*.” AMPLIFIED

THE WORD OF GOD. It is not possible to overstate the importance of “*the Word of God*” – what He has said, or revealed. This is the means through which we are begotten again to be “*a kind of first fruits of His creatures*” (James 1:18). The Word through which that conception is carried out, enabled us to be “*born again*” (1 Pet 1:23). It is the means through which spiritual life is sustained (Lk 4:4). This is “*the sword of the Spirit*,” through which spiritual battles are fought (Eph 6:17). The “*word of God*” is what works effectively in those who believe it (1 Thess 2:13). This is the “*word of truth*” by which we are sanctified, or set apart for God (John 17:17). The “*word of God*” is what probes the inner recesses of man, distinguishing between soul and spirit, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb 4:12).

Without a due regard for the Word of God, no work will be done within the individual – either initially or on an ongoing basis. If a person is going to be delivered and kept, there must come a time when a high regard is had for “*the word of God*.” A disrespect for God's word brings with it unbelief in Christ Jesus, for He is the Incarnate Word (John 1:1,14; Rev 19:13). **No person, regardless of mental aptitude, who despises the Word of God, can arrive at a proper conclusion concerning Jesus, perceive a need for Him, or desire Him.** Those who say they have found Jesus, yet who despise the word of God, have simply lied. They are not to be believed, for God has magnified His word above all of His name (Psa 138:2).

Those who cast an unfavorable light upon the word of God have committed a great evil. They may have done it in the name of scholarship, throwing a veil of doubt upon the Scriptures. They may have held up the Bible to disdain by simply neglecting it, or even engaged in an initiative to rid society of it. Of course, that is the kind of people with whom those who fail to live in a godly manner are classed. That is the point of this text.

BE NOT BLASPHEMED. Blaspheming the word of God involves dishonoring it, maligning it, discrediting it, speaking evil of it, disgracing it, and reproaching it. It is holding up the word of God to disdain and contempt, so that men no longer hold it in high regard. And how is such a reaction provoked? It is because those who say they believe it live in a manner that contradicts what it says. The word says, “*Be ye holy*” (1 Pet 1:15), but they are unholy. It says, “*Sin not,*” but they sin (1 Cor 15:34). It says “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling,*” but they neglect the great salvation (Phil 2:12). It admonishes men to “*Watch*” for the coming of the Lord, but they are absorbed with life in this world (Mk 13:37).

And what is the effect of deviate conduct – when a person’s life contradicts what the word of God says, yet they profess that they know God? Well, Paul addresses the matter after a godly sort. He admonishes the young women to so conduct their lives that the word of God will NOT be blasphemed. This is not accomplished by admonishing people not to speak reproachfully of the word of God – although there is a place for that. It rather has to do with living in such a way as to confirm that this word, in fact, “*effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (1 Thess 2:13). That is the truth of the matter. Yet, if a person says they believe this word, and are a Christian, yet live in contradiction of the truth, they have suggested that the word does not work effectively in those who believe it. Therefore the door to blasphemy is opened.

Paul gave the same type of instruction to Timothy: “*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, **give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully***” (1 Tim 5:14). Servants were admonished in the same manner: “*Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, **that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed***” (1 Tim 6:1).

Our text affirms that appropriate lives are to be lived out by the younger women with a due regard for the word of God. This consideration is not limited to them. Paul certainly does not mean to say that young men can allow such blasphemy to be spoken with impunity. When, for example, David sinned with Bathsheba, God judged him because he gave “*great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*” (2 Sam 12:14). When the Jews who professed themselves to be Christians were loose in their living, violating the law they said they had embraced, Paul chided them saying, “*Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written*” (Rom 2:23-24). **When professing Christians live in a manner that contradicts both the spirit and the text of Scripture, it is a matter to be taken most seriously.**

The greatest influence causing skepticism, doubt, blasphemy, etc, is not the atheist, the agnostic, or the person attempting to prove the Bible is nothing more than a compilation of writings originated by men. It is not the evolutionist, the scoffer, or the worldly philosopher. It is the professing Christian who lacks sobriety and godliness, and is at home in this world.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” (Titus 2:6-8)

INTRODUCTION

Paul is admonishing Titus to “*speak the things that are befitting for sound doctrine,*” NASB or “*teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.*” NIV There is a manner of life that is befitting of the Gospel, and there is one that reproaches the Gospel, moving men to blaspheme the word of God. Sound teaching is not tailored for society, but instructs men to so live their lives as to “*adorn the doctrine,*” confirming that truth and a spiritual life never move a person to live in contradiction of the Gospel. It is never right or comely for individual Christians, or an entire congregation, to live in such a manner as to require extensive correction. Such a condition is shameful, as Paul indicated in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 6:5; 15:34). Paul told the Ephesians it was “*shameful*” to even speak of things that contradicted the very nature of life in Christ Jesus (Eph 5:12). The epistle to the Hebrews informs believers that fall away they “*put*” Christ, the subject of the Gospel, “*to open shame*” (Heb 6:6). One of the few things for which Jesus commended the Ephesian church was that they could “*not bear them that are evil*” (Rev 2:2). Such an attitude is not sufficient of itself, but must be accompanied by a strong love for and commitment to, the Lord Jesus Himself. A church that is tolerant of sin is one that is at a distance from the Savior, who died for sin, and delivers men from its power. Speaking things that become the sound doctrine involves teaching the people of God to conduct their lives in strict harmony with the doctrine of Christ. Stated in other ways, this is living by faith (Heb 10:38), living unto the One who died for us and rose again (2 Cor 5:15), and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:25). This is living in such way that the Holy Spirit is not grieved (Eph 4:30) or quenched (1 Thess 5:19). It is walking as dear children (Eph 5:1). Those whose lives contradict the doctrine are in a most dangerous circumstance. As long as they live in such an uncomely manner, a distance is forming between them and the Savior – a distance that can only be arrested by a hearty quest to apprehend that for which they have been apprehended.

Titus 2:6 “*Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.*”

YOUNG MEN. Other versions read “*younger men.*” NRSV “*Young men*” is a term that compares the ones being addressed with the aged, older, and more tenured men. Technically, these can range from juveniles to married men capable of begetting and raising children. Here, the word indicates they are either adults or

approaching adulthood. The exhortation that is delivered to them assumes they are subjected to desires and social pressures that will lead them away from Christ. The trait they are admonished to have does not apply to little children, who are not yet capable of extended thought, judgments, and determinations.

LIKEWISE. This word means “*in the same manner,*” THAYER *similarly,* CJB and “*in the same way.*” NLT The young men will be exhorted to have the same trait as a “*bishop,*” (1:8), the “*aged men*” (2:2), and the “*young women*” (2:4). The fact that the “*aged women*” were to teach the “*younger women*” to be “*sober*” confirms that they themselves were required to have this trait (2:3-4). Here, then, is a characteristic that is to be found throughout the entire church, from the leaders to the ones being led, and from the older to the younger.

SOBER MINDED. Other versions read, “*sensible,*” NASB “*self-controlled,*” NIV “*to control themselves,*” NRSV and “*be self-restrained and to behave prudently [taking life seriously].*” AMPLIFIED The words “sober minded” are translated from a single Greek word – **swfronei/n** (soph-ron-ein). This is a very large word, encompassing the manner of thought, the subject of thought, a proper perspective of life, and the consistent subduing and rejecting of inordinate thought.

The studied definition of “*sobriety*” that is shown above indicates the depth of both the concept and the word. It postulates the presence of danger and the illusiveness of the truth. It also presumes the strong downward pull of fleshly desires. A religion that caters to the flesh is lethal, and there really is no hope of a person yielding to such influences to work out their own salvation “*with fear and trembling*” (Phil 2:12).

The grace of God teaches those who receive it to “live soberly” (Tit 2:12), alert, subduing fleshly lusts, and sensitive to Divine direction. It is something that is strongly exhorted – a requirement that is mandated by the very nature of salvation as well as the length of life: “*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober , and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 1:13). Notice that being sober is linked to thinking (“*the loins of your mind*”) , and “*hope,*” by which we are saved. The suggestion is that the lack of sober mindedness will render us incapable of being ready for the return of Jesus. Again, the presence of a fierce adversary demands that one have a sober mind: “**Be sober , be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world**” (1 Pet 5:8-9). Again, the suggestion is that Satan cannot be resisted without having a sober mind – one that is serious, alert, and sensitive.

A sober mind is essential in waiting for the Lord to return and receive us unto Himself. “*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night*” (1 Thess 5:6-7). The text adds that being sober has to do with putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation (1 Thess 5:8). It is difficult to conceive of anything being more important!

Young men being sober is not an option – not if one, like Paul, desires to apprehend that for which he has been apprehended (Phil 3:12-13). Being sober minded involves more than simply being serious: one must be serious about the right thing. Young men must not allow themselves to be consumed with things pertaining to this world – even legitimate things. At the upper end, it is possible for education, an occupation, and a successful life to actually upstage one’s quest for eternal life. At the lower end there is the appetite for pleasure, popularity, and self-gratification. All of these areas of life – both emotional and intellectual – are fraught with danger. However, those dangers cannot be perceived unless a person is sober-minded.

It is possible to throw yourself into the affairs of this life, then loaf through ones spiritual life, like taking a vacation from what it really to be desired. In our time, young men are faced with a society much like that of the citizenry of Crete. It is a sensual society, dominated by surface thinkers who cavort upon the landscape of

life just as though there were no heaven and hell, and that Jesus was not returning to judge the world in righteousness.

“ 2:7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.”

Now Paul addresses Titus himself, who was probably a young man. There must be nothing in him that detracts from the truth of God. The totality of his life is involved in his ministry. It ought to be noted here that those who minister to the saints, or in any way address them with words, are themselves to be living examples of the doctrine. Those who are not willing to live consistent godly lives are given no license to address the children of God.

IN ALL THINGS. Other versions read, “*in everything*,” NIV “*in all respects*,” NRSV “*always*,” GWN “*in every respect*,” NAB “*in every way*,” NET “*above all things*,” TNT and “*concerning all things*.” YLT

There is no facet of life in which we are allowed to walk at a distance from God, or fail to devote yourselves wholeheartedly to Him. No believer is free to conduct any aspect of his life as though he had not been bought with a price, being solemnly obligated to live for the One who died for him and rose again. For those who are in Christ, there is no such thing as secular and spiritual. No part of the lives of the redeemed can be lived outside of the perimeter of faith, apart from the domination of a joyful and expectant hope.

This is a consistent teaching delivered to the saints. “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever ye do** , do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor 10:31). “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **do all** in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*” (Col 3:17). “*And **whatsoever ye do** , do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men*” (Col 3:23).

A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS. Other versions read, “*a pattern of good deeds*,” NASB “*set them an example by doing what is good*,” NIV “*a model of good works*,” NRSV and “*a pattern and a model of good deeds and works*.” AMPLIFIED

The meaning here is that “*good works*” are urged upon the people of God, and Titus is to proclaim their necessity. From Genesis to Malachi, the phrase “*good works*” does not occur in any standard version of Scripture. The first place the expression is used is Matthew 5:16: “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt 5:16). Ephesians 2:10 reveals that God creates us in Christ Jesus in order that we might do the “*good works*” He has ordained for us. Wealthy believers are admonished to be “*rich in good works*” (1 Tim 6:18). The Scriptures are said to be able to make the man of God “*perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim 3:17). Jesus is said to have given Himself in order to purify a “*peculiar people*” who are “*zealous of good works*” (Tit 2:14). Those who believe in God are admonished to “*maintain good works for necessary uses*,” or “*daily necessities*” NIV (Tit 3:14). Believers are to faithfully assemble together, provoking one another to “*good works*” (Heb 10:24-25). Those in Christ are to so conduct their lives that their critics may behold their “*good works*” and glorify God “*in the day of visitation*” (1 Pet 2:12). Now Paul tells Titus to live in such a manner as to rightly define “*good works*.”

IN DOCTRINE SHOWING INCORRUPTNESS. Other versions read, “*purity in doctrine*,” NASB “*in your teaching show integrity*,” NIV and “*holy in your teaching*.” BBE

No person has a right to teach what is wrong, what tends to lead people to the wrong conclusion, or what conflicts with any word of Scripture. There are teachings that are like bruises on a piece of fruit, or a torn section on a garment. They are like a sieve that cannot hold the truth, yet they are proclaimed as though they were the truth. Every preacher and teacher is obligated to God for what they say. If God sanctifies people

through the truth (John 17:17), then what can be said of doctrines or teachings that are corrupt, inaccurate, and contrary to the mind of the Lord? There are some who do corrupt the word of God, but we are not to be identified with them. Every preacher and teacher must be able to say with Paul, *“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ”* (2 Cor 2:17). What we teach must be right. It cannot be wrong.

IN DOCTRINE SHOWING GRAVITY. The word *“gravity”* means *“dignity, sanctity, purity,”* THAYER *“propriety,”* LOUW-NIDA *“solemnity,”* LIDDELL-SCOTT and *“augustness.”* LEH As used here, it means adherence to the highest principles and ideals. The doctrine, or teaching, itself is to be characterized by dignity and grandeur – separate from humor, fables, fads, and the likes. Doctrine has to do with shaping men for eternity, and is to be approached with that mind-set.

IN DOCTRINE SHOWING SINCERITY. Other versions read, *“sincerity and earnestness,”* NJB *“integrity,”* PNT *Incorruptibility,”* YLT and *“with dignity and seriousness.”* AMPLIFIED The idea is that what is taught must not be conducive to obsolescence. It must not be faddish, reflecting the passing trends of the day. It is to be pure, undiluted, and reflecting both the mind of the Lord and the nature of salvation. Both the preacher and what he preaches are to free from worldly contaminants. Jesus died to deliver us from *“this present evil world”* (Gal 1:4), and none of it is to be found in either our persons or our teaching. Since nothing about *“newness of life”* contributes to lack of purity and sincerity, those who possess such qualities have been living too close to the world. The solemn injunction: show *“sincerity”* in your teaching.

2:8 *“Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”*

Inherent in this text is an acute awareness of adversarial influences that are all about those who speak in the name of the Lord. This is in addition to the fact that we all live and speak in the presence of the Lord Himself. Bishops are to be able to exhort and convince the gainsayer with *“sound doctrine”* (1:9). Older men are admonished to be *“sober, grave,”* and *“temperate”* (2:2). Older women are told to be *“in behavior as becometh holiness”* (2:3). Younger women were told to conduct their lives so *“the word of God be not blasphemed”* (2:5). Now Titus is admonished concerning what and how he preaches and teaches.

SOUND SPEECH. Other versions read, *“soundness of speech,”* NIV *“saying true and right words,”* BBE *“everything you say be so wholesome,”* CJB *“a sound message,”* NET *“healthy language,”* WEYMOUTH and *“sound and fit and wise and wholesome, vigorous and irrefutable and above censure.”* AMPLIFIED

The word *“speech”* relates to the words that are employed in preaching. This is compared with the message itself, or the teaching that is being conveyed to the people. There is a kind of speech that is not suitable for the conveyance of the truth of God, and the preacher and teacher is to see to it that he does not employ such language. The words that are employed are to be capable of containing the truth that is intended to be conveyed. The vocabulary of the world is not appropriate for the conveyance of the truth of God. Such terms as *“cool,”* *“fun,”* *“exciting,”* etc., are not the best vocabulary for declaring the truth of God. They carry with them associations that are neither large nor precise enough to declare or clarify Divine intent.

This is not a matter that requires the development of a manual of appropriate words. It is to be understood that each one who speaks for Christ is responsible to choose *“words of understanding,”* (Prov 1:2), *“words of truth”* (Prov 22:21), *“words of knowledge”* (Prov 23:12), and *“words . . . taught by the Spirit”* (1 Cor 2:13). A special alertness is required in our generation to speak with such words, just as it was in the society of the Cretians.

CANNOT BE CONDEMNED. Other versions read, “*beyond reproach,*” NASB “*cannot be censured,*” NRSV “*against which no protest can be made,*” BBE and “*speech that cannot be criticized.*” NAB At the high end, this would be language that directly contradicts the words of Scripture. At the low end, it would be vulgar, the vernacular of slang, and suggestive speech that is crude and uncomely, obviously reflecting the worldly mind-set.

Some speech is expressly forbidden: “*Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient*” (Eph 5:4). Another way of referring to speech that cannot be condemned is, “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*” (Eph 4:29). Colossians 3:8 refers to speech that can be condemned as “*filthy communication of your mouth.*”

Another kind of speech that can be condemned is that which has an appeal to covetousness: “*For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error*” (2 Pet 2:18). Health and wealth preaching falls into this category.

HE THAT IS OF THE CONTRARY PART. Other versions read, “*an opponent,*” NKJV “*the opponent,*” NASB “*those who oppose you,*” NIV and “*he which withstandeth.*” GENEVA This is someone who is in competition with what is said, and consequently with the one who is saying it. It may be a person of the world, raw and spiritually uncultured, who manifestly loves the world and has no regard for the truth at all. It may be a devoutly religious person, like a Jew, or a member of some of the cults who have little regard for Jesus Himself. It could even be an educated and cultured man who accepts any and all religion in the name of philosophy.

The idea is that the opponent, whoever it may be, finds fault with what is being taught because of the way that it is said. It will further become evident that the person who said it, and the way he said it, contradicted generally accepted traits of devout men. Scripture refers to this kind of person: “*For he that in these things [righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit] serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and **approved of men***” (Rom 14:17-18). The person who speaks for God properly can do as Paul, commending “*ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*” (2 Cor 4:2).

NO EVIL TO SAY OF YOU. Oh, for the grace to speak in such a manner that those who oppose us have “*nothing bad to say about us.*” NASB That is, that they may not be able to say something that is legitimately against us. Peter spoke of such a circumstance in this way: “*that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that **falsely accuse** your good conversation in Christ*” (1 Pet 3:16). Jesus spoke of such people as “*saying all manner of evil against you **falsely**, for My sake*” (Matt 5:11).

The “*shame*” of those who are “*of the contrary part*” may not be experienced now, and they may speak evil of you anyway – as they did of Stephen. However, they will have to lie to do. Shame may come when they see the truth, and repent as Paul did. It may also never come until the day of judgment when they will have to acknowledge their error before an assembled universe.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” (Titus 2:9-10)

INTRODUCTION

Paul is in the midst of an admonition to speak, or teach, the things that are becoming of “*sound doctrine.*” This has much to do with the tone of teaching, and how it relates to “the doctrine of Christ.” In particular, it relates to the manner of life that is to be lived by the believer. At no point does the truth of God allow for the separation of living from faith. How we conduct our lives is, in fact, directly related to whether or not we are maintaining the fellowship of the Son into which we have been called (1 Cor 1:9). In our time this is understanding is particularly vital. There has been an outburst of teaching that is borrowed from the psychiatric field. It majors in methodologies that deal with recovery from unacceptable behavior. Great care is taken to make it appear as though the believer is helplessly dominated by certain habits, and there is a disciplined effort to avoid the use of such terms as “*sin,*” “*transgression,*” “*sin wilfully,*” “*depart from the faith,*” and “*fall from your steadfastness.*” With these Divine perspectives of human behavior hidden neatly under the blanket of human wisdom, extended teaching is given on how to correct flawed lives. The seriousness of “*drawing back*” from the Lord has no place in this strain of teaching. We must see the stark difference between that kind of approach to life and this text. Here there is a summons to conduct ones life in keeping with the doctrine of Christ. No methodology is provided for getting into position where this can be accomplished. Rather, the hearers are admonished to address life in the strength of faith. If there is some moral or spiritual deficiency in them, they are too address it like a lame person who has been commanded to pick up his bed and walk, of a blind man who has been told to go to a pool and wash. Faith is a grand enabler, fully equal to any circumstance requiring correction. To speak in any other manner is unbecoming of sound doctrine, bringing reproach dishonor to the Son of God.

Titus 2:9 “ Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again.”

To this point, Paul has delivered a word for bishops, older men, older women, younger women, and younger men. Now he turns to a vocational class of people. In each of these admonitions Paul speaks in view of

a comely spiritual life. In keeping with the consistent manner of the Spirit, the stress is placed on what the person should be, and that is in view of who they are in Christ. No detailed procedures are given for recovery from moral or spiritual defections. With remarkable consistency, those who have sinned are simply told to do it no more (1 Cor 15:34; Eph 4:26,28; 1 John 2:1). All are told to make no place for the devil (Eph 4:27), “*resist the devil*” (James 4:7), and to “*refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven*” (Heb 12:25). Now, in keeping with this manner of teaching, a word for “*servants*” is delivered.

EXHORT. Other versions read “*urge*,” NASB “*teach*,” NIV “*tell*,” NRSV “*bid*,” RSV and “*continue urging*.” MONTGOMERY This word is a continuation of what is said in verse one of this chapter: “*speak thou the things that become sound doctrine*.” It addressing servants with the same urgency that young men were exhorted (2:6). The intention is for Titus to continue strongly urging people to live in strict accord with the doctrine of Christ, which involves dying to self and the world, and living unto God – just as Jesus did (Rom 6:8; Col 2:20; 2 Tim 2:11).

SERVANTS. Other versions read “*bond-servants*,” NKJV “*bondslaves*,” NASB “*slaves*,” NIV and “*bondmen*.” DARBY As used in Scripture, a “*servant*” is one who is serving the interests of another. In many cases, they are actually owned by their master, belong to him. Hebrew servants, or slaves, differed considerably from the slaves of heathen nations. Often they were given authority over their master’s house, as Abraham’s servant Eliezer (Gen 15:2; 24:2). Joseph is another example of an exalted servant (Psa 105:17-21). However, privileged servants are not the subject here. This word is for all servants, regardless of their circumstances.

BE OBEDIENT. Being obedient differs slightly from obeying. A servant may obey in deed, yet recoil from it in his heart, being unwilling. Being obedient has to do with the heart and being “*subject to their own masters*.” NASB There is respect and willingness in being “*obedient*.” The word from which “*obedient*” is translated means “*to submit to one's control*.” THAYER In this case, the submission is to be “*to their own master*.” Paul wrote to the churches on this matter saying “*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ . . .*” (Eph 6:5-7; Col 3:22). He told Timothy that servants who were “*under the yoke*” of servitude were to “*count their masters worthy of all honor*” (1 Tim 6:1). Peter told servants they were to “*be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*” (1 Pet 2:18).

The “*doctrine*” is that this is what Jesus did to save us, submitting to the Father to do His will, even though it was challenging, even involving suffering (Lk 22:42; Heb 10:7-9). Servants were to conduct themselves in this manner toward their masters. While we do not have servants such as this in our society, we do have servanthood that is quite similar to that among the Hebrew servants, which involved remuneration (Deut 15:14-15). The employer-employee relationship is one in which this exhortation is to be carried out. No Christian has the right to maintain a critical and bitter spirit toward those who have employed them

PLEASE THEM WELL IN EVERYTHING. Other versions read, “*in everything, be well-pleasing*,” NASB and “*give satisfaction in every respect*.” NRSV As in all human relationships, the servant is not being told to please his master if what he does is displeasing to God. If what is required involves transgressing the law of God, “*we ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). However, it appears to me that in this word is the strong suggestion that the Lord will protect the obedient servant from being subjected to such compulsions (as with Joseph), or enable them to pass through any trial associated with refusing such obedience (as with Daniel Shadrach, Meschech, and Abednego).

On this matter, Paul wrote to Timothy that servants should obey their master, counting “*their own masters worthy of all honor*,” and to especially do so if they were believers (1 Tim 6:1-2). He also said that any man

who taught “*otherwise*” was “*proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words . . .*” (1 Tim 6:4)

NOT ANSWERING AGAIN. Other versions read, “*not answering back,*” NKJV “*not argumentative,*” NASB and “*not to talk back or contradict.*” AMPLIFIED This involves disputing the will of the master, and can even include quietly enduring unjust treatment. Peter admonished servants, “*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example . . .*” (1 Pet 2:18-19).

“ 2:10a Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity. . . ”

As is apparent in this text, living for the honor and glory of God sometimes involves being in uncomfortable, and even unjust, circumstances. Joseph, for example, had to serve as a prisoner. However, he did so well, and the Lord saw to it that he was exalted.

This word to servants is especially appropriate in our kind of economy, where the employer-employee relationship is more common. Who is able to estimate the reproach that has been brought upon the Lord by the conduct of professing Christians who are employees? This passage appears to me to especially underscore the close affiliation of daily life with Divine acceptance. Being a servant has been associated with doing the will of God (Eph 5:6), being a servant of Christ (Eph 5:6), conscience toward God (1 Pet 2:19), being acceptable with God (1 Pet 2:20), and following in the steps of Christ (1 Pet 2:21). Perhaps one reason for this circumstance is that this kind of teaching is not common among the churches.

NOT PURLOINING. Other versions read “*pilfering,*” NKJV “*steal from them,*” NRSV “*taking what is not theirs,*” BBE “*robbing,*” DARBY “*defrauding,*” DOUAY and “*steal by taking things of small value.*” AMPLIFIED The word “*purloin*” is translated from a word that means, “*set apart or separate for oneself . . . withdraw covertly and appropriate to one's own use.*” THAYER In the English, “*purloin*” means “*to appropriate wrongfully and often by breach of trust.*” WEBSTER English synonyms are filch, pilfer, snitch. This refers to stealing things that are not apparent, and doing so while being trusted to be either in charge of them or around them. The word assumes that what is taken belongs to a larger supply, so that it does not appear as though a gross injustice was done. There would, in such a case, be much of the same commodity left. Achan, for example, purloined or pilfered a Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold (Josh 7:21). In a subtle way, Gehazi purloined two talents of silver, and two changes of clothes (2 Kgs 5:21-23). Judas was a classic purloined, pilfering from the treasury of the disciples (John 12:6). Ananas and Sapphira purloined part of the resources they had pledged to the Lord (Acts 5:1-2). In all of these cases craftiness was employed, and the thing was done in secret. There was no force, as when a robber breaks in to steal, or threatens the life of the owner.

A servant might reason that his master was wealthy, and had more than he required. He might put that together with his own miserable condition in which he was seemingly deprived of the niceties of life. In such a case, it might appear quite innocent and acceptable to take little enough so that it was not noticed, yet enough to gratify personal lusts. Notwithstanding, the servants are exhorted to be those who are “*not purloining.*”

Do you suppose there are Christian employees who think nothing of pilfering from their employer? Perhaps it is only a small thing that is not readily apparent. Maybe it is something that is small, yet valuable, and the deed requires some stealth, planning, and cunning. And what of time – the stealing of time from the employer. The employee is paid for that time, yet uses it for his own purposes, being less productive than he could be. In this case “*redeeming the time*” (Eph 5:16; Col 4:5), using the time for which one receives

remuneration to do what he is being paid to do.

So far as all believers are concerned, “*not purloining*” involves putting to death our members that are upon the earth: “*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth . . . covetousness, which is idolatry*” (Col 3:5). The vice of covetousness can creep into the heart of someone who has managed to avoid many other vices.

SHOWING ALL GOOD FIDELITY. Other versions read, “*showing all good faith,*” NASB “*can be fully trusted,*” NIV “*perfect fidelity,*” NRSV “*complete faithfulness,*” CJB and “*prove themselves truly loyal and entirely reliable and faithful throughout.*” AMPLIFIED The word “fidelity,” as used here, is connected with one’s religion. It comes from the same Greek word as “faithfulness,” and means, “a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.” STRONG’S In other words, it is known that the “*servant*” is a believer, claiming identity with Christ. His life, therefore, is to perfectly comport with his profession. In every aspect of his Servanthood, he is to show himself wholly devoted to the Lord. That devotion is lived out by being fully trustworthy to his master on earth. Once, when king Saul was angry with David, Ahimelech stood in David’s defense, point out his fidelity: “*And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king’s son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house?*” (1 Sam 22:14). Jesus described the person who showed “all good fidelity” in these words: “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much*” (Luke 16:10). Whether in small matters or large matters, the servant who shows fidelity in all things can be trusted to do what is right, and to fulfill his responsibilities. Such is appropriately called by Jesus a “*good and faithful servant*” (Matt 25:21,23). The servant who cannot be trusted to serve his earthly master, cannot be trusted to serve the Lord. How succinctly Jesus said it: “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much*” (Luke 16:10).

2:10b ” . . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

Paul now gets the reason that undergirds the requirement for the servants to be exemplary in all of their conduct, always remaining keenly aware of the impact of their lives upon the impact it has upon those who behold it. The tenor of the teaching emphasizes the fact that we are not to live for ourselves, but for the Lord. That is why He died and rose again (2 Cor 5:15). That is why we have been purchased with a price (1 Cor 6:20). That is why we have been created in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10).

THAT THEY MAY. Other versions read, “*they will make,*” NIV and “*they may be.*” NRSV What follows, therefore, is not possible unless the things that have been specified are actually done: “*obedient to their own masters,*” “*pleasing them well in all things,*” “*now answering again,*” “*not purloining,*” and “*showing all good fidelity.*” When these are fulfilled, the servants will be able to do what follows. If they are not done, what is now declared will not be able to be done.

Right here the axe is laid to the root of hypocrisy, or living in contradiction of one’s profession. Without it actually being said, many are left with the impression that all of the commitments made to Godly people can be enjoyed simply upon the basis of a profession of faith. When fleshly explanations are given for professed believers being enslaved by sin, the insinuation is that it all happened without the consent of the professed believer. Therefore, all of the promises of Jesus’ intercession, the empowerment of the Spirit, honored prayers, etc, can still be maintained, even though the person is not living by faith and walking in the Spirit. Also, in order to justify such a conclusion, one must substantiate that the doctrine of Christ can be contradicted by one’s life, yet the benefit of that doctrine can still be enjoyed. If a person’s life is fundamentally lived for self, yet a profession of faith is maintained, the doctrine of Christ suffers reproach. People take it less seriously,

concluding that Christians are not substantively different from anyone else. If Christ honors all prayers during the hour of crisis, what sense does it make to live to Him all of the time. That is how the ungodly are led to reason when they see professed Christians who are really no different than themselves.

ADORN THE DOCTRINE. Other versions read, “*make the teaching . . . attractive*,” NIV “*that they may be an ornament to the doctrine*,” NRSV “*doing credit to the teaching*,” BBE “*show the beauty of the teaching*,” GWN and “*do worship to the doctrine*.” TNT Jesus referred to this as men seeing your good works and “*glorifying your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt 5:16). Ephesians 4:1 depicts it as working “*worthy of the vocation wherewith you **are** called*.” Philippians 1:27 speaks of it as our lives being such as “*be cometh the gospel of Christ*.” Philippians 2:15 speaks of it as shining “*as lights in the world*.” Peter states that this is a life through which those who speak evil of us may “*glory God in the day of visitation*” (1 Pet 2:12). Some versions mistakenly make this verse refer to the second coming of Christ. NIV/NRSV/LIVING However, this is not at all the meaning, for sinners will not glorify God when Jesus comes, but seek to hide from Him. The point here is the visitation that occurs when God deals with an individual, as when God “*visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name*” (Acts 15:14). Those who are alienated from the life of God, yet have been exposed to genuine spiritual life, will more readily respond when they are visited by God through Gospel proclamations. This is the heavenly logic behind the ministry of John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for the Lord. His life and his doctrinal emphasis truly adorned the doctrine.

If the doctrine speaks of deliverance (Col 1:13), freedom (John 8:36), reconciliation (Col 1:20), being born again (1 Pet 1:23), and being a new creation (Eph 2:10), exactly what is the impact of a professing Christian living a fundamentally ungodly life? Of course, when the main thrust of the professed church is to help its members recover from sin rather than grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, “*the doctrine*” is of little consequence.

GOD OUR SAVIOR. The text reads the same in all versions, ascribing Saviorhood to God. The precise expression “*God our Savior*” occurs six times in Scripture, three of them being in Titus (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; Tit 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude 1:25). Remember this is a part of the phrase, “*the **doctrine** of God our Savior*.” At its core, the doctrine is about God Himself: how He saw the world in relation to Himself, and what He did about it through Christ. Reconciliation is “*to God*” (2 Cor 5:20), peace is “*with God*” (Rom 5:1), Jesus is bringing us “*to God*” (1 Pet 3:18), and God is the One who “*justifies*” us through faith in Christ (Rom 8:33). Remove God from the picture, and there is neither need nor reason for the Lord Jesus Christ.

IN ALL THINGS. Other versions read, “*in every respect*,” NASB “*in every way*,” NIV and “*in everything*.” NRSV No segment of life is excluded from this requirement: no deed, no word, and no visible manner. Our reason for living must not be open to question. We are not free to leave the impression that this world is the only one, or that self-interests are the primary ones; That conflicts with the “*doctrine of God our Savior*,” which declares that He is the primary Person, His purpose is the superior purpose, and His will is the fundamental will. To live in contraction of that is to reproach the doctrine, for such a life suggests the doctrine is not true.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”

(Titus 2:11-12)

INTRODUCTION

Paul is writing to Titus in view of the Cretian culture, which was especially decadent. Even one of their own poets had truthfully said, “*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*” NKJV (Titus 1:12). **Now the apostle is instructing Titus concerning the correlation of doctrine with life – something that can easily elude the casual disciple**. The doctrine itself must be “*sound doctrine*,” holding up under Divine scrutiny. No man has a right to teach something that is not correct in the eyes of God – something that contradicts what God has revealed. Similarly, no person has the right to live in a manner that conflicts with sound doctrine. If men are weak in this area, they must become strong. A salvation that does not impact directly upon the way men live is no salvation at all. Men cannot be delivered by God, yet remain in bondage. That would be like Israel being delivered from Egypt, yet remaining there under the harsh taskmasters. Yet, in the professed Christian community, the notion that this **is** possible remains a dominant way of thinking. In addition to this unfortunate circumstance, there is also the tug of culture that seeks to neutralize sound thinking. A refined and cultured society can lead men to believe that a good life is defined by cultural attainments. A depraved culture, like that of Crete, can lead people to believe that because they do not live in the basement of morality, they have somehow achieved something. However, whether a person is a debased Cretian or a cultured Greek, salvation separates men from a worldly manner of life. The work of salvation is so thorough and so effective that those who embrace it can be told to be (not try to be) sober, grave, temperate, and sound in faith, charity, and patience (2:2). They can be told that their behavior is to be holy (2:3), and that they are to live so the Word of God will not be blasphemed (2:6). These are not areas where deficiencies are allowed, and protracted failure to live in such a manner is permitted. We will now see the reason for such unbending requirements. The grace of God enables men to live right!

Titus 2:11 “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*”

Paul is addressing the manner in which people live. It is to be in a manner that takes from the ungodly the opportunity to blaspheme the Word of God (2:5). The way people live, even down to the slaves, is to “*adorn the*

doctrine of God our Savior ” (2:10). That is, being “*saved*” by God is never to be associated with faltering morality and inept living. Such trite sayings as “We are all sinners, but Christians are forgiven,” at the very least borders on blasphemy, and may even be at the very heart of it. In such sayings, salvation is seen as only a technicality – like clearing the record – yet having no measurable effect upon life itself. In our time there are also professed Christian programs that build on this heretical view, offering ways to conquer lingering and disconcerting propensities. It all may sound innocent enough, but it is not. Such representations are not becoming of “*sound doctrine*,” and are conditions that clash with the admonition of Titus 2:1: “*teach what is fitting and becoming to sound (wholesome) doctrine [the character and right living that identify true Christians]*” AMPLIFIED

THE GRACE OF GOD. This is the second reference to “*grace*” in this letter, the first being in the salutation (1:4). There will be two more times it is mentioned (3:7,15). The next reference (3:7) will declare we are “*justified by His grace*.” The last mention will be a benediction: “*Grace be with you all*. In these four references we get a glimpse of the work of grace. Initially it justifies us (3:7). In the whole of our lives, it is present with us (1:4; 3:15). Now we will see that the grace of God is active in believers living to the glory of God.

Men ordinarily associate grace with being initially forgiven of sin and made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. It is interesting that “*grace*” only appears four times in the Gospels (Lk 2:40; John 1:14,16,17). Three of those references have to do with Jesus Himself, and one has to do with the reception of grace by men (John 1:16). Yet, the letters to the churches – those who were in Christ Jesus – contain 116 references to “*grace*.” The book of Acts contains 10 references to grace, with only one of them pointing to the time when men first believed (18:27).

The point is that much must be made of the grace of God to those who are in Christ. Believers are said to have received an “*abundance of grace*,” which postulates an ongoing work in them (Rom 5:17). Grace also is said to “*reign through righteousness unto eternal life*” (Rom 5:20). Spiritual gifts are said to be associated with grace (Rom 12:6; Eph 4:7). Those who labor for God are said to do so through grace (1 Cor 15:10). Believers are admonished not to receive the grace of God “*in vain*” – which means it is associated with the life of faith (2 Cor 6:1). “*Everlasting consolation and good hope*” are given to us “*through grace*” (2 Thess 2:16). The intercession of Jesus for believers is also associated with grace (Heb 4:15-16). Additionally, it is connected with serving God “*acceptably*” (Heb 12:28). When Jesus comes again, we are told He will bring grace to us (1 Pet 1:13). When we speak of grace, we are addressing a large subject!

THAT BRINGS SALVATION. There is no true salvation that is independent of the grace of God. If salvation is obtained, grace brought it, and faith was the means of appropriating it – for we are saved “*by grace through faith*” (Eph 2:8). We did not climb up to obtain salvation, it is brought down to us by God’s grace! Our initial participation in salvation is directly associated with God’s grace (Eph 2:5,8; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 2:11; 1 Pet 1:10). Believing is said to have been accomplished through grace (Acts 18:27).

Salvation is not a once for all experience. It is a work in progress, and has not yet been brought to its completion. It is imperative that this be seen, for if it is not we will be lulled into sleep as though we were already in heaven. Solemnly we are reminded that our “*salvation is nearer than when we believed*” (Rom 13:11). The time during which we are being succored, or nourished from heaven, is referred to as “*the day of salvation*” (2 Cor 6:2). Part of “*the whole armor of God*” is “*the helmet of salvation*” (Eph 6:17; 1 Thess 5:8). We are admonished to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil 2:12). This is a salvation that can be neglected, throwing one into the same state in which grace originally found him (Heb 2:3). Jesus is “*the Captain*” our “*salvation*,” which has to do with bringing it to its intended culmination – “*bringing many sons to glory*” (Heb 2:10). For the elect, when Jesus comes again, it will be “*unto salvation*” (Heb 9:28). This

salvation is *“ready to be revealed”* 1 Pet 1:5).

This being the case, our text makes perfect sense. Salvation is thus seen as an ongoing process that is carried out by the grace of God (Acts 15:11; Rom 5:21; 6:14,15; 2 Cor 13:14; 2 Thess 2:16). When, therefore, we speak of adorning the doctrine, we are addressing the matter of salvation.

HAS APPEARED. It is the grace of God that has appeared. Some versions read it has appeared to all men, others read it has appeared bringing salvation to all men. There is really no difference in the statements. Salvation is either for all men or for no men, for it must reach as far as the effects of sin. This is why sin is traced to Adam, while salvation is traced to Jesus (Rom 5:12-21). In both cases *“all men”* are involved. That is why the Gospel is to be preached *“to every creature”* (Mk 16:16). This grace *“appeared”* in the Person of Jesus, when the *“Word became flesh”* (John 1:14). It also appears the doctrine of the Gospel – *“the gospel of the grace of God”* (Acts 20:24).

“ 2:12a Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts . . .”

This text represents the grace of God as bringing salvation, **then remaining to work in the ones who are being saved.** This is a facet of the work of salvation itself. What follows cannot be divorced from God’s salvation. There is a view of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus that separates sanctification from salvation. In its most simplistic form, salvation has to do with delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13). That initial work is thorough and effective. **Sanctification has to do with carrying that work to its intended completion.** From one point of view, this work is under the administration of the Holy Spirit. Thus salvation is *“through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”* (2 Thess 2:13). Th Spirit is the One who is changing us as we behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18). Now we will see an aspect of the practical side of salvation – the areas that require our personal involvement. The grace of God is active in these.

TEACHING US. Other versions read, *“instructing us,”* NASB *“training us,”* NRSV *“schooling us.”* MONTGOMERY The word translated *“teaching”* is different from the ordinary Greek word so translated. Ordinarily *“teaching”* refers to a process addressed to the intellect, (Acts 5:25; 15:35; Acts 18:11; 28:31). Here, however, we have a different word. This word means *“to train children . . . to cause one to learn,”* THAYER *“as bringing up a child and guiding him toward maturity instruct, train, educate,”* FRIBERG and *“to provide instruction, with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior.”* LOUW-NIDA **The idea here is of effective teaching, and not the mere process of teaching, as in formal education.** Sometimes the word is translated *“learn”* (Acts 7:22; 1 Tim 1:20), placing the emphasis on the effectiveness of the teaching. There are people who are taught outwardly, but not inwardly. These profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him (Tit 1:16). They are like a living contradiction who suggest that salvation is only a surface matter, and never really gets to the heart of men. That is a most serious misrepresentation!

By saying that the grace that brings salvation is the same grace that effectively teaches us how to live, we have been given a most vivid picture of the nature of salvation. While it surely involves the mind, rationality, reasoning, and decision, there is a deeper part of man that is touched by the grace of God. Job once said, *“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding”* (Job 32:8). Solomon said, *“The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD”* (Prov 20:27). Speaking with this in mind, David said, *“For Thou wilt light my candle: the LORD My God will enlighten my darkness”* (Psa 18:28). Our text is speaking of this kind of process. It is the means through which Jesus manifests Himself to the individual.

This kind of teaching yields several results. First, **the person is illuminated** so that things are clearly seen. Second, **there is a willingness** that accompanies this illumination, so that the person fervently desires to be conformed to what he sees. Third, there is **enabling power** that comes with grace, so that what is seen and

desired can actually be accomplished. If the grace of God is “*frustrated*” (Gal 2:21), or through unbelief men “*fail of the grace of God*” (Heb 12:15), or are “*fallen from grace*” (Gal 5:4), this teaching will not be done. In such a case, a person will seek change by some other means – perhaps ordinances conceived by men (Col 2:20) – some set of procedures that guarantee the desired change or improvement.

Grace is always operative through faith – “*by grace through faith*” (Eph 2:8). That is true of initial faith, when one turns to the Lord, and of the ongoing life of faith as well (Heb 10:38).

DENYING. Other versions read, “*say No,*” NIV “*to renounce,*” NRSV “*turning away from,*” BBE “*to avoid,*” GWN “*to reject,*” NAB “*give up,*” NJB “*turn from,*” NLT and “*reject and renounce.*” AMPLIFIED The word “*deny*” means “not to accept, to reject, to refuse something offered.” THAYER **This, then, has to do with overcoming sin at the temptation level, when the assault is made upon the soul.** The grace of God effectively teaches the saved to successfully reject the temptations now mentioned.

UNGODLINESS. Other versions read, “*impiety,*” NRSV , “*irreligion,*” RSV “*evil,*” BBE and “*godlessness.*” CSB Ungodliness has to do with human expression – ungodlike thoughts and deeds – doing what contradicts the Divine nature and the salvation that is realized through grace. In a practical way, it means disregarding the truth made known in Christ, and willingly contradicting it in either thought, or word, or deed. The grace of God effectively teaches the saved ones to reject such expressions, giving no place for them to reside.

WORLDLY LUSTS. Other versions read, “*worldly desires,*” NASB and “*worldly passions.*” NIV These are **the wants** that tie us to a condemned world, as opposed to being “*joined to the Lord.*” They compete against the Lord, moving the person to prefer what is temporal to what is eternal. These cause people to give their souls in exchange for temporary pleasure or satisfaction. Just as sure as there is an unseen world teeming with things to be had and experienced, so the world is filled with such things – but they lead people to destruction. Worldly lust connect people to those things.

Let it be clear, if the ungodliness is expressed and worldly lusts entertained, it is because those things have not been rejected. If they have not been rejected, it is because grace has not taught the people to do so. If grace has not taught them to do this, it is because they have not been living by faith, for faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5).

2:12B ” Teaching us that . . . we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

It is not enough to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, refusing to allow them expression. Salvation is not only being delivered from the power of darkness, it is being translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son – a Kingdom that is characterized by a staggering amount of God-honoring activity. The thing that truly distinguishes the people of God is not only what they do **not** do, but how they **express** themselves in this present world.

THAT WE SHOULD. Other versions read, “*and to,*” NASB “*so that we can,*” GWN “*we must be,*” NJB and “*so that we might.*” ISV There is obligation in this word – that is, it is imperative that we live in the manner so described. However, there is more to it than mere obligation. The idea is that the grace of God teaches us to effectively subdue the flesh **in order that** we might walk in the Spirit, for no one **can** walk in the Spirit who does not crucify the flesh.

LIVE SOBERLY. Other versions read, “*sensibly,*” NASB “*self-controlled,*” NIV “*living wisely,*” BBE “*in sobriety,:*” MRD “*temperately,*” NAB “*self-restrained,*” NJB and “*live discreet (temperate, self-controlled).*” AMPLIFIED As used here, the root meaning of the word “*sober,*” is “with sound mind.” THAYER

This is the quality that **enables** one to be temperate or self-controlled. **It is a spiritual mind-set.** That is, the qualities that follow are the result of seeing things correctly, and adjusting ones expressions to to agree with the realities that are perceived. In my judgment, some of the versions have accented the result rather than the cause. Here, the meaning is that grace effectively teaches is to have a “*sound mind*” that is not drawn aside by the allurements of the world, or diverted by his “*fiery darts*” of temptation hurled by the devil (Eph 6:16).

LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY. Other versions read, “*upright,*” NIV “*uprightly,*” BBE “*justly,*” DOUAY and “*moral.*” GWN Living “*righteously*” is **doing** what is right, and in agreement with the doctrine. It speaks of a manner of life that adorns the doctrine, confirming that it is the truth. A person who lives in such a manner fulfills what God says to do, living out what the doctrine proclaims. Such a life give expression to what God says is right. The life of such a person is lived “ethically, in a right way, honestly, and with integrity.” FRIBERG

Let it be clear, the life that is lived “*righteously*” is **not** the result of Law – **it is the result of the effective teaching of grace.** That means that is **not** lived out of fear of Divine reprisal, but out of a preference to serve the Lord. That is the result of faith.

The necessity of living righteously is seen in the fact that “*the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Cor 6:9), which is the only alternative to living righteously. Jesus said “*the righteous*” will go “*into life eternal*” (Matt 25:46). Peter says that the eyes of the Lord are “*over the righteous*” (1 Pet 3:12). To confirm that “*the righteous*” are people who actually **do** righteousness (something that grace teaches us), John affirms, “*If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him*” (1 John 2:29). And again, “*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous*” (1 John 3:7). In other words, the person who abides in Christ cannot conduct his life in an unrighteous manner. This righteousness is the “*fruit*” of which Jesus spoke in John 15:1-8.

LIVE GODLY. Other versions read, “*in the knowledge of God,*” BBE “*godly way,*” CSB “*in the fear of God,*” MRD “*devotion to God,*” NLT “*piously,*” YLT “*God-fearing lives,*” LIVING and “*devout (spiritually whole) lives.*” AMPLIFIED The meaning of the word translated “*godly*” is “life lived in a reverent relation to God.” FRIBERG **This is life lived in a keen awareness of God, and out of the fellowship that results from knowing Him.** It is a life that is in harmony with God, and delivers an outward depiction of His nature, of which we are partakers (2 Pet 1:4). Such a life is lived in the fear of the Lord, so that the individual perfects holiness “*in the fear of God*” (2 Cor 7:1). As believers, such people submit themselves to one another “*in the fear of God*” (Eph 5:21), and serve God acceptably “*with reverence and godly fear*” (Heb 12:28). There is no substitute for a godly life, and no circumstance or condition can compensate for a lack of it.

Now, grace effectively teaches people to live in this manner, so that their outward lives match what grace has done within them. If you are successful in putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Eph 4:22-24), it is because the grace of God has effectively taught you to do it. If you are crucifying the flesh and growing in knowledge and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have no doubt devoted yourself diligently to such things, working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. But in the last analysis, you were a student, not a master. It was the grace of God that taught you how to actually do it. That is the essence of true “how-to” religion! There is no human system that can teach like the grace of God.

IN THIS PRESENT WORLD. The mortification the flesh (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5), not quenching the Spirit (Eph 4:30), and being “*filled with the fruits of righteousness*” (Phil 1:11), are all done while we are in “*this present world*” – “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4) that consistently contradicts everything God has said and done. Now I ask you, is that not a fitting commentary on the effectiveness of the grace of God?” One wonders why more is not being said of such things.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. ” (Titus 2:13-15)

INTRODUCTION

Paul is instructing Titus on the essentials of a good and acceptable ministry. There must be a consistent emphasis on the necessity of living in harmony with the sound doctrine. The approach to living is not to be simply correcting unacceptable behavior. To be sure, unsuitable demeanor is not accepted by the Lord. However, the life of faith is not simply the absence of sinful expressions. Actually, there are two reasons for eliminating sin from our lives. One is that it separates us from God and leads to destruction from the presence of His glory. However, the preeminent reason is that sin prohibits us from doing righteousness. It is the actual involvement in the good and acceptable will of God that is the **appointed objective** . We are not saved to occupy a kind of neutral zone, for with God there is no such thing as neutral. One is going either forward or backward, ascending or descending, increasing or decreasing. This is because the treasure of salvation is held within an earthen vessel (2 Cor 4:7), and our lives are being lived out in a hostile realm in which we are strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet 2:11). Although we have a “*new man*” that is “*created in all righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph 4:24), we also have an “*old man*” that is “*corrupt according to deceitful lusts*” (Eph 4:22). Even though we have been liberated from “*the law of sin and death*” that is in our members, the law itself remains, rearing itself and crying for our attention at every opportunity. These contradicting circumstances are why believers must be continually reminded of the nature of spiritual life, and why they have been redeemed. No person remaining in this world will grow beyond a critical need for exhortations such as those found in this text.

Titus 2:13 “ *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.*”

The words we now consider have been preceded by a reminder that the grace of God has not only

appeared, bringing salvation, but that it teaches those who receive it. The teaching is two-sided, addressing the dichotomy of our nature in Christ. First, it teaches us to “*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,*” refusing to give expression to the “*old man,*” or yield to the *other law* that is resident in our members. What follows presumes the teaching of grace has been heeded. If it has not, there is no possible way to fulfill this word.

LOOKING FOR. Other versions read, “*while we wait for,*” NIV “*awaiting,*” RSV “*while continuing to expect,*” CJB “*while we look forward,*” NLT “*in expectation of,*” WEYMOUTH and “*Awaiting and looking for the [fulfillment, the realization of our].*” AMPLIFIED The words “*looking for*” are translated from a single word. The words assume the one who is looking is acquainted with the One for whom he is waiting. It also includes the idea of being well pleased with that association, and eager to see it enhanced and brought to its fullest measure. “*Looking for*” also includes the idea of being dissatisfied with the present realm, and longing for the glories of the world to come. A person who is at home in this world cannot look for “*the blessed hope,*” which involves being gathered out of the world and unto Christ. Grace must first teach the individual to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, replacing that activity with living righteously and godly in this present world. When there is some measurable progress in those matters, looking will be possible.

THE BLESSED HOPE. Other versions read, “*glad hope,*” BBE “*happy fulfillment of our hope,*” NET and “*waiting in hope for the blessing.*” NJB This is a **confident** hope – that is, there is no question about it coming to pass. Jesus has said, “*I will come again*” (John 14:3), and hope takes hold of that word, for it answers the longing of the “*new heart.*” When a person has been “*joined to the Lord*” (1 Cor 6:17), and is enjoying His “*fellowship*” (1 Cor 1:9), there is a profound longing to be with Him in glory (Col 3:4). This is a hope that produces rejoicing, and therefore we read of “*the rejoicing of the hope*” (Heb 3:6). Because of our justification and the very nature of this hope, there is such a thing as “*abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit*” (Rom 15:13). The Spirit causes this hope to abound by unveiling more of the person of Jesus, His accomplishments, His present ministry, and His promised return.

One of the great flaws in a system of law, or an inordinate emphasis on correcting behavior, is that it does not produce a hope. In such a case, if there is any joy at all, it is found in the fact that one did not fall into the pit of iniquity. But that is not the appropriate cause of genuine spiritual joy – not if we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and “*rejoice in Christ Jesus*” (Phil 3:3). Joy is produced by **taking hold** of what is eternal – **not** letting go of what is temporal. That is a marvelous distinction that must be apprehended by all believers.

THE GLORIOUS APPEARING. Other versions read, “*the appearing of the glory,*” NASB “*manifestation of the glory,*” NRSV and “*the appearing of the glory.*” RSV **A glorious appearing is one that cannot be hid.** When Jesus first entered into the world, He was incognito, i.e., not recognized. He came “*in the form of a servant,*” **not** in glory (Phil 2:7)! He came “*in the likeness of sinful flesh,*” **not** in glory (Rom 8:3)! Even the most holy of men “*knew Him not*” until He was made known to them (John 1:31). His own people, the Israelites, who had been cultured to receive Him, “*received Him not*” (John 1:11).

However, His “*glorious appearing*” will be of another order. Because of this it will not – it cannot – be private or secret. Instead of divesting Himself of glory, as He did in His first appearing, He will come “*in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels*” (Lk 9:26). Instead of being hidden, “*every eye shall see Him*” (Rev 1:7). This appearance will strike unspeakable fear into the hearts of all who have rejected Him (Rev 6:15-16).

However, for those who have been taught by the grace of God, that will be the time of which it is written, “*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy*” (1 Pet 4:13). Our joy in the Lord will be brought to its apex at that time,

and “*everlasting joy*” will be upon our heads (Isa 35:10).

THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR. This phrase applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no teaching that states God Himself shall appear. Jesus will come in the glory of the Father (Matt 16:27). The focus of attention will be on the glorified Christ Himself, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells (Col 1:19; 3:9). The fulness of the glory of God will be seen **in** Jesus Christ, when He comes “*in His glory*” (Matt 25:30-31), and “*power and great glory*” (Mk 13:26). This text confirms that Jesus can properly be referred to as “*God*.” God Himself assigned this term to Jesus (Heb 1:8). Thomas called Him “*my God*” (John 20:28), and Jesus did not rebuke him for doing so. Of course, the ascription “*the Son of God*,” points to His Divinity. Even the hard-hearted Jews knew that (John 5:18). Of course, when He comes again, there will be no question about whether He is God or not. He will come in the Father’s glory, and that would not be possible if His basic Person was different from that of the Father.

“ 2:14 *Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*”

Notice the emphasis on Deity! Grace teaches us to look for **Christ’s** glorious appearing. **He** is “**the great God and Savior.**” **Jesus** gave **Himself** . **Jesus** redeemed us. **Jesus** purified us unto **Himself** . **He** did this in order that we might be zealous of the works that have been ordained by God (Eph 2:10). Right here, we are the very heart of the Gospel.

GAVE HIMSELF. These words occur in three other places, and all of them are weighty: “ ***gave Himself for our sins***” (Gal 1:4); “ ***gave Himself for me***” (Gal 2:20); “ ***gave Himself for it*** [church] (Eph 5:26; “ ***gave Himself a ransom***” (1 Tim 2:6). All major versions read the same, with the only exception being the NASB. In Galatians 2:20 it reads, “ ***delivered Himself up.***”

The word translated “*gave*” is very precise. It has nothing to do with giving up, surrendering, or abandoning a cause. It rather speaks of a deliberate act – giving something to someone else for the advantage of the one to whom it was given. THAYER It involves allowing another person to take what is given to him without any objection on the part of the giver. Inherent in the word is the idea of furnishing something to someone else that is necessary or essential. The thing that is given is more than a common gift – it is something that cannot be received from anyone else.

In this case, what “*the great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” **gave** was Himself. Elsewhere the act is referred to in these words: “*He offered up Himself*” (Heb 7:27), and “*the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God*” (Heb 9:14).

This has particular reference to the time of Christ’s death upon the cross – that is where the giving of reference took place. Actually, there were two offerings made by Jesus. The first was in Gethsemane when He offered Himself to God for the accomplishment of the second and premier offering on the cross. Like the high priest of old, he first offered “*for himself*” (Heb 5:3). This was the offering to which He referred when He said, “*I sanctify Myself*” (John 17:19). It had to do with Him being a suitable sacrifice in which was “*no sin*” or “*spot*” of any kind.

Having sanctified Himself, He offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for sin. He did so because it was essential, and because He wanted to do God’s will. He presented Himself to God as a sacrifice to be “*made sin*” (2 Cor 5:21), and “*cursed*” (Gal 3:13). This is the only way God could deal with sin without consuming the sinner. That forever proves that sin and the sinner could not be separated. It was this very condition that demanded that Jesus offer Himself.

REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY. Other versions say to redeem us from “*every lawless deed,*” NKJV “*all wickedness,*” NIV “*all wrongdoing,*” BBE and “*every sin.*” GENEVA The word translated “*iniquity*” is not the same as the one translated “*sin.*” Here, the meaning of “*iniquity*” is “contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness,” THAYER “a general state of wrong, lawlessness,” FRIBERG and “to behave with complete disregard for the law.” LOUW-NIDA

This has to do with **bondage** to sin (2 Pet 2:19), being the **servant** of sin (Rom 6:17), and being **dead** in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). This is the **result** of being forgiven of “*all trespasses*” (Col 2:13), and “*justified from all things*” Acts 13:39). **As soon as a person is forgiven of sin, he is liberated from its power** – that is the doctrine of Scripture, and is the point of this text. It is the process to which the Scripture refers when it says, “*For he that is dead is freed from sin*” (Rom 6:7). Jesus said the person who commits sin “*is the servant of sin*” (John 8:34). However, that servitude ends when the Son makes the person “*free indeed*” (John 8:36). It is this matter of being redeemed “**from all iniquity**” that reveals why Peter wrote, “*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning*” (2 Pet 2:20).

PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF. The reason for forgiveness and being freed from the dominion of sin was not ourselves – i.e. it was not merely to free us, liberate us from bondage, and bring relief to the soul. It was rather in order that we might be His own people, for He could not receive us as we were. He redeemed us so we could be uniquely His own.

A PECULIAR PEOPLE. This is a special people who can effectively “*show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (1 Pet 2:9). It is a people to whom He can command the angels to minister (Heb 1:13-14), whose prayers He will hear (1 Pet 3:12) and in whom He can work “*that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ*” (Heb 13:20-21). It is a people He has taken out of the mass of mankind for His own name (Acts 15:14). These are the people He gives to Christ to bring to glory (Heb 2:10,13).

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. Other versions read, “*eager to do what is good,*” NIV and “*people who are] eager and enthusiastic about [living a life that is good and filled with] beneficial deeds.*” AMPLIFIED Having been redeemed, purified, and made peculiarly God’s people, they are to do good works with zeal. Elsewhere this objective is associated with being a new creation: “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Eph 2:10). In that marvelous context, all of the exhortations given to the aged and young men and women make perfect sense. Maintaining purity is necessary to the objective of being zealous of good works. This is also associated with spiritual gifts which also have to do with zeal (1 Cor 14:12).

2:15 “*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*”

The truth is not delivered to people as a mere reference point, to be recalled in the time of crisis or some special occasion. If men do not act upon the truth, it yields no benefit to them. Also, the truth of God is not a private matter, tailored **only** for the individual who sees it. It is personal, but it is not private. Therefore, Paul will address Titus about his personal response to these matters – a reaction that has to do with making them known to others.

THESE THINGS SPEAK. Other versions read, “*These, then, are the things you should teach,*” NIV “*Declare these things,*” NRSV “*Tell these things to the believers,*” GWN “*communicate these things,*” NET and “*Tell [them all] these things.*” AMPLIFIED

It is important to note that there are no “how-to” instructions in the teaching and exhortations that have

been given. *“Things that become sound doctrine”* included the following. **1-** Be sober, **2-** be grave, **3-** be temperate, **4-** be sound in the faith, **5-** be sound in charity, **6-** be sound in patience, **7-** be in behavior as becomes holiness, **8-** do not be false accusers, **9-** do not be given to much wine, **10-** teach good things, **11-** women love their husbands and children, **12-** be discreet, **13-** be chaste, **14-** be keepers at home, **15-** be good, **16-** be obedient to their own husbands, **17-** be sober-minded, **18-** show yourself a pattern of good works, **19-** in doctrine show incorruptness, gravity, and sincerity **20-** have sound speech that cannot be condemned, **21-** servants be obedient to their own masters, **22-** please their masters well in all things, **23-** do not answer back, **24-** do not purloin, **25-** show good fidelity. All, of these things are to be done in order that *“the word of God be not blasphemed,”* and that *“the doctrine of God”* may be adorned (2:1-10).

Yet, with those twenty-five assignments, staggering to the mind of the flesh, there is not so much as one detailed instruction provided. And why is this so? Why isn't there a manual of procedures accompanying these words? It is because the Word of God is *“with power.”* All of the resources that are required to fulfill His Word accompany it. When men put their efforts into believing the Word, mixing it with faith, genuine and lasting results **will** be realized.

This is why these things must be said, declared, and proclaimed. Paul is not telling Titus to hold courses on these matters, but to **proclaim** them. When men, in faith, take them seriously, God will work in them *“both to will and to do of His own good pleasure”* (Phil 2:12).

EXHORT WITH ALL AUTHORITY. How does one *“exhort with all authority?”* His words are removed from the category of mere suggestion or ideals. If it is true that Jesus gave Himself to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a people who are zealous of good works, how can godly men exhort in any other way? Do not those circumstances require fervent, undiluted, and urgent words? How can there be any allowance for deficiency and flaw if they are true? Exhorting with all authority is urging men to do what is required of them, and doing so with a sense of urgency and necessity. Such words are not merely pressing men to do better, but to actually accomplish the things that are urged upon them – remember, there were twenty-five of them!

REBUKE WITH ALL AUTHORITY. Other versions read, *“reprove,”* NASB *“convince,”* GENEVA *“correct,”* GWN and *“refute.”* ISV After citing the waywardness of the Cretians, Paul had told Titus, *“rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith”* (Titus 1:13). Those who brazenly continue to sin when they have been duly instructed are to be rebuked. Their soundness in the faith depends upon such action.

Rebuking is not a work of knit-picking, but one of turning men away from sin and the world. Jesus told His disciples, *“If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him”* (Luke 17:3). Paul wrote to Timothy, *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”* (1 Tim 5:20). The preaching of the Word was to be attended by reproof and rebuke when necessary (2 Tim 4:2). **Rebuke is the appointed way of bringing an abrupt end to the practice of sin.** It is a way of informing the people God will not receive them in such a state. Rebuking with authority requires that the reproof be firmly founded on the Word of God and the nature of His great salvation. Since the modern church has adopted the methodologies of psychiatry, rebuke is not common. However, it is still necessary.

LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE. Other versions read, *“disregard you,”* NASB *“look down on you,”* NRSV *“ignore you,”* GWN and *“despise or disregard or think little of you [conduct yourself and your teaching so as to command respect].”* AMPLIFIED That is, Titus is not to live in such a manner as to neutralize what he says, so that people do not take him seriously. A person whose life is inconsistent with the doctrine ought not to engage in the rebuking of sinners. Paul said something similar to Timothy: *“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”* (1 Tim

4:12). Those who are younger are to see to it that they are separated from the world's defilements and manners. They are not to be caught up in worldly fads, or have inordinate appetites for the things that are passing away. Those who speak for God are to be pure.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.”

(Titus 3:1-2)

INTRODUCTION

How are preachers and teachers to address believers in a decadent society. When iniquity abounds, violence covers the face of the earth, intemperance is in vogue, and life in general tends to be raw and uncultured, how should we speak? Are we to assume that all believers will simply adjust their lives to address such circumstances in a godly manner? Are civil and social matters strictly private, with no need to publically address them? Indeed, our text confirms that those who are in Christ are to be reminded of how to conduct themselves in a society in which they **appear** to be better and more holy than they may actually be. The word Paul delivers on this matter is brief, but pungent. His teaching confirms that a sensuous and unjust society has a neutralizing effect upon the zeal and commitment of believers. It tends to lead them to the conclusion that maintaining a holy attitude and a godly demeanor is of little or no value in an environment that is so filled with unrighteousness. Add to that the notion that the government is by the people, and that their personal pursuits are to be underwritten by the civil law, and you have a circumstance that actually can promote living solely for self, with no regard for the glory and honor of God. We will find that there is no way to sanctify civil disorder. God has made no provision in Christ for men to speak derisively of others, be trouble-makers, and live in an inconsiderate manner. In a few words, Paul will make this quite clear. His words will be remarkably broad, and will require extensive meditation and introspection. Behind his words is the fact of the Lord being the *“Governor among the nations”* (Psa 22:28). There is also the matter of it being better to obey God than men, so that nothing will be said that justifies living in a manner that contradicts the Word and will of the Lord. There will be no suggestion that civil authorities have a right to require things that God forbids, or that it is right to yield to laws or customs that require such things.

Tit 3:1a *“ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates .”*

PUT THEM IN MIND. Other versions read, *“remind them,”* NKJV *“make clear to them,”* BBE *“admonish them,”* DOUAY *“put them in remembrance,”* GENEVA *“warn them,”* PNT and *“constantly remind.”* WILLIAMS The words *“put in mind”* come from a single word that means *“to cause one to remember,*

bring to remembrance, recall to mind.” THAYER

After writing to Timothy concerning the necessity of faithfulness under difficult circumstances, Paul admonished him, “*Of these things, put them in remembrance*” (2 Tim 2:14). In his second epistle, Peter twice said he was putting the brethren in remembrance of certain things: “*I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance*” (2 Pet 1:12-13). In his epistle, Jude reminded his readers of those who had been blessed by God, then drew back: “*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not*” (Jude 1:5). This is a peculiar ministry of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said would “*bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14:26).

Why is it necessary to “*put them in mind?*” You do not need to remind people to remember what they have learned by rote. Imagine reminding an adult with all their wits, “Remember that one plus one is two.” Or, “Don’t forget to eat something this week.” However, in a moral and spiritual arena, men do not live by rote, or routine. This is because there are competitive influences all around them, and within them as well. A single decision or deed can alter a person’s condition – like Adam and Eve eating a piece of fruit. It can even alter one’s eternal destiny – like Judas betraying Jesus.

The mind is to be devoted to loving God (Matt 22:37). It is also used to “*serve the law of God*” (Rom 7:25). There is a transformation that is caused by the “*renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2). That renewal is helped along by putting the saints in mind of things they already know. There is also a full persuasion that can take place in the mind – “*fully persuaded in his own mind*” (Rom 14:6). Remembrance plays a role in this work. Conditions like a “*fervent mind*” (2 Cor 7:7), a “*willing mind*” (2 Cor 8:12), a “*ready mind*” (2 Cor 8:19), and a “*sound mind*” (2 Tim 1:7), are more possible when it is stirred by holy remembrance.

I have observed over the years that the professed church is weak in the area of the mind – thinking, meditating, determining, and discerning. Thinking is not its strong point.

SUBJECT TO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS. Other versions read, “*subject to rulers and authorities,*” NKJV “*submissive to rulers and authorities,*” RSV “*submit to government and its officials,*” CJB and “*obedient to the officials in authority.*” NJB Peter referred to this same obedience when he wrote, “*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme (rulers) ; or unto governors (authorities) , as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well*” (1 Pet 2:14).

It seems to me that this instruction takes into account the seditious nature of the many Jews with whom Christians were closely aligned. Barabbas was an insurrectionist (Mk 15:7). There was also Theudas and Judas, who drew men away after themselves, who were anarchists, promoting obedience to themselves (Acts 5:36-37). Jude spoke of some false teachers who “*despise dominion,*” and spoke “*evil of dignities*” (Jude 1:8). Peter said of them, they “*despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*” (2 Pet 2:10).

Elsewhere, Paul teaches that government and its officials are ordained of God, referring to them as “*higher powers*” – **not** highest! He states that these powers are “*ordained of God,*” and whoever resists them is resisting “*the ordinance of God.*” They are encouragers of good, and the appointed means to suppressing evil. He refers to a civil ruler as “*the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*” (Rom 13:1-4). This is God’s way of keeping evil from breaking out across the earth as it did in Noah’s day. This is not the Divine answer to all evil, but to the excessive outbreak of it.

Considering that the Roman Empire was in authority at that time, some of the current trends of believers to malign “*principalities and powers*” are questionable, to say the least. It is no more right to speak evil of dignities today than it was during the time of Titus. To provide us with an even more arresting consideration, Jude reminds of that “*Michael the archangel,*” when disputing with the devil himself, did not dare to “*bring against him a railing accusation*” He rather said to him, “*the Lord rebuke thee,*” deferring to the One who ruled Satan (Jude 1:9).

OBEY MAGISTRATES. “*Magistrates*” refers to all who have been invested with civil authority – keeping in mind that God Himself is the Author of civil authority. The obedience rendered to them does not allow for disobedience to God – as Daniel ceasing to pray (Dan 6:10), or the three Hebrew children bowing to Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image (Dan 3:18). In honoring the king (1 Pet 2:17), we obey those with authority who have not encroached upon our obedience to the King of kings. Blessed is the person who knows how to do this.

“ **3:1b . . . to be ready to every good work.**” Other versions read, “*ready for every good deed,*” NASB “*ready to do whatever is good,*” NIV “*ready for any honest work,*” RSV “*ready to do any honorable kind of work,*” CJB “*open to every good enterprise,*” NAB “*ready to do good at every opportunity,*” NJB “*be prepared for every right action,*” WEYMOUTH and “*prepared and willing to do any upright and honorable work.*”
AMPLIFIED

READY. The word “*ready*” has the following Greek lexical meaning : “prepared to do something,” THAYER and “pertaining to a state of readiness.” LOUW-NIDA In English, the word “*ready*” means, “ prepared mentally or physically for some experience or action.” WEBSTER In the parable of the ten virgins, only those who “*were ready*” went in with the bridegroom (Matt 25:10). David’s servants said to him, “*Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint*” (2 Sam 15:15). Speaking of His return in glory, Jesus told His disciples, “*Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh*” (Matt 24:44). The work of John the Baptist was to “ *make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” – who were prepared to receive Him when He was manifested to Israel (Lk 1:17). Believers who are “*rich in this world*” are admonished to be “ *ready to distribute,*” or “*share*” NASB their wealth (1 Tim 6:18). When Paul reached the point when he was going to be martyred he said, “*I am ready to be offered*” (2 Tim 4:6). Believers are admonished to “ *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).

The words “*be ready*” speak of a condition of preparation that exists, **not** one that is in the making. There are times when men are to “*make ready.*” On the day of the Passover, Jesus told His disciples to “*make ready*” for the occasion (Mk 14:15). John the Baptist was to “*make ready*” a people (Lk 1:17). This, however, is not the kind of activity to which our text refers. This speaks of an existing condition – the preparation has already been made. Examples of such a state have been cited above.

We are living in a time when preparation for future living in this world has been accentuated. There are professions that specialize in establishing goals to be met in the future. We have financial planners, retirement consultants, and an entire educational system that is calculated to prepare people for the future. It is not that such approaches are of themselves wrong. However, they are an adjunct to higher and more certain things. All of them assume the individual will live longer, that the political and social climate will remain static, that no catastrophe will occur, and that the world will continue on as it is. None of them reckon on the coming of the Lord, or death, or the day of judgment.

It is possible for a believer to spend an inordinate amount of time preparing for their future in this world. They must not allow this to happen. There are certain inevitabilities for which we are **BE** prepared – not get

prepared. These include death, the coming of the Lord, and the day of judgment. Preparing as if these could take place tomorrow is not good enough.

EVERY GOOD WORK. Our text applies readiness to another area of life – doing good. In this case, “*every good work*” applies to any honorable kind of work, CBJ involvement in any good enterprise, NAB or participating in any upright and honorable work. **AMPLIFIED** It may be a Samaritan who was ready to assist a man left half dead upon a road (Lk 10:30). It could be Paul’s young nephew who overheard the Jews planning to kill him (Acts 23:16). Perhaps it is a young Jewish maiden who served Naaman’s wife, and was knowledgeable that he was a leper (2 Kgs 5:2-4). Ponder the sister of the three month old infant Moses, who was “*ready*” to speak to the king’s daughter about the care of her brother (Ex 2:7). What of being ready to give an exhortation when asked (Acts 13:15). Who can forget Isaiah who was “*ready*” when standing before the Lord to say, “*Here am I, send me*” (Isa 6:8).

In view of this, believers should not allow personal preferences to rule what kind of work they do. Unfortunately, we live in a society that caters to personal preference rather than do what is “*good*” or “*honorable and upright.*” Amos was a “*gatherer of sycamore fruit*” (Amos 7:14). Elisha was plowman (1 Kgs 19:19). Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen (Matt 4:18-22). Matthew was a tax collector (Matt 9:9). None of these men stayed in their original occupation, but were called up higher. This suggests they did well in their occupation, for “*he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much*” (Luke 16:10). When it comes to being ready to enter into every opportunity to do good, the postulate is that you are currently doing your best for God’s glory, whether you are a slave or a master.

If, in Christ, we are God’s “*workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Eph 2:10), should we not be “*ready*” to do them? If we have been redeemed from all iniquity to be the people of God who are “*zealous of good works*” (Tit 2:14), is it really right to be unprepared to do them? See, behind this exhortation is the fact that God sets opportunities to do good before His people. He does not present us with a schedule of such opportunities. Instead, He informs us that He works in us “*that which is well pleasing in His sight*” (Heb 13:21). Our role is to “*be ready*” to step into those opportunities, and bring glory to God through our good works (Matt 5:16).

3:2 “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.” This word has to do with our general social demeanor. In Christ, we are not allowed freedom to conduct our lives in a manner that is at variance with our profession of faith.

SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN. Other versions read, “*malign no one,*” NASB “*slander no one,*” NIV “*blaspheme no man,*” PNT “*not to insult anyone,*” WEYMOUTH and “*slander or abuse or speak evil of no one.*” **AMPLIFIED** For some, this is a hard saying, for they seem to take delight in speaking derogatorily of people. This applies to principalities, powers, and magistrates. As it is written, “*Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*” (Acts 23:5; Ex 22:28; Eccl 10:20). It also applies to our peers, whether they be masters or servants, male or female, Jew or Gentile.

This includes people like “*false accusers*” (2 Tim 3:3), those who “*sow discord among brethren*” (Prov 6:19), “*revilers*” (1 Cor 6:10), and those who are “*not afraid to speak evil of dignities*” (2 Pet 2:10). However, lest men imagine that there are some of whom they can speak evil, our text says to speak evil of “*no man.*” James focuses the attention on the body of Christ itself, affirming “*speak not evil one of another, brethren*” (James 4:11). Peter admonishes the saints to “*lay aside all . . . evil speakings*” (1 Pet 2:1). Paul also exhorts men to do this (Eph 4:31). James shows the attempts of the tongue to do something even the realm of the impersonal creation forbids. “*But the tongue . . . is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same*

mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh” (James 3:8-12).

The idea here is that we are not to seek to harm anyone with our words. We may warn others of false teachings, as did Paul concerning Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim 1:20), or alert our brothers to those who will do them harm, as Paul did concerning Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim 4:14-15). However, we must not engage in derisive and maligning speech against anyone. That is the mandate of the Lord, and we do well to take it seriously.

DO NOT BE A BRAWLER. Other versions read, “*be peaceable,*” NKJV “*uncontentious,*” NASB and “*avoid quarreling.*” NRSV In the English language, “*brawler*” means “to quarrel or fight noisily: wrangle.” WEBSTER The word “*brawler*” speaks more of an attitude than of attempting physical harm – although that is included. As used here, a “*brawler*” is the opposite of a “*peacemaker*” (Matt 5:9). The transgression exhibited in being a “*brawler*” is found in the fact that such a person creates an environment in which “*the fruit of righteousness*” cannot be sown. As it is written, “*And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace*” (James 3:18). In that same passage, James refers to the kind of harvest that is produced by the brawler: “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work . . . From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*” (James 3:16; 4:1). One of the primary evidences of the sin of sectarianism is the level of *brawling* that it has produced.

BE GENTLE. Other versions read, “*considerate,*” NIV “*give way to others,*” BBE “*be friendly,*” CJB “*be kind,*” CSB “*be mild,*” DARBY “*soft,*” GENEVA and “*forbearing (yielding, gentle, and conciliatory).*” AMPLIFIED Gentleness includes the ideas of being gracious, mild, equitable, patient, forbearing, and considerate. This is the opposite of being a brawler. It is the kind of spirit that will not break a bruised reed, or quench a smoking flax (Matt 12:20). This is what moved Jesus to say of Himself, “*I am . . . lowly in heart*” (Matt 11:29). It is why the prophet said of Him, “*He shall . . . gently lead those that are with young*” (Isa 40:11). It is why Paul referred to “*the gentleness of Christ*” (2 Cor 10:1). Being “*gentle*” is not being abrasive, or leaping at an opportunity to argue or point out some flaw. It is the trait of someone who seeks the betterment of those with whom he deals. In such a case, harshness is only exhibited when there is obstinance – as confirmed in Jesus’ diatribe against the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23).

SHOW ALL MEEKNESS TO ALL MEN. Other versions read “*showing all humility,*” NKJV “*showing every consideration,*” NASB “*show true humility,*” NIV “*show every courtesy,*” NRSV and “*show unqualified courtesy.*” AMPLIFIED Meekness is mildness or gentleness – **but it is exhibited by one who has the strength to react otherwise.** This is not a meekness that is exhibited by the weak, who can really do nothing but yield to the whims of others. Meekness is like a voluntary bridle one places on himself, choosing to use his strength to forbear in order that he might show mercy. “**ALL meekness**” is meekness to the fullest extent possible. If there is an opportunity to show kindness, the meek person will show it. Ponder Jesus saying to Judas when he came to betray Him, “*Friend, wherefore art thou come*” (Matt 26:50). There is an example of showing “*all meekness to all men.*”

Believers can fulfill this word knowing that a day has been “*appointed*” in which all men will receive their just due (Acts 17:31; Heb 9:27). All issues do not have to be settled by us, or in the here and now. There is one “*who is able to save and to destroy*” – and it is not us (James 4:12).

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

(Titus 3:3)

INTRODUCTION

Paul had left Titus in Crete to “*set in order the things that are wanting,*” or the things that were “*lacking,*” and “*appoint elders in every city*” (Tit 1:5). The believers in Crete were not yet established in the faith, and that is something that must be accomplished. Spiritual life that does not mature will not be able to continue. This is because it is not lived out in a moral or spiritual vacuum. Not only are there lingering remnants of the flesh within the believer, called “*the old man,*” but the very world in which life is being lived out, together with the lusts that tie men to it, is in a deteriorating state – passing away (1 John 2:17). Add to that the fact that they have an adversary that is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and it is apparent why we cannot remain immature children in Christ. On top of all this, those in Christ Jesus are intended to “*grow up into Christ*” (Eph 4:15). The objective is to bear “*much fruit*” to God, not merely exist or survive (John 15:1-8). In increasing stages, believers are being changed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). That work is in perfect concert with the predetermination of God Himself, that those who are “*justified*” be “*conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom 8:29). In all of this, no room has been made for living in a faulty or juvenile manner. In life, the one who is in Christ must progress toward heaven, distancing himself from the world from which he has been delivered. A time has been appointed when all will stand before the One who died for them, and they must not do so in an unprepared state. While that may be perfectly clear to you at this time, Satan and all of his hosts are working to move us to live without thinking about these realities, That is the logic behind the teaching of the book of Titus. The treasure of salvation – “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” – is held in an “*earthen vessel*” (2 Cor 4:6). The condition requires continued vigilance, and pressing toward the mark, on the part of the one in Christ Jesus. In this particular text, we will be reminded of what we once were – a condition that can reoccur if we do not work our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12).

Titus 3:3a “*For we ourselves also were sometimes . . .*”

The admonition has been one that involved sobriety, diligence, and a public demeanor that matches the

profession of faith. Every advantage has been given to the believer. This has included the teaching of the grace of God, which tutors us in saying “No!” to ungodliness and worldly lusts, while living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (2:11-12). However, lest we be wise in our own conceits, we are reminded of what we once were. Salvation is not merely the administration of various moral and social improvements. There was a very real condition in which the Lord found us, and we do well to remember it.

FOR. The word “for” introduces a reason for the preceding statement. Here it is a form of spiritual logic or pattern of reasoning. Both older and younger men and women, together with servants, have been addressed concerning their attitudes and manner of life (2:1-10). The grace of God is also said to be teaching us to effectively reject the temptation to sin, and to live godly lives in anticipation of the coming of the Lord (2:11-12). The reason for Christ giving Himself has also been clearly stated: to “redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (2:14).

This makes all sin totally unreasonable. It decimates any excuse given for sin, for salvation not only remits sins committed, but empowers the individual to live in a godly manner. Now, the text will begin to show us how effectively this has been accomplished. However, this will be done in such a manner as to destroy the pride that comes from thinking this was all the result of human mastery and wisdom. Our new lives are not the result of our achievement, even though they required our commitment and hearty effort.

WE OURSELVES. The expression “we ourselves” comes from a single Greek word. It is intended to include both the speaker and the readers, with an added **emphasis** : i.e. “WE” as compared to everyone else. It is the kind of reasoning that is reflected in a rebuke to a very talented body of students who had committed something wrong: i.e. “YOU did that?”

This is an expression that affirms a distinction between the people who are in Christ and those who are not – and it is more than merely being forgiven. The saved are more than a people who have managed to straighten up their lives. Although that has been done, it has not accomplished in **their** strength. Paul will now remind Titus that “we ourselves” – the saved – were, in fact, in an absolutely hopeless state. There was no mere program that could retrieve us for God.

ALSO. Other versions read, “we too.” NIV The particular sentence that is the point of reference is the admonition to “speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (3:2). While the condition of the lost is repulsive to us, we must not be arrogant toward them, or conduct ourselves as though, independently of Jesus Christ, we were superior to them. We are familiar with their condition, because we were once in that state ourselves. This is the same kind of logic that was expressed to Israel: “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex 22:21). Take Jesus out of the picture, and remove the work that He has done in us, and we are no different than they!

WERE SOMETIMES. This is a unique and powerful expression. Other versions read, “were once,” NKJV “aforetime,” ERV and “formerly.” MRD This refers to a **former** condition, not a present one! Those who say believers are really no different than anyone else, have muddied the waters of thought. In fact, a significant amount of our thanksgiving can be traced back to the fact that we are **not** what we once were. The error is in forgetting what we once were. We are reminded, as Israel was, “look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged” (Isa 51:1). Ponder how often the Spirit reminds us of what we **were** .

“Wherefore remember, that ye being **in time past** Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that **at that time** ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:11-12). Have you forgotten what you once were – without God in the world?

Remember – “For ye **were** sometimes darkness . . .” (Eph 5:8). “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were** some of you . . .” (1 Cor 6:11). Oh, the expressions are so numerous, that we can only give a sampling of them. “Ye **were** the servants of sin” (Rom 6:17) . “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph 2:2), “Which in time past **were not** a people . . . which **had not** obtained mercy” (1 Pet 2:10). “Ye **were** as sheep going astray” (1 Pet 2:20). “For **the time past** of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles . . .” (1 Pet 4:3).

The lives of those in Christ consist of two parts: the past and the present, then and now, the former and the latter. The line of demarcation is the time when we were “*joined to the Lord*” (1 Cor 6:17), “*illuminated*” (Heb 10:32), and “*delivered*” (Col 1:13). Our text will now elaborate on the past – our former lives. It will emphasize what we **were** , not merely what we did.

“ 3:3b . . . foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures . . . ”

Speaking through the Spirit, Paul will not gloss our former nature. He will not allow for believers to think of their former state as inherently better than that of others. Our nature may have erupted in less offensive ways than others, but it was our nature that was the problem. It is what we were within, not what we were without. Even the scribes and Pharisees knew how to clean up their outward lives. Jesus referred to it as making “*clean the outside,*” appearing “*beautiful outwardly,*” and “*outwardly appearing righteous.*” However, the problem was within, not without. Jesus referred to their condition as, being “*withing full of extortion and excess,*” being “*full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness,*” and being “*full of hypocrisy and iniquity*” (Matt 23:25,27,28). That condition was held within a religious appearance. Our former condition was not necessarily within such a context, although it may well have been.

FOOLISH. Other versions read, “*without intelligence,*” DARBY “*unwise,*” DOUAY “*stupid,*” GWN “*reckless,*” MRD “*ignorant,*” NJB “*thoughtless,*” YLT “*deficient in understanding,*” WEYMOUTH and “*without understanding.*” WILLIAMS As used here, the word “*foolish*” means “*senseless, devoid of understanding.*” LEH This is the state that is ascribed to all men by nature: “*There is none that understandeth*” (Rom 3:11). This is not referring to a state men would call *uneducated* . This is speaking of the human capacity. We were foolish because, within the boundaries of nature, there was no other alternative. Further, this is not speaking of intellectual or scholastic acumen. In particular, this has to do with the knowledge of God, and things pertaining to life and godliness. This inaptitude of thought was made known in living as though there was no God, no end of the world, and no day of judgment. We lived as though we did not need to be saved, were not in a hopeless state, and as if this world was going to last forever. We lived as though our will was the primary will, and our satisfaction was fundamental.

DISOBEDIENT. Other versions read, “*hard in heart,*” BBE “*incredulous,*” DOUAY and “*obstinate.*” WEYMOUTH As used here, the word “*disobedience*” means “*impersuasive, uncompliant.*” THAYER Here, language breaks down, for in the English “*disobedience*” means “*refusing or neglecting to obey.*” This may lead to the assumption that a specific word was delivered to the person, and they refused to take it seriously. While that may very well be involved, there is more in being “*disobedient*” than that. This involves a refusal to recognize God in creation (Rom 1:21,26). It includes the violation of the conscience and the intuitive sense of right and wrong (Rom 2:15). Apart from Christ, there is a certain hostility against even the Law of God, “*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom 8:7). This is a breakdown of the components of being “*disobedient.*” In this case, our prior lives were marked by the **inability** to obey God. This inability is further explained in the next word.

DECEIVED. Other versions read, “*led astray,*” NRSV “*turned from the true way,*” BBE “*wandering in*

error,” DARBY “*erring,*” DOUAY “*misled,*” GWN “*deluded,*” NAB and “*fooled.*” IE Apostolic doctrine further defines this condition. It is not that we were simply deceived by our peers, or teachers among men. It is Satan that is charged with deceiving “*the whole world*” (Rev 12:9). He is “*the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*” (Eph 2:1). Satan does use “*deceivers*” who perpetrate his ways, leading men to be “*deceived and being deceived*” (2 Tim 3:13). However, it is Satan who is “*the father*” of all lies, which are the vehicle of deception (John 8:44). The point here is that sin put us into the devil’s domain, where he is invincible. We were “*deceived*” just as surely as Eve (2 Cor 11:3). We were deluded into thinking we could direct our own lives, confining the realm of our thoughts to this present world.

SERVING DIVERS LUSTS. Other versions read, “*servicing various lusts,*” NKJV “*enslaved by all kinds of passions,*” NIV and “*captives of various passions.*” CSB The word “*servicing*” refers to the activity of a slave, whether willing or not. We were shackled to various kinds of inordinate desires and passions, and those shackles could not be broken by any human power, individual or collective. “*Lusts*” refers to unlawful desires – desires that bind us to a perishing world. They all center in self, and life in the body, which is our most vulnerable part. This enslavement was the result of being deceived by the master deceiver. That deception led to the exaltation of self above everything else – even the God who created us.

SERVING PLEASURES. Other versions read “*dissipations,*” NJB “*voluptuousness,*” PNT and “*pleasant feelings.*” PHILLIPS Most translations read “*pleasures,*” which are etymologically defined as “*enjoyment, or that which is pleasurable in an unfavorable sense.*” GINGRICH These are baser desires that are associated with our human nature. They are so strong that they can supercede a desire for the Lord. Thus it is written of those who apostatize, they are “*lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*” (2 Tim 3:5). Our text speaks of “*divers,*” or different kinds of illicit desires. They range from finding enjoyment in being esteemed, having many goods, having satisfying fleshly sensations, and a host of other things relating to life in this world. In a nutshell, they have to do with being satisfied with something other than God and His great salvation. As is true of all sin, self, or “*I*” is at the center of such indulgences. However, in salvation, self is supplanted by Christ, and worldly desires for those of God.

3:3c “ . . . living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Our former lives were characterized by captivity and bondage to sin and the devil. Our perception was corrupted – we were “*foolish.*” Our response to God Himself was depraved – we were “*disobedient.*” We were the helpless vassals of the devil – we were “*deceived.*” Our purpose for living was perverted by purely self-interests – we were “*servicing lusts and pleasures.*” But this was not the end of the matter. Our lives were conducted in a wayward manner, and with flawed expressions. They are briefly summarized in this text.

LIVING. Other versions read, “*spending our life,*” NASB “*we lived,*” NIV “*passing our days,*” NRSV “*spending our days,*” ISV and “*wasting our days.*” AMPLIFIED This speaks of the **focus** of life, or how we conducted our lives. The pillars of our expressive conduct were malice, envy, and hate – all of which presume the priority of self, and life in this world. This speaks of the direction of life, or the way in which we were pointed. This is not speaking of the peaks and valleys of life, but of the default manner of living. It is something from which we had to be delivered. Peter referred to such a life as “*vain conversation,*” “*aimless conduct,*” NKJV “*futile way of life,*” NASB “*empty way of life,*” NIV or “*the useless (fruitless) way of living.*” AMPLIFIED It was a manner of life that did not lead to ultimate life, but was rather the “*broad*” way that led to destruction (Matt 7:13).

IN MALICE. Other versions read, “*bad feelings,*” BBE “*evil,*” CSB “*maliciousness,*” GENEVA “*resentment,*” LIVING and “*being mean.*” IE The word “*malice*” means, “*ill-will, desire to injure,*” THAYER “*the quality of wickedness, with the implication of that which is harmful and damaging.*” LOUW-NIDA In English,

the word means “desire to cause pain, injury, and distress to another.” As used in Scripture, it particularly refers to a response to being offended by another. McKnight and Strong’s Cyclopaedia states that it “is a settled or deliberate determination to revenge or do hurt to another.” Bible examples of malice are Cain (Gen 4:8), Ishmael (Gen 21:9), Esau (Gen 27:41), Joseph’s brothers (Gen 37), Potiphar’s wife (Gen 39:14-20), King Saul (1 Sam 18:8-9), Haman (Esth 3:5-6), and the Jews toward Paul (Acts 23:12).

Malice has to do with avenging ourselves, or carrying out revenge – getting back at those who have offended us. Solemnly we are admonished, “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (Rom 12:19). Paul referred to its consuming properties as “*the leaven of malice,*” forbidding its presence among the saints (1 Cor 5:8). We are also to be childlike in matters that appear to justify retaliation: “*in malice, be ye children*” (1 Cor 14:20). “*All malice*” is to put away from us, whether it takes the form of thought, word, or deed (Eph 4:31). We once lived “*in malice.*”

Yet, before we were delivered from the power of darkness (Col 1:13), we placed our own interests above those of the Lord, seeking to vindicate ourselves, even if it meant invoking some kind of harm or distress upon others.

IN ENVY. Other versions read, “*we were . . . jealous,*” GWN and “*jealousy.*” ISV This word means “jealousy over the good of another,” FRIBERG with the idea of having “ill-will toward them because” of it. LOUW-NIDA In English, “*envy*” means “painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage.” WEBSTER This attitude is produced by an overestimation of one’s personal worth, and by a dominating spirit of discontentment. When Isaac flourished in the time of famine, “*the Philistines envied him*” (Gen 26:1,14). When Joseph told his brothers of his dreams, which involved their obeisance to him, they “*envied him*” (Gen 37:11). Israel, though they chose to stand aloof from the God of Moses, are said to have “*envied Moses*” (Psa 106:16). Such an attitude places an inordinate value on life in this world.

HATEFUL. Other versions read “*being hated,*” NIV “*despicable,*” NRSV “*hated by men,*” RSV “*people hated us,*” CJB “*full of hate,*” PNT “*odious,*” YLT and “*hateful (hated, detestable).*” AMPLIFIED As used here, the word “*hateful*” does not speak of a capacity for hatred, but of actually being “hated,” THAYER “detestable.” FRIBERG or “pertaining to being hated or regarded as worthy of being hated.” LOUW-NIDA The word is used in this way in Psalm 36:2: “*For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful,*” and Revelation 18:2: “*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation . . . every unclean and hateful bird.*”

While this includes the idea of being hated by men, it seems to me that the stress is placed on being odious, or detestable, to God Himself. Thus God speaks of people who themselves are an abomination to Him (Deut 18:12; 25:16; Prov 6:16-19). This is what causes the Lord to “*abhor*” certain people (Lev 20:23; Deut 32:19; Psa 78:59; Prov 22:14). There is such a thing as provoking the Lord (1 Cor 10:22) – and we all were once guilty of such “*provocation,*” even as Israel, who provoked the Lord by their unbelief and disobedience (Heb 3:8,15).

HATING ONE ANOTHER. Other versions read, “*detesting one another.*” CSB This is the antithesis of loving our neighbor as ourselves (Rom 13:9). It is exhibited in doing harm to another, coveting their wife or their possessions, and living with no regard for whether or not we cause them to stumble. It is a failure to seek their good, or neglecting them during the time of need when it is in our power to help them. This was the state from which we were saved.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

(Titus 3:4-6)

INTRODUCTION

Our former state was our natural condition – one that is common to all men who are out of Christ: *“foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (3:3). In a composite sense, this is a description of *“the natural man”* (1 Cor 2:14), whose only recognized filial association is with Adam. This was not a state that was achieved, but one that resulted from our association with Adam, in whom all *“are dead”* (Rom 5:15), are in a state of *“condemnation”* (Rom 5:18), and were *“made sinners”* (Rom 5:19). Thus our former state is described as one in which we were *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1). Further, it was a condition in which we had *“no hope”* (Eph 2:12). Unless we were in some way acted upon, we were thoroughly incapable of extricating ourselves from this dilemma. Paul now accounts for the dramatic change that has taken place in those who are in Christ Jesus. This change is not the result of going through a program of reform. It did not result from a disciplined and sustained effort of self-regimentation. Our moral and spiritual condition was one that left us impotent regarding becoming acceptable to God. A change of character and status must originate with, and be sustained by, the God against whom we had sinned. This is basic to the concept of *salvation*. There are two fundamental aspects of salvation. First, it must be legal, or have a righteous basis. Second, it must be effective in its application. A salvation that is not based upon God’s character cannot be righteous, and a salvation that is not righteous cannot be effective. Once it is established that the work of salvation is based upon the character of God Himself, then we can be confident it will be accomplished by His power. In a remarkably few words, our text will account for the glorious change that has been wrought in the saved. Emphatically, they are not what they used to be, and it is all owing to what the Lord Himself has done.

Titus 3:4 “ *But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared.*”

AFTER THAT. Most other versions read, *“But when.”* NKJV The word translated *“after”* carries the idea of certainty, not mere possibility. THAYER It also includes the idea of duration – that is, as long as the

described condition exists, the following work is in place – i.e. “*As long as.*” FRIBERG There is also the idea of the overlapping of what is here stated, and what is described in the next expression. LOUW-NIDA

This is like the drawing of a line of demarcation. Prior to this time, the accomplishments that will be mentioned were not possible. It was the nature of God that prohibited them from happening. But once the condition takes place that is now described, the actions that follow will accompany it.

GOD OUR SAVIOR. This phrase occurs six times in Scripture, with three of them being in the epistle to Titus. It is associated with God’s *commandment* (1 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:3), what is *good and acceptable* (1 Tim 2:3), the *doctrine* (Tit 2:10), God’s *kindness and love* (Tit 3:4), and *Divine wisdom* (Jude 1:25). At the foundational level, salvation is “*of God*” (Psa 50:23; Lk 3:6; Acts 28:28; Phil 1:28). The One from whom sin separated men, is the Architect of their salvation. He is also the One who initiated it, sending His Son (1 John 4:9-10), delivering Him up (Rom 8:32), raising Him (Acts 4:10), and highly exalting Him (Phil 2:9). It is God Himself who “*hath saved us*” (2 Tim 1:9). The “*living God*” is described as “*the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe*” (1 Tim 4:10).

THE KINDNESS OF GOD. Other versions read, “*goodness,*” NRSV “*mercy,*” BBE and “*bountifulness.*” GENEVA The word translated “*kindness*” is lexically defined as, “a gracious attitude, goodness, kindness,” FRIBERG “benevolent . . . an expression meaning to help,” LOUW-NIDA “goodness of heart,” LIDDELL-SCOTT “generosity.” LEH “*Kindness*” also contains the idea of gentleness. STRONG’S This is an expression confirming that God is basically good. When God revealed Himself to Moses, He said He would make all of His “*goodness*” to pass before him. He then referred to Himself as being gracious and showing mercy (Ex 33:19). As His glory passed before Moses, God said of Himself, “*merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth*” (Ex 34:6). In a great outburst of insightful praise, David said, “*O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good*” (1 Chron 16:34). Paul called upon us to consider the “*goodness*” of God as well as His “*severity*” (Rom 11:22). Confirming that God delights in His goodness, he also referred to “*the good pleasure of His goodness*” (2 Thess 1:11). The posture of God toward us in Christ Jesus is described as one of kindness, worthy of exposition in the ages to come: “*That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:7).

When Adam sinned, he no longer perceived God as basically good. As a transgressor, he was “*afraid*” of God, and therefore hid himself from Him, not wanting to confront his Creator (Gen 3:10). From that day until Christ, few people saw the God of heaven as being full of goodness and gracious. Sin hid this aspect of God.

THE LOVE OF GOD. Other versions read, “*loving kindness,*” NRSV and “*compassion.*” MRD It is interesting to note that the word “*love*” is not translated from the Greek word “*agape.*” Rather, the Greek word used here is **filanqrwpi,a** , (phil-an-thro-pia). This is the word from which philanthropy is derived. It emphasizes what love does, rather than the reality of Divine love itself. The lexical meaning of the word is “benevolence,” THAYER “friendliness,” FRIBERG “affection for people,” LOUW-NIDA “acts of kindness . . . mildness,” LIDDELL-SCOTT and “generosity.” GINGRICH

The idea here is that all along, God had intended to do good to men, who are accurately described as “*His offspring*” and “*the offspring of God*” (Acts 17:28). Although fallen humanity was alienated from the life of God (Eph 4:18), could not receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14), and were His “*enemies*” (From 5:10), yet God had gracious intentions for humanity. He had a profound desire to be gracious toward them, but His nature would not allow Him to do so. God is not only good, kind, and gracious; He is also righteous, impartial, and “*will by no means clear the guilty*” (Ex 34:7). His nature will not allow Him to act in

contradiction of His own character. Yet, that condition could not remove the desire He had to do good to His creatures.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE KINDNESS AND LOVE. The appearance of the kindness and love of God is seen from two different perspectives. Provisionally, they are seen in the sending forth of Jesus to resolve the dilemma of sin, and bring the sons to glory. Experientially, they appear at the point the individual believes the Gospel, being convinced that whoever comes to Christ will not be turned away (John 6:37). There is also a persuasion that remission can be obtained, together with a new birth. So far as the realization of the benefits now described, they must be preceded by the perception of faith.

“ **3:5a** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us . . .*”

Our text begins with a negative – “ *not by.*” This is because sin has caused all men to overestimate their own achievements. It is essential that we be continually reminded that the salvation of God is in no way comprised of the homogenization of the work of God and the doing of men. It is the doing of our race that got us into a fallen state – first in Adam, and then in all of his progeny, “*for all have sinned*” (Rom 3:23; 5:12).

NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. Other versions read, “*not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness,*” NASB “*not because of righteous things we had done,*” NIV “*it was not on the ground of any righteous deeds we had done,*” CJB and “*not because of anything we had done to gain His approval.*” GWN

This is a critical matter, dealing with salvation from the standpoint of its **basis** , not its experience – and there is a vast difference between the two. There is a marked tendency in the Christian community to trace the experience of the kindness and love of God back to something *right* that was done by the saved ones – i.e. “*works of righteousness.*” Some relegate the **cause** , basis, or foundation of their salvation to what they themselves have done. Some associate it with, what they call, a simple prayer. Others view their baptism as the basis. Still others see the cause of their salvation as traceable to some extraordinary experience. However, at the root of the matter, God did not save us because we did what was right.

At this point, the reasoning is not that we were incapable of doing what was right – although apart from Divine empowerment, that is correct. Abel’s works are categorically said to have been “*righteous*” (1 John 3:12). Abraham, for example, did what was righteous. He left Ur when told to do so (Heb 11:8), he obeyed the command concerning circumcision (Gen 17:23-26; 21:4; Acts 7:8), and he unhesitatingly went to Moriah to offer Isaac as he was commanded to do so (Gen 22:3). Those were all works of righteousness. Saints of old who lived by faith are said to have “*wrought righteousness*” (Heb 11:33). Zecharias and Elizabeth “*were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*” (Luke 1:6).

However, none of those works, although “*righteous,*” were sufficient as a **basis** for God showing His kindness and love to them. Their personal experience of Divine goodness was owing to their faith – and their faith was fundamentally related to God’s promise of a coming Savior (Gen 3:15; 22:18). Keep in mind, “*works of righteousness*” are not mere acts of moral goodness. These constitute a conscientious effort to do what the Lord has required.

Isaiah once said, “*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away*” (Isa 64:6). That statement, however, was made against the backdrop of the declaration of Divine intent: “*For since the beginning of the*

world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what **He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him** ” (Isa 64:4). Those marvelous provisions were not conceived because of the right things men did. They were rather drawn from the reservoir of Divine goodness. Our best and most consistent responses to God are certainly a thank-offering for what the Lord has done – but they are not the **basis** , or foundation, of that working.

BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY. Here “*the kindness and love of God*” are merged together in a single expression: “*His mercy.*” Other versions read, “*on the ground of His mercy,*” CJB and “*it was for no reason except his own faithful love.*” NJB “*Mercy*” has to do with undeserved kindness and good will. It speaks of a Divine quality that is so pronounced, that God, in His infinite wisdom, has found a way of expressing it without compromising His own character. Daniel saw this in his time, when he realized that the Babylonian captivity was about to end. “*O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies* ” (Dan 9:18).

HE SAVED US. Other versions read, “*He gave us salvation,*” BBE “*He vivified us,*” MRD and “*He did save us.*” YLT And what does it mean to be “*saved*” – something God Himself did? It means to be delivered, rescued, and restored. It means we were released from what held us, acquitted from what condemned us, and freed from the grasp of the devil, sin, and this present evil world. From the standpoint of His purpose, He “*saved us according to His own purpose and grace,*” and then called us, apprising us of what His mercy had accomplished (2 Tim 1:9). That is, He first provided a means through which He could be both “*just and the Justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus*” (Rom 3:26). Then, upon the basis of that provision “*He saved us*” – not because of what we were, but because of who He is; not because of what we had done, but because of the accomplishments of His only begotten Son, who carried out His will to the finest detail (Heb 10:5-10).

3:5b “ . . . by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, 6 Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. ”

There are practical ordained means through which the salvation of God is implemented. They do require the personal involvement of the ones being saved. However, the effectiveness of their obedience is according to what the Lord has done, as will be abundantly apparent.

THE WASHING OF REGENERATION. Other versions read, “*washing of rebirth,*” NIV “*the water of rebirth,*” NRSV “*washing of the new birth,*” BBE “*the laver of regeneration,*” DOUAY “*the washing of the new birth,*” GENEVA “*the bath of new birth,*” NAB “*the cleansing water of new birth,*” NJB “*fountain of the new birth,*” TNT and “*a bathing of regeneration.*” YLT

The word “*washing*” does speak of the act of “*bathing.*” THAYER A type of this washing was seen in the laver that stood between the altar and the tabernacle: first sacrifice, then washing, then entrance into the “*tabernacle of the Lord*” (Ex 30:18-21; Num 16:9). That “*washing,*” however, was only ceremonial. It did not change the character of Aaron and his sons, or constitute them a new creation before God. It only removed from them the ceremonial and external defilement associated with being outside of the tabernacle.

Jesus also associated water and the Spirit with regeneration, or the new birth. “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit , he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” (John 3:5). Peter associated the water with baptism, distinguishing the cleansing from that which was done ceremonially at the tabernacle. “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 3:21). The “*putting away of the filth*

of the flesh,” refers to the ceremonial cleansing under the Law (Ex 40:12-13).

Baptism itself does not regenerate the individual, and that is not the point of the text. It is God that regenerates, makes alive, or causes the new birth. However, in order to remove the matter from the realm of speculation and supposition, regeneration is associated with a point in time when we were cleansed. In our baptism, our sins were washed away (Acts 22:16), our bodies being “*washed with pure water*” (Heb 10:22). The transaction is referred to as “*the operation of God*” – something that took place our baptism into Christ (Col 2:11-12). A number of things took place at that time that are a kind of breakdown of what is involved in being regenerated. Our sins were “washed away” (Acts 22:16), or remitted (Acts 2:38). We were “*baptized into*” Christ’s “*death*,” thereby terminating our affinity with the world (Rom 6:3). We were “*baptized into Christ*,” causing us to be accepted in Him, as well as participate in His life (Gal 3:27). Our “*old man*” was “*crucified*” (Rom 6:6). We received “*the circumcision of Christ*,” in which the fleshly nature was cut away from our essential, being (Col 2:11). God also raised us up to walk in the “*newness of life*” (Rom 6:4).

The “*washing*” confirms that we had to be cleansed from the guilt of sin before we could receive life from God. The washing itself was not the regeneration, but the point at which the regeneration commenced. Our spirits were then regenerated, and our bodies will also undergo a renewal at the resurrection of the dead (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14).

Regeneration also speaks of becoming “*a new creation*,” in which old things pass away and all things become new (2 Cor 5:17). It is what results in being “*created in Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:10), or being “*born again*” (1 Pet 1:23). The prophets spoke of it as having the heart circumcised (Deut 30:6), receiving a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26), and having the law written in our inward parts (Jer 31:33). Where these things have not occurred, salvation has not been experienced, for they initiate the realization of salvation.

THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The renewing of the Spirit is the ongoing facet of salvation – sanctification. Life is both initiated and maintained by Him. He leads us in putting to death the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13-14). He has an intercessory ministry that is involved in maintaining spiritual life (Rom 8:26-27). Through Him newness of life produces fruit unto God (Gal 5:22-23). The Spirit is given to us “*because*” we are sons (Gal 4:6), and is sent “*into our hearts, crying Abba, Father*” (Gal 4:6). There is no salvation where this renewing ministry is not taking place. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are being changed “*from glory to glory*,” being conformed to the image of God’s Son (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29). Regeneration and renewal are involved in salvation.

WHICH HE SHED ON US ABUNDANTLY. The need for Divine involvement is seen in the manner in which the Spirit is given to us: “*shed on us abundantly*,” “*poured out on us abundantly*,” NKJV “*generously*,” NIV or “*richly*.” NASB This is the precise language used to describe what took place on the day of Pentecost, then declared to be the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16-18). At that time, Peter affirmed that it was the exalted Christ who had “*shed forth this*” (Acts 2:33). The Spirit was poured out abundantly upon us because both the nature and the work of salvation require such an abundance.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 3:7 That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:7)

INTRODUCTION

It is essential that those who are saved consider **the reason** behind their salvation. We will find that salvation – deliverance or rescue – is really not an end of itself. It is absolutely essential, to be sure, but it is what follows salvation that gives it true meaning. I am becoming more and more impressed with the manner in which the salvation of God has been distorted in the minds of men. Our text deals with the matter of salvation, and how our lives in this world bear upon it. There is a strong reason for being sober and godly – for seeing to it that the Word of God, and God Himself, are not maligned because of our conduct. We have been begotten again to a living hope that has to do with things that will take place **after** we leave this present evil world; **after** the present heavens and earth pass away; **after** the dead are raised, and death has been swallowed up in victory; **after** the day of judgment, and **after** the public exoneration and glorification of the saints of God. In view of such arresting consideration, the people of God cannot afford to become absorbed into the world order, for *“all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* The text before us is designed to assist us in fine tuning our objectives, so that we are not caught unawares by the coming of the Lord and the consummation of everything that is seen and sensed by the flesh. Seen properly, salvation is infinitely more than the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing of the conscience, and the conferment of a new heart and a new spirit. All of those were necessary to the realization of a higher and eternal purpose that was conceived by the Almighty before He made the world. Our existence in this world is not the point – and woe be to that poor soul who conducts their life as though that was the case. I realize it is in vogue for Christian leaders to focus on the temporal needs and aspirations of the people. That kind of focus is necessary to the maintenance of their religious careers. However, God is not a Problem Solver, for that presumes the preeminence of the ones who have the problem. Such an approach sees human objectives as primary – but they are not, and no person can afford to approach life as though they are.

Titus 3:7a *“That being justified by His grace . . .”*

This verse announces the reason for the previous affirmation of Divine action: God saved us by the washing of regeneration and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, who was lavished on us abundantly through

Jesus Christ our Savior. This was all done in strict accord with kindness and love, which are fundamental to His nature. That is, God did not save us because we needed to be saved, but because of His kindness and love (vs 4-6). As is stated in Solomon's Song, the believer can say, "**His desire is toward me**" (Song of Sol 7:10). Paul; has made clear that this was not owing to any works of righteousness on our part. Our extrication from the dilemma of sin was not owing to any right thing we did, but according to God's "*mercy*," which is a righteous expression of His kindness and love, or desire to bless men. Just as Abraham was not justified because he obeyed God's command to circumcise himself and his household, so we were not justified **because** we obeyed what we were commanded to do (Rom 4:10).

Paul is tracing our salvation to its cause – what **constrained** God to save us. Although obedience is imperative, and those who "*obey not the Gospel*," will be thrust from God's presence (2 Thess 1:8), yet that obedience is not the **cause** of salvation. Now our text will confirm why this is the case. It is because of the purpose of salvation – the objective that is intended to be accomplished through it. It is a cause that is too lofty for human achievement – even the accomplishments of those who have been regenerated and given the Holy Spirit.

THAT BEING. Other versions read, "*having been*," NKJV "*so that we might be*," RSV "*as a result*," GWN "*since we have been*," NET and "*once justified*." TNT

The intended objective of salvation depends upon a very real existence of a condition that is experienced by those of reference. What will now be affirmed is not a goal for believers, but is a condition in which the determination of God is commenced.. Those in whom the gracious intention of God is being fulfilled have experienced certain things, and are in a certain acceptable state. They are described as loving God, and as having been called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). They "*have redemption*" (Eph 1:7), have "*obtained like precious faith*" (2 Pet 2 Pet 1:1), have "*received the Spirit of adoption*" (Rom 8:15), and have "*received the knowledge of the truth*" (Heb 10:26). These are very real conditions – what the people of God **are** .

JUSTIFIED. Here is the state of those in Christ Jesus: they **are** justified. Justification is a two sided coin. **First** , they have been "*justified from all things*" (Acts 13:39). Their sins have been "*blotted out*" (Acts 3:19), and they have been "*washed*" from their presence and contamination (Acts 22:16). They are no longer "*enemies*" (Col 1:21), are no longer "*alienated from the life of God*" (Eph 4:18), and are no longer sheep going "*astray*" (1 Pet 2:25). **Second** , they have been "*made righteous*" (Rom 5:19) by imputation – that is, God has imputed His own righteousness to them upon the basis of our faith (Rom 4:23-24).

From a practical viewpoint, this means that the saved have a "*new heart*" and a "*new spirit*" (Ezek 36:26), have God's laws written upon their hearts and minds (Heb 10:16), and are "*reconciled to God*" (Rom 5:10). By nature, the saved are not the people they once were (1 Pet 2:10). Being justified, or "*made righteous*" in the eyes of God, the saved are now described as "*partakers of Christ*" (Heb 3:14), and are presently qualified to be "*partakers of the Divine nature*" (2 Pet 1:4). In reality, "*we are the sons of God*," and "*should be*" so called (1 John 3:1-2). This is because we have not only been separated from our former selves by "*the circumcision of Christ*" (Col 2:11), we also have been "*joined unto the Lord*" (1 Cor 6:17). We have not only ceased to go astray, but have "*returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls*" (1 Pet 2:25). **There is no such thing as a state of justification in which one retains a fundamental love for sin, and the propensity to continue going astray.** Justification involves a fundamental change that removes what is displeasing to God from the believer, and imparts what is pleasing to Him.

BY HIS GRACE. Elsewhere it is stated that men are "*justified by faith*" (Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 3:24). That is, it is by **the means** of the faith that justification is personally realized. But there is another view of justification, and it is imperative that we see it. We are, for example, said to have been "*justified by His blood*"

(Rom 5:9), and “*justified by Christ*” (Gal 2:17). Now, we also read of being “*justified by His [God’s] grace.*” “*Faith,*” “*His blood,*” “*Christ,*” and “*His grace*” are not four causes of equal value, and they must not be so perceived. Two of these descriptions speak of means, and two of causes. “*Faith*” on our part and “*His blood*” are appointed **means** . It is by means of our faith that we appropriate justification, and it is by means Christ’s blood that God gives it. On the other hand, “*Christ*” and God’s “*grace*” are the **causes** of justification, or what make it happen. Here the point is that no action on the part of man would have proven effective if God, by His “*grace*” did not **cause** us to be “*justified from all things,*” and “*made righteous.*” By “*means,*” I refer to the point at which the gate is opened for the benefit to be **received** . By “*cause,*” I mean the reason that makes the stated benefit pass through that gate to the individual. Our faith did not cause God to justify us. It rather enabled us to appropriate justification. However, it was God’s “*grace*” that **moved** Him to justify us. It is insightful the recognition of this distinction that will provoke faithfulness.

“ **3:7b** . . . *we should be made heirs* . . . ” Other versions read, “*should become,*” NKJV “*might be made,*” NASB “*might become.*” NIV

WE SHOULD BE. This is the purpose that drove the justification of sinners. The cause of the justification, as set forth in this text, was “*His grace.*” The means through which justification is appropriated, as declared in apostolic doctrine is “*faith.*” Now, we come to the purpose, or objective, of justification. Because “*it is God who justifies*” NKJV (Rom 8:33), we ought to expect this objective to be worthy of His Person, power, and Divine qualities. It is not possible that such a purpose can be confined to time or this present world, for He has determined the cessation of them both. The objective of God is in strict harmony with His eternity and righteousness. It must center in Him, not those with whom He is working.

Whatever views men may entertain concerning the procurement, maintenance, and objective of salvation must be in harmony with what God has revealed about that salvation. It must be theo-centric, not man-centered. As a general rule, those who have a man-centered religion are actually seeking to exploit men, for God engaged in no such focus. In the ages to come it is “*the exceeding riches of His grace*” that will be “*shown,*” or “*clearly demonstrated,*” AMPLIFIED in “*His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:7). It will be what God Himself has done in us that will be the subject of exposition and demonstration. The perception of this reality will deliver man from a religion that majors on the correction of human behavior.

MADE HEIRS. Other versions read, “*have part in the heritage,*” BBE “*will inherit,*” NLT “*share in the wealth,*” LIVING “*now embrace,*” ISV and “*come into possession.*” GNB Most versions of Scripture use the word “*heirs*” in this text. A few follow the dreadful practice of stating what they conceive the word to mean. Lexically, the word translated “*heirs*” means, “one who received by lot . . . one who receives his allotted possession by right of sonship,” THAYER “literally, one receiving an allotted portion.” FRIBERG We are speaking of a specific inheritance, intended for the individual – the apportioning of a part of the whole, even as each tribe of Israel received a portion of the promised land – a “*lot*” (Num 26:55; Josh 14:2; 23:4).

From this we learn that the ultimate objective for the saved does not relate to this world, but the world to come. It is only introduced to us while we are “*in the body,*” in which we cannot receive the endmost blessing. “*Heirs*” refers to what we **are** , **not** what we have. At this time, the “*heirs*” receive from God what is required for them to maintain their status of “*heirs.*” This is necessary because God can disinherit those who are heirs, voiding their right to the inheritance. Thus some Israelites who came out of Egypt, did not actually inherit the promised land, for which they were delivered. (Heb 3:12). It is possible for “*heirs*” to come short of the inheritance, for the inheritance is obtained “*through faith and patience*” (Heb 6:12). Esau sold his “*birthright,*” which was the right of inheritance, and was not able to regain it. It is written of him, “*when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected*” (Heb 12:17).

There is a gap between being “*made heirs*” and the act of inheriting. To be sure, no one will inherit the benefit who has not first been “*made heirs*” in this world. The process of being “*made heirs*” includes being saved “*by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,*” in order that we might be “*made heirs.*” Our experience of these marvelous realities is strictly owing to “*the kindness and love of God*” that moved Him to save us “*according to,*” or in unvarying accord with, “*His mercy.*” Then, the One who saved us also “*made*” us “*heirs.*”

The status of “*heirs*” is one of amazing scope. Those appropriately termed “*the children of God,*” are said to be “*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*” (Rom 8:17). A picture of this is provided in Aaron, who was given no inheritance in the land of promise. The Lord told him why this was the case: “*I am thy part and thine inheritance*” (Num 18:20). This kind of inheritance is described by Jesus as entering “*into the joy of thy Lord*” (Matt 25:21).

Viewing this whole matter from the standpoint of salvation in the consummate sense, the angels are said to have been sent by God to “*minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*” (Heb 1:14). James reminds believers they are “*heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him*” (James 2:5). This aspect of the inheritance is also by lot, or apportionment. Jesus said to His disciples, “*And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me*” (Luke 22:29). Further expanding the concept of being “*heirs,*” Jesus said the meek would “*inherit the earth*” (Matt 5:5). As if that was not enough God Almighty said to John, “*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son*” (Rev 21:7). Oh, the word “*heirs*” is pregnant with meaning that will challenge the mind.

I understand the admonitions in the book of Titus to bear directly on the matter of maintaining the status of being “*heirs.*” Although we have been “*made heirs,*” we hold that position by means of our faith – for we are “*kept by the power of God through faith*” (1 Pet 1:5). All of the resources that are required to remain “*heirs*” are provided in Christ Jesus, and by means of our faith. Those resources are, in fact, the “*first fruits*” of our inheritance. Like the grapes of Eschol were to Israel, they are samples that acquaint us with what is to come.

3:7c “ . . . *according to the hope of eternal life.* ”

ACCORDING TO. Other versions read, “*having,*” NIV “*in,*” RSV and “*with the certain.*” CJB The words “*according to*” are translated from a single word that means “*motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower,*” THAYER and “*down from.*” LIDDELL-SCOTT The reference here is to the act of being “*made heirs.*” The status of heirs was Divinely determined with the following reality in mind. It was not for our betterment in this world that we were “*made heirs,*” but in prospect of what is to come. That is, there was a higher purpose that moved God to make us being made heirs.

THE HOPE. The idea here is that “*heirs*” matches “*the hope.*” Both ultimately have to do with the future. It is “*the hope*” that gives substance to the concept of being “*heirs.*” This is stated succinctly by John: “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is*” (1 John 3:2). This hope of being “*like Him,*” as well as seeing Him and being with Him, is what motivates us to engage in a sustained quest for personal purity. John continues, “*And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” NASB (1 John 3:3).

“*Hope*” plays such a prominent part in spiritual life that Paul was moved to pray that one of the premier churches Scripture might have the “*eyes of their understanding enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling*” (Eph 1:18). Knowing that God has called you is one thing; knowing WHY He did is another matter. It is also good to know that you are “*accepted in the Beloved*” (Eph 1:6). It is even better to know the objective of that acceptance.

If God made us “*heirs . . . according to the hope,*” how can it be possible for those “*heirs*” to live without regard to that hope? The working out of our salvation “*with fear and trembling*” is motivated by that hope, for “*we are saved by hope*” (Rom 8:24). This hope (a noun) is both certain and effective. It is not a nebulous wish that can be too good to be true. This is not a hope that originates with men, but is given to them in Christ Jesus. That is why it is written that God has “*given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*” (2 Thess 2:16). There is certitude in hope – a firm expectation and anticipation of good things to come. Hope is, in fact, faith in its forward posture. Its solidity is seen in the depiction of hope as an anchor. “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil*” (Heb 6:19). It has to do with where we shall be, and the firm persuasion of the realness of that abode, while we journey through the world. We even “*rejoice in hope of the glory of God*” (Rom 5:2), and “*abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit*” NKJV (Rom 15:13).

Much of the religion of our time fosters doubt, and even withdrawing fear. When men are taught they are fundamentally weak, or are always sinning, or must be in a state of continual repentance and remorse, it puts hope to sleep, for it cannot survive in such a mind-set.

OF ETERNAL LIFE. The “*hope*” of reference is not the expectation of living a better life, or finding domestic or social stability. It is not hoping that we will be able to overcome a certain habit, or realize some kind of breakthrough in our understanding. Considered properly, there is nothing wrong with such objectives. However, they are not strong enough to promote a sustained effort for Christ. They are too weak, because they are tied to a world that is passing away. The determination to live for the glory of God is good, but it is not good enough to cause you to possess faith and patience to inherit the promises – something that has to do with “*hope.*” There is a form of religion that **emphasizes** self-discipline, regimen, accountability to one’s peers, and interpersonal relationships. There are vantage points from which such approaches look good – even humble and spiritual. However, they are like having a withered hand that cannot deliver the required results. Our affection is to be “*set on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Col 3:2) – and that is impossible to do when you are dominated by things pertaining to life “*in the body,*” or things that have to do with living in this world.

The hope of reference pertains to “*eternal life*” – not “*eternal life*” in its initiatory aspect, but in its fulness, in the world to come. There is a sense in which we have “*eternal life*” now, as we live by faith. Jesus said the person who ingests Him “*hath eternal life*” (John 6:54). It is written that “*God hath given to us eternal life,*” and that we can “*know*” that we have it (1 John 5:11,13). And yet, “*eternal life*” is depicted as being “*promised us*” (1 John 2:25). Jesus spoke of having eternal life “*in the world to come*” (Mk 10:30). Jude wrote of “*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*” (Jude 1:21). Paul wrote of what we possess now, and what we will have in the end: “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*” (Rom 6:22).

We do have eternal life now, but not in its fulness. That is why those who do possess it are admonished to “*lay hold on eternal life*” (1 Tim 6:12,19) – that is, to obtain a more firm grasp of its reality. There is a sense in which we are laboring under a great handicap. We have the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in an “*earthen vessel,*” which is our “*mortal body*” (2 Cor 4:7; Rom 6:12). That circumstance confines us to the state of knowing “*in part*” – and eternal life is knowing God (John 17:3). Even under this circumstance, more can be possessed than we can imagine.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Titus 3:8)

INTRODUCTION

Paul has briefly summarized the revealed purpose of God as contained in the Gospel. This revelation is set within the context of what we were prior to being saved: *“foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”* (3:3). That is a condition of character, not mere circumstance, and that is what is addressed in salvation. The kindness and love of God our Savior is to be seen against that dark background – not against the setting of poverty, sickness, and difficult experiences. Our deliverance in Jesus is similar to that of the Israelites from Egypt in that it was wrought by God. However it differs in that we were delivered from bondage to sin, which deliverance wrought a change in character, as well as status before the Living God. If we forget this fact, or thrust it into the background of our thinking, we will begin to entertain a tolerance for sin. It is even possible that men will adopt a distorted and false doctrine that represents God as being forbearing of sin, as though it was nothing more than an inevitable weakness. This is spiritually disarming, and actually disqualifies a person for grace, which is intended to retrieve men from sin, and empower them to live in a manner that is pleasing to God. Therefore, Paul has called upon Titus to speak things that are becoming of *“sound doctrine”* (2:1)– things that do not contradict the nature and intent of salvation. This bears directly upon the conduct of believers, for the *“washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit”* have to do with *“newness of life,”* not the sufferance of an *“old”* way of living. Justification by God’s grace is in order to men becoming *“heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (3:7), not merely being helped along in this present evil world. Eternal life has nothing whatsoever to do with sin, for it directly relates to the personal knowledge of and acquaintance with God, who is totally separate from sin, and in whom there is no darkness. That acquaintance can be no greater than our separation from sin. That is the reason for this section of Titus, which calls upon the man of God to faithfully and fully represent these circumstances to the brethren.

Titus 3:8a *“This is a faithful saying . . .”* Other versions read, *“trustworthy statement,”* NASB *“The saying is sure,”* RSV *“a true saying,”* BBE *“a statement that can be trusted,”* GWN *“doctrine you can rely on,”* NJB and *“steadfast is the word.”* YLT

A *“faithful saying”* is one that holds true, and can therefore be steadfastly held by faith. It is an utterance

that precisely represents the case, blending perfectly with the nature of salvation, and the kind of people that are produced by the kindness and love of God. This kind of word is never in conflict with the purpose of God. There is never a point when it must be put to the side in favor of a more precise word on the subject it addresses. There are no Divine apologies for a “*faithful saying*,” nor is there a time when God will operate in contradiction of it.

The “*saying*” of reference is the sentence stated in 3:4-7 – a kind of synopsis of the salvation of God. The **ORIGIN** of salvation is declared: “*the kindness and love of God . . . toward man*” – **God’s expression of His own nature**. The particular **OBJECTIVE** is stated: “*our Savior*” – **delivering us from a condition in which we could not be received by God**. The **MEANS** through which the salvation is wrought: “*the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit*” – **a new creation, and the maintenance of newness of life**. The **ABUNDANCE** of the means through which the work is sustained: “*the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly*” – **a lavish supply that confirms the need for extensive Divine involvement**. The **INTENTION** of justification by grace: “*made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*” – i.e. **in Christ we are being prepared for the future, not merely for the present**.

What is there in that statement that suggests God no longer has a hatred for sin, or is not pledged to destroy those who do not obey the Gospel, and remain in ignorance of Him? Where is there the slightest hint that God is tolerant for sin, or that He is unaffected by the presence of sin in those who wear His name? The radical change that is wrought by salvation is testimony enough concerning the heinousness of iniquity. The intent of salvation is to remove not only sin, but everything that has been tainted by it – including our present bodies. They are also scheduled to be “*changed*,” for they are unsuitable to dwell forever with the Lord (1 Cor 15:52; 2 Cor 5:1-5; Phil 3:20-21). That confirms that God’s very nature will not allow Him to entertain tainted people in His immediate presence – and salvation is getting us ready to do precisely that: “*and so shall we ever be with the Lord*” (1 Thess 4:17). At no point is the salvation of God divorced from that objective, and we must not think as though it is.

Now this saying (Tit 3:4-7) is a faithful one. **When we wrestle with confusion, we can return to such a saying to get our bearings, and adjust our focus**. Other statements described as “*a faithful saying*” are characterized by this trait. “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (1 Tim 1:15). “. . . *godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*” (1 Tim 4:8-9). “*If we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him*” (2 Tim 2:11). Behold how all of these sayings point upward, and to the world to come.

Men choose what sayings they are willing to trust – what they consider to be “*a faithful saying*.” However, their willingness to trust such sayings is not what make them “*faithful*.” Rather, it is the faithfulness of the saying that must constrain the individual to trust in it. Ponder some of the sayings that men are being asked to trust, as though they were “*faithful sayings*.” These are often stated just as though they were in the Scriptures. 1–“God loves you just the way you are.” This contradicts the need for the new birth and the intercession of Christ (John 3:7; Eph 2:10). 2–“God’s love is unconditional.” This removes the need for loving Christ and keeping His words, obedience, and faith itself (John 14:21,23; ; 1 Pet 1:2; Heb 11:6). 3–“Nothing you do can effect the way that God loves you.” This contradicts the call for setting our affection on things above, walking as dear children, and pleasing God (Col 3:1-2; Eph 5:1; Col 1:10). 4–“Once you are saved, you can never be lost.” This nullifies the purpose for exhorting us to remember how God saved Israel, afterward destroying them that believed not, as well as warnings concerning falling away (Jude 1:5; Heb 6:6; 2 Pet 2:20). 5–“God can handle your lapses into sin.” This ignores the fact that we can provoke God, and try His patience (1 Cor 10:22; Matt 4:7; Heb 3:9). 6–“God wants you to realize your dreams.” The call of God is to what He wills, and is doing, not what we are doing (Rom 8:28; 12:1-2). 7–“God is always there to help you.” While God is a “*very present Help in the time of trouble*” (Psa 46:1), He is no closer than our faith, without which we cannot please Him (Heb 11:6). There are times when God has declared He “*will not hear*” calls for help (Isa 1:15; Jer

7:16; 11:14).

None of these statements are found in the word of God, and yet men are being taught that they are “faithful sayings” on which they can depend. I do not know that it is possible to satisfactorily state how serious it is to ascribe faithfulness, or trustworthiness, to a saying that not only was not said by God, but that actually contradicts what He has said. **It is not possible for faith to rest on a saying that is not faithful!** When men are exhorted to do such a thing, they are being deceived. In effect, this is what Satan did when he suggested to Eve that God’s saying was not faithful, but that the one he delivered to her was (Gen 3:4-5).

“ 3:8b . . . and these things I will that thou affirm constantly . . . ” Other versions read, “*speaking confidently,*” NASB “*stress these things,*” NIV “*insist on these things,*” NRSV “*affirm confidently,*” ASV “*give certain witness about these things,*” BBE “*speaking with confidence about these things,*” CJB “*insist strenuously on these things,*” DARBY “*be quite uncompromising in teaching all this,*” NJB “*should certify,*” TNT “*affirm fully,*” YLT and “*insist steadfastly.*” AMPLIFIED

The words “*affirm constantly*” are translated from a single Greek word (**diabebaiou/sqai**). The word is rather complex , and is therefore difficult to compress into a few words. This is seen in the words employed by various versions to convey the meaning of it.

SAY IT. The necessity of actual utterance in teaching is seen in the words “*affirm,*” KJV “*speaking,*” NASB “*witness,*” BBE and “*teaching.*” NJB To “*affirm*” is to assert, testify, express, certify, and declare. The matter that is to be declared is not an opinion, or a private view, or a sectarian dogma. Rather, these sayings are utterances, or declarations, that are “*faithful*” – statements that will hold up in the court of heaven, being in perfect accord with God’s nature and purpose.

STRESS IT. The word “*affirm*” contains the idea of stress, emphasis, accentuation, or prominence. Some versions present this view: “*stress,*” NIV and “*insist strenuously.*” DARBY What is stressed in teaching cannot be a theological tangent, or some current fad. It cannot be something strictly related to this world, or that will pass with time. The sayings that are to be stressed are those that are faithful – applying to all persons and circumstances. They cannot be things that fade with time, or are only applicable to a certain people group. The validity of any body of teaching will be determined by what is stressed, or emphasized by it.

SPEAK IT CONTINUALLY. To “*affirm*” something includes the idea of continuity. Some versions read “*affirm constantly,*” KJV “*insist steadfastly,*” AMPLIFIED and “*affirm fully.*” YLT That is, there can never be a time when it is no longer necessary to declare these “*faithful sayings.*” Paul spoke in the same way when he admonished Timothy to preach the Word, being “*instant in season, out of season,*” , or “*persistent whether favorable or unfavorable*” NRSV (2 Tim 4:2). Preaching the fads of the times, and catering to the fickle interests of men, is wrong.

DECLARE IT CONFIDENTLY. Affirmation also carries the idea of confidence – knowing that what is being said is the truth, the proper emphasis, and properly represents the mind of the Lord. Some versions emphasize this: “*speaking confidently,*” NASB “*affirm confidently,*” ASV and “*speaking with confidence.*” CJB Men must not preach things of which they themselves are not certain. The preacher and teacher is like a husbandman that must be the first one to eat the fruit of his vineyard (2 Tim 2:6). He must be confident he is handling the Word correctly, and is approved of God in what He is saying (2 Tim 2:15).

DECLARE IT WITH CLARITY. Affirming constantly also contains the idea of clarity – the absence of ambiguity and vagueness. After all, the salvation of men is at stake. Some versions make a point of this: “*be quite uncompromising in teaching,*” NJB and “*certify.*” TNT This is the sort of thing Paul was describing when he said, “*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto*

you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:1-2). Just as in photography, doctrinal clarity depends upon one's focus. **It is actually the focus that makes the truth clear.** This is what is meant by the well known saying, "*in Thy light, we see light*" (Psa 36:9). When a preacher or teacher is pulled into things that delight those with "*itching ears*" (2 Tim 4:3), it is at the expense of a proper focus. Such preaching ministers spiritual confusion, which totally contradicts the purpose of both revelation and salvation.

AFFIRMING WHAT IS PIVOTAL, OR CENTRAL. Constantly affirming "*these things,*" is placing the stress upon the objective and means of the salvation of God. That includes the fact of what God is doing, and the means through which it is being done. It is all encapsulated in what Paul has said in verses four through six. If it is true that the love and kindness of God our Savior appeared to deliver us from our former condition, then what possible reason can there be for continuing in that condition? What advantage is there in a regenerated person living like one who is unregenerate – or, is such a thing possible without forfeiting the advantages of regeneracy? See, the point of this text is that all of the advantages of salvation are maintained within the framework of godliness. Live outside of that framework, and those advantages are forfeited. Further, every sin, no matter how minuscule it may seem, has the potential of pulling you into a state of servitude to sin, for "*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*" (John 8:34).

In view of this, doctrinal emphasis is of critical importance. Should men be drawn aside to meeting the needs of people rather than serving the God of heaven, they are at once in jeopardy. Further, their teaching brings jeopardy to all who hear it, for it points them in the wrong direction. Every denomination is noted for its doctrinal emphasis, for that is what distinguishes them from others. Paul instructs Titus to maintain a proper emphasis, **not** to maintain a proper balance, which is a human perspective, not a Divine one.

3:7c "*. . . that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*"

Here is the solemn objective of maintaining a proper doctrinal focus, constantly affirming what is "*faithful.*" If it is true that God does nothing "*without cause*" (Ezek 14:23), then it ought to be obvious that our labors must also be so characterized. It goes without saying that the "*cause*" must be honorable before God, and in strict comportment with both His nature and His purpose. There must be no clash between what we teach and who God is.

THAT THEY WHICH HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD. Titus is urged to teach with believers in mind. They are the people for whom Jesus is interceding (Heb 7:25). They are the ones to whom holy angels are ministering (Heb 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit is also making intercession for them (Rom 8:26-27). They are the body of Christ into whom all of His "*fulness*" is being poured forth (Eph 1:23). What would prompt any preacher or teacher to shape his words for another kind of audience? If it is countered that we ought to seek to save the lost, it must be seen that this is the way to reach them – by preaching a doctrine that guarantees Divine favor to those who believe. We tell sinners what the Lord has done, declaring both His character and His revealed intentions. That is what the Gospel does. Even so, at all times, it is those who believe that gain the most from proper preaching and teaching.

MIGHT BE CAREFUL. And what of those who have believed in God. What is it that our doctrinal emphasis is targeted by Divine intention to do? It is to make them "*careful.*" Other versions read, "*give attention to,*" BBE "*apply themselves to,*" CJB "*pay diligent attention to,*" DARBY "*can concentrate on,*" GWN "*keep their minds constantly occupied,*" NJB "*devote themselves to,*" NLT "*might be diligent,*" TNT "*may be thoughtful,*" YLT and "*be careful to apply themselves.*" **AMPLIFIED**

The word "*careful*" accents the activity of the mind, meaning "to think, to be thoughtful," THAYER "think

seriously about,” FRIBERG “concentrate upon,” UBS and “let one’s mind dwell on.” LOUW-NIDA Everything critical to our identity with God through Christ involves our mind. This is in accord with the first and great commandment under the Law, which required that men love God with all of their mind (Matt 22:37). Now, Paul instructs Titus to teach in such a manner as to promote the proper use of the mind. The mind is a faculty with which we “*serve the law of God*” (Rom 7:26). In this text, there is a particular matter with which the mind is to be occupied.

TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. Other versions read, “*engage in good deeds,*” NASB “*doing what is good,*” NIV “*apply themselves to good deeds,*” RSV “*excel in good works,*” DOUAY “*show forth good works,*” GENEVA “*go forward in good works,*” TNT “*leading in good works,*” YLT and “*apply themselves to honorable occupations and to doing good.*” AMPLIFIED The latter version correlates this text with verse fourteen that speaks of maintaining good works “*for necessary uses*” – that is, “*works*” that have to do with providing for our needs – i.e. jobs, or employment. While this is involved in this text, it appears to me to be more broad, taking in all manner of good works.

The word “*maintain*” means to “to superintend or preside over.” THAYER The idea here is that “*good works*” are an area of stewardship, and are to be taken seriously. It has been revealed that in Christ we are “*created*” in order to do “*good works*” that have been “*ordained by God.*” Maintaining these good works involves being “*thoroughly equipped*” NKJV to do them through spiritual culturing by means of the Word (2 Tim 3:16), It also involves cleansing ourselves of defiling influences, so that we will be “*prepared unto every good work*” (2 Tim 2: 21).

The appointed means through which believers will be able to maintain good works is “*sound doctrine,*” and the things that “*become sound doctrine*” (1:9; 2:1). **First** , there must be clear and consistent declaration of what God has done and is doing in Christ Jesus. The objective of salvation must be properly delineated, and the means through which it is realized declared. There is no point at which men can cease to stress these things, for the life of the believer depends upon the recollection and understanding of them. The fact that the life of faith is being lived out in a hostile and perishing world necessitates this stance. **Second** , the type of life that is mandated by God must be declared. **The manner of life must match the nature of the salvation, else there can be no confirmation that one has participated in it.** That is why practical considerations are referred to “*things which become sound doctrine*” (2:1).

GOOD AND PROFITABLE. Other versions read, “*excellent and profitable for everyone,*” NIV “*good and of profit to men,*” BBE “*good of themselves and valuable,*” CJB “*excellent and beneficial.*” NAB and “*for such things are [not only] excellent and right [in themselves], but [they are] good and profitable for the people.*” AMPLIFIED The phrase “*unto men*” speaks of the universality of the benefit. The idea is that everyone (mankind) will profit from this teaching. Although it is quite common in our day to hear specialized teaching, or an emphasis addressed to only a segment of the church, such is not found in Scripture. Foundational teaching, which is the emphasis of our text, is, by its very nature, for everyone. Furthermore, foundational is not equated with elementary or initial. There are elemental “*principles*” that are not our continual emphasis (Heb 6:1-3), but none of them are foundational in the sense of our text.

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit3:9 *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* ” (Titus 3:9)

INTRODUCTION

The nature of salvation, and the perception of it, plays a key role in how we conduct our lives. A failure to discern the characteristics of salvation will inevitably lead to doctrinal distortion, and moral decline. **This is because Christ obtains relevance only within the context of salvation.** At no point does He become entangled with the affairs of this world. Although it has become quite fashionable to represent Christ as man's friend, who is deeply concerned with the affairs of life in this world, Jesus is never so represented in Scripture. He is bringing us to God, and bringing us to glory, and there is not an activity related to this world that plays any contributive role in that work. That is precisely why we have been chosen *“out of the world,”* and called into a focus on *“the world to come.”* Here, Paul instructs Titus to remind men to live in such a manner as minimizes their involvement in the affairs of this world. This is why we are to obey civil authorities, be ready to do the good works for which we have been created, and not be abrasive in our associations with men. Violating these teachings causes contention and variance that actually pulls us into the world, while the purpose of God is to separate us from it. It was our involvement with the world that caused us to be *“foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”* (3:3). That involvement was a natural one, for we ourselves were alienated from God and dead in trespasses and sins. **Once this is understood, it makes perfect sense to avoid becoming overly involved in the world's affairs, and with worldly people.** Now that we have been regenerated, with the Holy Spirit being shed on us abundantly, we have been fundamentally adapted for heaven, and for holy involvements. We are admonished to *“be careful to maintain good works”* because we have been created to walk in them (Eph 2:10). The newness of life cannot be maintained in environments and activities for which it has not been adapted. In such places, men must resort to carnal, or natural, manners.

Titus 3:9a “But avoid . . .”

Paul has affirmed that salvation was by means of *“the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit,”* and that it resulted in us being *“made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* Regeneration was the

commencement of a new life – not merely starting over again, but beginning anew in the heavenly places, and with a new heart and spirit. The renewing of the Holy Spirit has to do with both the initial experience, and maintenance of, the “*newness of life.*” We were, in fact, extricated from condemnation, and from the world, or natural order, as well. We were not only separated from our sins, but also from the environment that fostered sin – “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). The objective set before us is now to “*press toward the mark*” for the prize of our high calling (Phil 3:14). This involves the culturing of our spiritual appetites, and the strengthening and maturation of our faith.

All of this activity takes place in an intensely moral and spiritual environment. There are personal adversaries around us and even within us (Rom 7:23). Satan works with these influences with the intention of drawing us back into the condemned realm from which we were once delivered. His efforts are to be taken quite seriously by remaining alert, vigilant, and steadfast in the faith (1 Pet 5:8-9). Our text now addresses some of these distracting influences.

AVOID. Other versions read, “*shun,*” NASB “*have nothing to do with,*” BBE “*stay,*” GENEVA “*do not get involved in,*” NLT “*stand away from,*” YLT and “*hold yourself aloof from.*” WEYMOUTH The word “*avoid*” means, “to turn oneself about namely, for the purpose of avoiding something, hence, to avoid, shun.” THAYER The same word is translated “*shun*” in 2 Timothy 2:16, where the same subject is addressed: “*shun profane and vain babbling . . .*”

The idea is that of turning our back to the things of reference, and refusing to become involved in them. It is the same action described in the words “*turn away*” (2 Tim 3:5). The matters that are now addressed are all designed to get us off the “*narrow*” way that leads to life (Matt 7:14). They are a lure contrived to get us back into the domain from which we were delivered – like Israel being tempted to return to Egypt.

In order to turn toward these allurements, men must “*turn away their ears from the truth*” (2 Tim 4:14). Earlier in his letter to Titus, Paul wrote of some who, by “*giving heed to Jewish fables, and the commandments of men,*” actually “**turn from the truth**” (Tit 1:14). Peter spoke of those who were drawn aside and “*again entangled*” in the things from which they were once delivered, as those who “**turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them**” (2 Pet 2:21). **Whenever a person turns aside to something set before them by the wicked one, it is always at the expense of the truth.** If one chooses to become involved in the things of this world, they at once forfeit their fellowship with, and direction by, Jesus Christ. This is because “*no man can serve two masters*” (Matt 6:24). It is not possible to become inordinately involved in temporal things, and maintain participation in eternal things. The “*flesh*” and the “*spirit*” cannot be fed simultaneously. The heart cannot be attracted to things that major on life in this world, and at the same time maintain a focus on “*the world to come.*”

If men are not aware of this circumstance, you may rest assured that Satan is fully aware of it. His temptations – all of them – are designed to refocus your attention on things that do not blend with eternity. He aims to remove our attention from what fortifies the soul to what distracts it, and then induces death. If he can turn the attention of men, he can turn their hearts. If he can entice them to use their hearts and minds for the things that can be seen, they will not use them to apprehend the things that are not seen (2 Cor 4:17-18).

The Scriptures frequently admonish believers concerning the avoidance of contaminating influences. These texts accent one of the manners through which the Tempter seeks to make inroads into our thinking and preferences. Ponder some of these exhortations. “. . . *mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (Rom 16:17). “**Flee fornication**” (1 Cor 6:18). “**Flee from idolatry**” (1 Cor 10:14). “. . . *the love of money . . . flee these things*” (1 Tim 6:11). “**Flee also youthful lusts**” (2 Tim 2:22). “**Turn away**” from those with a mere form of godliness (2 Tim 3:5). “**Shun profane and**

vain babblings” (2 Tim 2:16). Avoid! Flee! Turn away! Shun! There certainly is nothing casual about such warnings. This is the language of spiritual warfare!

Such warnings are particularly important in a religious arena, which is the point of our text. Satan is intensely active in the religious arena, seeking to exploit men by his enticements. Paul spoke of the teachers Satan employs as men who “*draw away disciples*” **after themselves** (Acts 20:30). Such teachers allow their victims to maintain “*a form of godliness,*” while rejecting its power (2 Tim 3:5). In regard to our text, the things to “*avoid*” are the things that “*draw away.*” Such things are not harmless, and the avoidance of them is not simply a matter of law, or right and wrong. These are matters that are calculated by the wicked one to move us away from Christ, out of the domain of truth, and into the realm where falling is inevitable. They must not be addressed on an intellectual level alone, for that is an area in which Satan flourishes.

“ 3:9b But avoid . . . foolish questions, and genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law . . . ”

FOOLISH QUESTIONS. Other versions read, “*foolish disputes* ,” NKJV “*foolish controversies* ,” NASB “ *stupid controversies,*” NRSV “*foolish debates* ,” CSB “*foolish arguments* ,” NAB “*foolish speculations* ,” NJB “*foolish discussions* ,” NLT “ *unanswerable questions,*” LIVING and “*foolish issues* .” IE

The word “*foolish*” means “without learning, without forethought or wisdom, useless, godless.” THAYER Something that is “*foolish*” is the opposite of the mind of the Lord. It is senseless in view of both the Person and Word of God. It makes no sense in the context of eternity. In view of the truth, it is “intellectually weak, irrational, or lacking in foresight.” FRIBERG

The word “*questions*” means “a subject of questioning or debate, matter of controversy.” THAYER This refers to an issue with two opposing sides. Therefore, these discussions tend to become arguments. Now, there are issues that are to be argued and disputed: Justification by law or grace (Rom 4:16; 6:14; Gal 5:4), salvation through Christ or others (Acts 4:12; Col 2:10), and life centered in self versus living unto the Lord (2 Cor 5:15; Gal 2:20).

A “*foolish question*” is an argumentative issue that yields no profit because it lacks Divine focus. There is no satisfactory answer that will bring glory to God. It does not reflect a spiritual mind-set, but is the direct result of an improper focus. In a letter to Timothy, Paul referred to these as “*foolish and unlearned questions*” that “*gender strife*” (2 Tim 2:23). Elsewhere Paul refers to “*endless genealogies*” that “*give rise to mere speculation*” (1 Tim 1:4).

GENEALOGIES. Other versions read, “*spiritual pedigrees.*” NLT This speaks of fleshly descent or lineage. This has immediate reference to the maintenance of Jewish genealogies, which were critical under the Law – particularly for the maintenance of the priesthood (Num 3:6; Josh 21:4; Matt 1:1-18). However, now that Jesus is the “*everlasting Father*” (Isa 9:6), “*flesh and blood*” has no relevance when it comes to Divine acceptance, for it “*cannot inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Cor 15:50).

There are other forms of genealogical pursuits. Take what the Roman church refers to as “apostolic succession.” The office of the Pope depends upon a precise genealogical tracing back to Peter. Rather than being a flesh and blood genealogy, it is one of conferring papal power to a successor. Such efforts are altogether vain, and fall into the classification of things to avoid. And then, there is the modern religious practice of tracing bodily diseases and emotional deficiencies to, what is called, “generational curses.” This line of reasoning is used in a number of professed recovery programs.

CONTENTIONS. Other versions read, “*strife,*” NASB “*arguments,*” NIV “*dissensions,*” NRSV

“fights,” BBE *“quarrels,”* CJB *“rivalries,”* NAB *“brawlings,”* TNT and *“controversial theological ideas.”* LIVING The word “contentions” means “wrangling,” THAYER bickering, and persistent arguing, and includes the idea of “discord” FRIBERG and “selfish rivalry.” UBS This kind of thing was found in the Corinthian church. Paul said of it, *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and **strife** , and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”* (1 Cor 3:3).

Sectarianism especially breeds this kind of activity. **In contention there is really no quest to establish the truth.** Rather, the aim is to justify why this position or that position is taken. There are regular contentions concerning such things as the name of the church, the role of woman, the place of instrumental music, the necessity of baptism, various views of the second coming of Christ, the tribulation, the millennium, etc. These arguments are never settled, for they are not discussed for the purpose of settling them. It is not that there is no answer to them. Rather, whatever is said on them in Scripture is not adequate for those who insist on contending about them.

There is such a thing as valid disputation. Stephen disputed with certain of the synagogue of the Libertines (Acts 6:9). Paul *“disputed against the Grecians”* (Acts 9:29). Paul and Barnabas *“disputed”* with those demanding that circumcision was necessary if one was to be saved (Acts 15:2). Paul also disputed in the synagogue and marketplace of Athens (Acts 17:17), and in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-9). However, these were not *“contentions”* as mentioned in this text. On such occasions, the truth was powerfully affirmed, as compared with engaging in an effort to prove who was right.

STRIVING ABOUT THE LAW. Other versions read *“quarreling over the Law,”* RSV *“fights about Moses teaching,”* GWN and *“obedience to Jewish laws.”* LIVING In the early days, this referred to striving about circumcision, the distinction of meats, the observance of holy days, new moons, and sabbath days (Acts 15:1; Col 2:16). In our time, other dissensions about the Law have arisen. They include the teaching that the promises of prosperity mentioned under the Law are for believers to day. In recent years there has also been a revival of observing the three Jewish feast days, The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and The Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16). One major *Christian* denomination still strives about the observance of the Sabbath day. Our text speaks of unending strivings.

3:9c “ . . . for they are unprofitable and vain.” Other versions read, *“unprofitable and useless,”* NKJV *“unprofitable and worthless,”* NASB *“unprofitable and futile,”* RSV *“of no profit and foolish,”* BBE *“worthless and futile,”* CJB *“useless and empty,”* NET *“useless and a waste of time,”* NLT *“unprofitable and superfluous,”* TNT *“isn’t worthwhile; it only causes harm,”* LIVING and *“useless and without purpose.”* IE

UNPROFITABLE. As used in this text, this word means, “useless,” THAYER “harmful,” USB “ not offering any special benefit, without advantage.” LOUW-NIDA The book of Job speaks of *“unprofitable talk”* (Job 15:3). Jesus spoke of an *“unprofitable servant”* (Matt 25:30). Paul wrote of fallen humanity as *“together”* becoming *“unprofitable”* (Rom 3:12).

Being *“unprofitable”* speaks of a person or activity that brings no lasting benefit. In our text, the activities are *“foolish questions, genealogies, contentions, and striving about the Law.”* These are things that can bring no benefit to those engaged in them. That is, the people will not be the better for their involvement. These deeds will not make their faith stronger. They will not cause them to abound in hope. They will not minister confidence or assurance, or assist in conforming the individual to the image of Christ. In this way, they are **the opposite of edification** , which strengthens, solidifies, and makes the person more stable and consistent in the faith.

A religion that thrives on controversy cannot be profitable. All of the speaking associated with them (and they all have to do with speaking) is accurately said to be *“to no profit”* (2 Tim 2:14). If all things are to

“be done unto edification” (1 Cor 14:26), then something that is *“unprofitable”* actually fights against that requirement. If God’s intention is to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29), then what can really be said about something that is *“unprofitable?”* If the Holy Spirit, according to the purpose of God, is changing us from one increasing stage of glory to another (2 Cor 3:19), then how must we regard something that is *“unprofitable?”* If it is true that Jesus has given gifts to the church to ensure that we *“grow up into Him in all, things”* (Eph 4:11-15), then how should we view things that are *“unprofitable?”*

Who would dare to attempt an enumeration of things being done in and by the professed church that are, in heaven’s view, *“unprofitable?”* In this text, the fact of unprofitability is the very reason for avoiding the activities of reference.

VAIN. This word means, “devoid of force and truth . . . useless, to no purpose,” THAYER and “lacking in content.” LOUW-NIDA This is **why** the activities of reference are unprofitable: they lack the power and truth that are required to make them profitable. They are like a balloon filled with nothing more than hot air. They may be flown under the banner of profitability, assistance, understanding, and advantage, but that is all a deceptive lie. They have all been rendered impotent because they are not provided in the Divine arsenal. Their purported value is only in the eyes of men, and thus they cannot be used for God’s appointed purpose. To allow such interests to consume our time is like a car being stuck in a mud-hole, yet the motor is racing and the tires are spinning. It all amounts to vanity.

HARM. The word *“unprofitable”* also includes the meaning of being “harmful.” FRIBERG/UBS “hurtful,” LIDDELL-SCOTT/GINGRICH On this matter, we are not confined to the lexicographers. This is taught in apostolic doctrine. Paul said that indulging in *“foolish and unlearned questions”* would **“gender strife,”** which is a work of the flesh (2 Tim 2:23; Gal 5:20). He taught that giving heed *“to fables and endless genealogies”* would **“minister questions,”** not provide answers (1 Tim 1:4). He also taught that striving about words was to **“no profit,”** and would be to **“the subverting of the hearers,”** or **“the ruin of the hearers”** NKJV (2 Tim 2:14). Add to that the fact that *“profane and vain babblings”* are said to *“increase to more ungodliness”* (2 Tim 2:16). There are even words that **“will eat as a canker,”** or **“spread like cancer,”** consuming the hearers rather than building them up (2 Tim 2:17).

The person who chooses to spend their time in such vain discussions is described most vividly, also mandating a proper response to them. *“He is proud, knowing nothing, but **doting about questions and strifes of words** , whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself”* (1 Tim 6:4-5). Behold the harvest of such involvements! Envy [ill-will] , strife [variance] , railings [blasphemy] , evil surmising [wicked suspicions] , and perverse disputing [constant friction and meddling] . Perceive the nature of those choosing to do such things. They are proud [high-minded] , they know nothing [ignorant] , they dote [harping on] , have corrupt minds [rotten thinking] , and are destitute of the truth [uttering lacking of, and engaging in the hindrance of truth] .

Wherever there is spiritual decline, or a falling away, there has been extended involvement in the actions described in this text. Rather than avoiding these matters, as we are pointedly admonished to do, the people dabbled in them. However, when they did, they mandated a harvest of unrighteousness, and the forfeiture of the promises of God as well. Even though this passage is characterized by both power and clarity, it appears that it is being largely ignored by the professing church. Let not man yield to such distractions!

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit3:10 A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

(Titus 3:10-11)

INTRODUCTION

Although he is incarcerated, Paul has continued his ministry, delivering the things that have been revealed to him, and instructing believers in the manner of the kingdom. I think Christians take the epistles for granted, without duly regarding how they make known the faithfulness of those who wrote them – particularly Paul. Aside from my good father, and a very few others, I know precious few who have ever written to believers in order to declare or clarify the truth. It is not something that is in vogue in this day. Such writing is particularly noteworthy when you consider what Paul had to do to write a letter, then have it delivered. If it is true that his eyesight was poor, then he had to make some arrangements for another person to actually do the writing at his dictation. Tertius, for example, wrote the letter to the church in Rome (Rom 16:22). If in prison, as he was when he wrote Titus, he would require something to write on, and something to write with. Then, some kind of arrangement would have to be made to get the letter to the brethren. The point is that his great heart for the church moved him to reveal, instruct, and even correct believers by means of personal letters. That is something that is exceedingly rare in our day. Even throughout Christian history, there have been proportionately few men who have been that eager to provide proper teaching for the church. However, many of their works, though personal, remain to this very day, and have proved profitable to believers. In this text, Paul will address the matter of heresy, and how leaders are to respond to it – and they **are** to respond in an appropriate way. This word follows a solid admonition to avoid profitless controversies over irrelevant matters. Behold with what care the apostle speaks to “*faithful men*” who are able and willing to teach others. Compare this teaching with the modern concept of a theological education, which generally has little regard for the truth itself. Precious few students have had the advantage of such teaching as this.

Titus 3:10a “*A man that is an heretic . . .*” Other versions read, “*a divisive man,*” NKJV “*a factious man,*” NASB “*anyone who causes divisions,*” NRSV “*a man whose opinions are not of the church,*” BBE “*a heretical man,*” DARBY “*people who continue to teach false doctrine,*” GWN “*someone who disputes what you teach,*” NJB “*an author of sects,*” PNT “*a man given to heresy,*” TNT “*a sectarian man,*” YLT “*any one*

who will not be taught,” WEYMOUTH and “a man who is factious [a heretical sectarian and cause of divisions].” AMPLIFIED

A MAN. The expression “*a man*” means **any** man, **any** person fitting the description. It makes no difference whether that person is friend or foe, relative or none relative, a member of your particular gathering or not. Here there is to be no regard for, or respect of, persons. If Eli’s own sons are wrong, their error is to be confronted (1 Sam 2:22-25). If one apostle conducts himself in an unacceptable manner, another apostle is to rebuke him (Gal 2:14). No believer can allow friendship or relation to mitigate their hatred of error, or the need to rebuke it. In Christ, the love of God and the love of the truth outweigh all human relationships.

AN HERETIC. As the various translations indicate, a “*heretic*” is a person who causes division within the body of Christ. Primarily this is caused by teaching, but it can also be done by sowing seeds of discord among brethren. It can also be achieved by an action that promotes division, as when Peter withdrew from the Gentiles when certain Jews were sent by James to Antioch (Gal 2:11-12). We will see that causing division is a sin great in magnitude.

The word “*heretic*” is a transliteration, converting the Greek letters to English letters. An example of this is provided to the right. Transliteration was practiced because there was no English word that was precise enough to convey the intended concept. Therefore a word was created and given a precise meaning. This is not the way language is viewed today, and thus slang and crude speech have actually become a part of codified and formalized vocabulary.

The lexical meaning of the word “*heretic*” is: “schismatic, factious, a follower of false doctrine,” THAYER “causing divisions.” FRIBERG The English definition of the word is, “a dissenter from established religious dogma.” WEBSTER This definition is too general, requiring some further explanation.

First, the division of reference is caused among believers, or the body of Christ. Second, the standard from which the offender has dissented is not a religious dogma (i.e. “my church” versus “your church”). The standard is the truth of God itself – i.e. “*as the truth is in Jesus,*” or “*the truth that is in Jesus*” NIV (Eph 4:20). This is the body of truth, or reality, that revolves around, and is summarized in, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke this truth as being contained in Scripture, and centered in Him: “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are **they which testify of Me***” (John 5:39). A holy angel referred to revealed truth in this way, “*the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” (Rev 19:10). John referred to this Word as “*the record **God has given of His Son***” (1 John 5:10-11). Both Paul and John referred to it as and “*the doctrine of Christ*” (Heb 6:1; 2 John 1:9).

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the truth itself. It is the knowledge of the truth that liberates the soul (John 8:32). It is the love of the truth that enables us to be saved (2 Thess 2:10). It is the truth that sanctifies us (John 17:17). Whether or not a person believes is determined by one’s response to the truth itself (John 8:44-46). Jesus said, “*Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice*” (John 18:37). God’s wrath is revealed against anyone and everyone who holds back the truth (Rom 1:18). Any attempt to change the truth will result in Divine abandonment (Rom 1:24-25). Indignation and wrath will be poured out on those who “*obey not the truth*” (Rom 2:8). Men can be bewitched, so that they do not “*obey the truth,*” thus losing the benefits of it (Gal 3:1; 5:7). Hope is the result of believing “*the word of the truth of the Gospel*” (Col 1:5). A person has to come “*to the knowledge of the truth*” in order to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). When men err, or stumble, it is “*from the truth*” (2 Tim 2:18). Any way you look at it, the truth of God is vital!

How important, then, is a person who attempts to wedge human opinion into the truth, or one who introduces a new emphasis, or in any way distorts the understanding of truth? What is to be our attitude toward such a person? Paul wrote, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which **cause divisions and offences***”

contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom 16:17). “*Offences contrary to the doctrine*” are doctrinal obstacles that hinder progress, and pull the people away from the truth. The reason for this avoidance is spelled out. “*For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Rom 16:18). Because those who do perceive the truth have not taken advantage of increased communication media, those who “*cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine*” have monopolized the airwaves and electronic media. This has now compounded the requirement of our text, because we are no longer dealing with an exception here or there. Now, there are more erroneous teachings to embrace, and more who are declaring them. Our text gives us something to do about this condition.

“ 3:10b . . . after the first and second admonition reject.”

It is to be understood that this is speaking of a “*heretic*” with whom Titus had immediate contact – contact that could not be avoided. Other heretics are to be avoided, and no contact made with them, as Romans 16:17 enjoins. Here, however, is instruction on what is to be done when we face such people, or they are around us, or in our number. For Titus, this would be individuals he confronted among the Cretians.

AFTER THE FIRST AND SECOND ADMONITION. Other versions read, “*first and second warning,*” NASB “*Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time,*” NIV “*a first and second protest,*” BBE “*warned them once or twice,*” GWN “*after thou hast instructed him once and again.*” MRD What exactly is an “*admonition?*” Is it simply saying, “I don’t believe that,” or “I cannot agree with you”? Etymologically the word “*admonish*” means “teaching . . . and corrective instruction in regard to belief or behavior,” FRIBERG “instruction, warning,” UBS “to instruct, teach,” LOUW-NIDA and “to put in mind . . . advise.” LIDDELL-SCOTT In English the word means, “to indicate duties or obligations to, to express warning or disapproval to, especially in a gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner.” WEBSTER This kind of approach is outlined to Timothy. “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth ; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*” (2 Tim 2:24-26). While there may be some application of this text to immoral involvements, the references to striving, teaching, instruction, and acknowledging the truth indicate that it pertains more to teachers than to those who fall into the pit of immorality. For example, this is not the kind of instruction Paul gave for approaching a fornicator (1 Cor 5:-1-5).

The word “*admonition*” is used three times in the English and Greek Scriptures. First, “*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition , upon whom the ends of the world are come*” (1 Cor 10:11). Second, “*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph 6:4). Third, in our text. The word is not used in the NASB and NIV versions. They use the word “*warn*” in the place of “*admonition.*” The NIV translates it “*instruction*” in Ephesians 6:4. It is used once in the NRSV, which is our text.

The point of admonition is to straighten out the thinking on a matter – not merely to urge one to cease from saying this or that. The point is not simply to get the heretic to stop saying the wrong thing, but to start saying the right thing. I do not think the word “*warn*” carries that connotation. It is more of a word to cease than to commence, and to desist rather than becoming involved in speaking the truth. An example of corrective teaching is the occasion when Aquila and Priscilla “*expounded unto*” Apollos “*the way of the Lord more perfectly*” (Acts 18:25). For him, only one admonition was required. An example of admonition concerning conduct is Paul’s rebuke of Peter in Antioch (Gal 2:14-16). That also was only one time.

We are not to spend a lot of time trying to correct people who are devoted to propagating divisive

doctrines. Of course, all denominations have such a doctrine, for it is what they teach that causes the division. The truth of God unites those who believe it, but heresies divide them.

Heresies – or teachings that divide – are, in a sense essential. That is why God allows them to be perpetrated. On this matter Paul wrote, “*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*” (1 Cor 11:19). Other versions read “*factions,*” NASB and “*differences.*” NIV Those who are not approved by God will gravitate to such doctrines, heartily embracing them, while, Jesus said, His sheep “*will not follow*” a stranger” (John 10:5). A novice might say, “Then why not let the heretics speak? All that will happen is that the sheep will be made known.” That is too simplistic. While the sheep will not **ultimately** follow such teachers, confusion will be caused, spiritual growth retarded, and the unity of the Spirit endangered. There are also the young in the faith who can be offended because of their simplicity. Those who “*cause divisions,*” Paul said, “*deceive the hearts of the simple,*” “*unsuspecting,*” NASB or “*naive.*” NIV Jesus said of such people, “*But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*” (Matt 18:6).

Because the purpose of God is not simply to condemn, even a heretic is given two opportunities to repent – a first, and a second. I gather that the “*second*” admonition is not merely a repetition of the first, but a more extensive exposure of his error by shining the light upon it. Divisive teaching can only be seen as it truly is in the blazing light of the truth of God, for “*all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light*” (Eph 5:13). The aim is to bring the person to a point where the offender will be given repentance, acknowledge the truth, and recover himself from the snare of the devil. It is to be understood that “*the Spirit of truth*” will work through the truth that is proclaimed, for the Word of God is His sword. These **two** efforts are made to correct the offending teacher.

3:11 “ . . . **REJECT**; *Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*”

Here are Paul’s instructions concerning the heretic, or person who teaches divisive doctrine. Once he has been given the first and second admonition, he is to be rejected. Note, not six months of admonition, or a lengthy period of admonition, but **TWO** admonitions.

REJECT! Other versions read, “*have nothing to do with him,*” NIV “*have nothing more to do with,*” NRSV “*refuse,*” ASV “*is to be kept out of your society,*” BBE “*have done with,*” DARBY “*avoid,*” DOUAY “*break off contact with,*” NAB “*be rejecting,*” YLT “*stop having anything to do with,*” WILLIAMS and “*reject [him from your fellowship and have nothing more to do with him].*” AMPLIFIED The lexical meaning of the word is to “*refuse, decline, shun, avoid.*” THAYER

This is obviously a very strong word, indicating that it involves more than a mere procedure. Sin in any form is not only wrong, it is also contaminating, for “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9). Erroneous words “*spread like cancer,*” NKJV making impure everything around them. That is why decisive action must be taken.

This word is to be taken seriously – contact with such a person is to be broken off. The condition of such an individual is made known by him obstinately refusing two admonitions. That is how serious exposure to the truth is! Now the nature of the offender is delineated.

HE IS SUBVERTED. Other versions read, “*warped,*” NKJV “*perverted,*” NASB “*in error,*” BBE “*corrupt,*” GWN “*perverse,*” MRD “*twisted,*” NET “*have turned away from the truth,*” NLT “*has a wrong sense of values,*” LIVING “*has turned aside from the right path,*” WEYMOUTH “*is crooked,*” WILLIAMS

and “*has utterly changed (is perverted and corrupted).*” AMPLIFIED

The word “*subverted*” means “*to turn inside out, invert; topically, to change for the worse, pervert, corrupt.*” THAYER This is not speaking of a person who is merely confused, or has adopted a sectarian creed and is simply spouting it. **This is a person who has been converted to the lie, has embraced it, and refuses to be turned from it.** We know this is the case because he refused two admonitions in which the truth on a given matter was clarified, and he was called to repentance and the acknowledgment of the truth.

HE IS SINNING . The word “*sinneth*” is in the active tense and means the person is continuing in sin, even though he has been properly admonished concerning his error. Just like Jannes and Jambres, Egyptian magicians, “*withstood Moses, so do these men also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*” (2 Tim 3:8). They have so thoroughly bought into the lie that God has “*blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.*” They actually are like some of the Jews who beheld the “*many miracles*” that Jesus did, yet “*could not believe*” because they had been judged by God for their hardness of heart (John 12:39-40). **That** is why they kept on sinning, rejecting Jesus’ words, and ignoring His miracles. Keep in mind that, in our text, Paul is speaking of the person who has rejected two admonitions.

BEING CONDEMNED OF HIMSELF. Other versions read, “*self-condemned,*” NKJV “*self-judged,*” BBE “*condemned by his own judgment,*” DOUAY “*being damned of his own self,*” GENEVA “*condemned by their own actions,*” GWN “*is conscious of it himself,*” NET “*And he knows it,*” LIVING “*he knows he’s wrong,*” IE and “*[though he] is convicted of guilt and self-condemned.*” AMPLIFIED

The words “*condemned of himself*” are translated from a single Greek word. The meaning of the word is, “*self-condemned.*” THAYER and “*a person who shows by his own actions that he is wrong or guilty.*” FRIBERG However, those academic definitions are wholly inadequate. The condemnation of any person is owing to their own doing, whether it be unbelief, which is not so apparent or persistence in deviate behavior, which is apparent. That seems to me to be so elementary that it is an insult to our intelligence to say “*condemned of himself*” means “*self-condemned.*”

This is speaking of a person whose sin is like a whirlpool that caught him in its vortex, and pulled him to the bottom, where recovery is not possible –like Judas. It is another way of saying the person’s conscience has become “*seared with a hot iron,*” so that the pangs of the condemning conscience are no longer felt (1 Tim 4:2). This is what happened to the Gentiles when they “*did not like to retain God in their knowledge,*” and thus continued on in their willful ways ignoring the warnings of their own conscience. Paul referred to this as being “*past feeling*” (Eph 4:19). Even though the conscience of such people accuses them (Rom 2:15), like the brute beasts they continue their wayward thinking – even after the “*first and second admonition.*”

What Satan does not tell his dupes is that once a person has heard the truth, yet continues on in error, there is a certain hardness that begins to set in. The heart becomes more obstinate. The mind becomes more set in its ways. The conscience becomes more deadened, so that its voice is muffled. The determination to sin becomes stronger, and the mind can conjure up more reasons that justify what is being done. Such people are digging a pit for themselves, and unless they quickly amend their ways, they will fall headlong into it. The recovery of such a person, if it is even possible, will be wrought outside of the ordinary means, for the believers are admonished to have nothing to do with such people. A fearful state, indeed!

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit3:12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. 13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. 14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”

(Titus 3:12-14)

INTRODUCTION

Paul’s letter to Titus is a marvelous example of spiritual understanding and a sound mind. There is a blend of theology and living, of principles and practicality, and of understanding and consideration. He instructs Titus to make holy appointments, doing so with an understanding of their purpose (1:5-9). There are words to deliver to the old and the young (2:2-6), to male and female (2:2-6), and to those whose lot in life is to serve others (2:9-10). He addresses the subjects of eternal life (1:2), sound doctrine (2:1), the grace of God (2:11-12), hope (2:13), the appearing of Christ (2:13), and why Jesus “*gave Him self*” (2:14). He wrote of responsibility to higher powers (3:1), and the way we conduct ourselves among men (3:2). He opens up the purpose of salvation, how it was accomplished, and how it is intended to impact our conduct (3:5-7). He warns concerning things that are to be avoided (3:9), and how to respond to a heretic (3:10-11). All of this is accomplished within a relatively small letter. It is conducive to profound thought, the development of noble intentions, and the maintenance of a holy life. It confirms the nature of truth, which is very particular, and yet contains profound implications. There is a certain mind-set that is also revealed in this book, showing that those who participate in the salvation of God are brought to live with higher considerations than self. They cannot simply live by procedures and static routines. Faith sanctifies the heart and the mind, so that intentions become noble and God honoring, and life is filled with the marvelous blend of satisfaction and anticipation. This is the life of faith!

Titus 3:12 *“When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.”*

WHEN I SHALL SEND. We do not know the precise location of Paul when he wrote this letter. It was probably written shortly after he left Crete, embarking on a rather lengthy journey. His itinerary is not spelled out in a single text, but we can get a general idea of the trip by reviewing Titus, First Timothy, and Second Timothy – considered to have been written about the same time, probably within a year. Proceeding from south to north, stops included *Miletus* (2 Tim 3:20), possibly *Ephesus* (1 Tim 1:3), *Troas* (2 Tim), *Macedonia* (1 Tim 1:3), *Corinth* (2 Tim), *Nicopolis* (Tit 3:12), and finally *Rome* (2 Tim 1:17; 4:15-17). Most all of the travel was by means of the Sea, and covering about 1,500 miles. Yet, in all of these journeys, Paul’s mind was centered on the work of the Lord. Now, he writes that he is preparing to send one of the disciples to Titus in Crete – perhaps to replace him in the work.

It is to be understood that Paul’s plans were made as being subject to the will of God. As James wrote, “*If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*” (James 4:15). Of course, there is a slight difference in the circumstances. James was writing to spiritually obtuse people, who made their plans with no regard for the Lord and His will. In fact, their plans were presumptuous, because they assumed all things would continue as they were (James 4:15). However, this is not the mind-set of Paul. He did not view his life as his own, but confessed, “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” (Gal 2:20). This kind of perspective shapes how a person makes their plans. Paul had adopted the will of God for his own, and shaped his life around what he knew the Lord was doing, and in strict comportment with his calling and apostleship. What we read in this text is to be seen through the lens of being “*crucified with Christ,*” and the mortification of the deeds of the body.

ARTEMAS. This is the only time in Scripture that this name is mentioned. Yet, brief though it is, there is a lot to know of this man. First, he was associated with Paul, and, if not with him at the time, would soon be so. He was also associated with doing the work of the Lord. Further, he was someone who could be trusted in that work. Additionally, he was easily directed by the Apostle. From this we know that he was a believer, preferred the things of God, and was not a source of concern to the apostle. Think of the people with whom, Artemas is associated – people Paul “*sent*” somewhere: Timothy (1 Cor 4:17), Titus (2 Cor 12:18), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:28), Tychicus (Col 4:7-8), and Onesimus (Phile 1:12). There are also other believers who are only mentioned one time in Scripture. They include Epaenetus, Andronicus, Junia, Amplias, Urbane, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphena, Typhosa, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobus, Hermes, Nereus, and Olympas (Rom 16:8-15).

Because of his devotion to the Lord, and the mortification of his flesh, Paul was able to perceive trustworthy brethren who were not in a place of prominence. This is a most precious aptitude. There is a sense in which some of God’s people are precious gems, hidden from the masses of the people so they may be discovered for notable works by the truly godly.

TYCHICUS. Like the early disciples chose between two qualified men (Justus and Matthias) to replace the office vacated by Judas, so Paul would choose between two men in sending someone to Titus in Crete. Tychicus is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. He was one of the men from Asia who accompanied Paul into Asia – apparently on this very trip (Acts 20:4). Paul sent him to Ephesus to make known to them “*all things*” in which Paul was involved (Eph 6:21). He also sent him to Colossae to make known the same things (Col 4:7).

Within the body of Christ, there are individuals who can be trusted to do the work of the Lord, properly assessing the situation, declaring the right things, and faithfully reporting the working of the Lord. Everyone is not capable of doing this, and we should not imagine that they are. However, as each disciple cleaves unto the Lord with purpose of heart (Acts 11:23), perfects holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), and grows up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15), the possibilities for Kingdom labors become endless. The mentioning of these

two brethren confirms that this is, in fact, the real situation for every believer.

BE DILIGENT TO COME. Paul tells Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, which was a seaport city on the Adriatic Sea, and across from Italy. That was about 500 miles by Sea from Crete. Yet, Paul speaks of it with no regard for time or distance. This is because the work of the Lord is not couched within such considerations. Faith is the environment of decision, and urgency is the nature of the work of the Lord. That is why “*diligence*” is required of Titus.

I HAVE DETERMINED. In his journeys, Paul did not ask the Lord to circumvent the seasons, or make his trip convenient and even miraculous. He knew that the voyage from Greece to Italy was a long one, and best not to be made during the winter. Therefore, he made tentative plans to remain in Nicopolis for the winter, preferring to do so with Titus. There is no question but that these plans were made with “*if the Lord will*” in mind. That is how faith thinks.

3:13 “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.”

Being a trustworthy steward, Paul can give Titus several things to do without being unduly concerned about them being fulfilled. It is, after all, required in stewards that a man be “*found faithful*” (1 Cor 4:1), and that is the kind of man that we find in Titus.

ZENAS THE LAWYER. This is the only mentioning of this brother. The meaning of the reference to him as “*the lawyer*” is not certain. To me, it is doubtful that he was an expert in Roman or civil law. It is more probable that he was a “*lawyer*” in the ordinary Scriptural use of the term – that is, an expert in the Law of Moses (Matt22:35; Lk 7:30; 10:25; 11:45-46,52; 14:3). The generally accepted definition of the Scriptural use of “*lawyer*” is “one versed in the laws of Moses, which he taught in the schools and synagogues.” McCLINTOK STRONG’S

This was a category of Jewish experts that was generally denounced by the Lord Jesus (Lk 11:46,52). Yet, here is a man who proved to be the exception to the rule, as Nicodemus was an exception to the generally corrupt Pharisees (John 3:1; 7:5; 19:39). For that matter, the most exceptional former Pharisee was Paul himself (Acts 23:6; 26:5).

APOLLOS. This brother first surfaces in the city of Ephesus. He is described as “*an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures*” – that is, he was an expert in the Jewish Scriptures. At the first mention of him, he knew “*only the baptism of John.*” However, when two notable disciples, namely Aquila and Priscilla, knew of this deficiency, they brought him into their home and “*expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*” He then commenced traveling, accompanied by letters of commendation from the brethren, and “*helped them much which had believed through grace.*” He even “*mightily*” convinced the Jews publicly, “*showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ*” (Acts 18:24-28). He was also in Corinth for a season (Acts 19:1). Some of the brethren in Corinth even called themselves after the name of Apollos (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4). Paul described him as one who “*watered,*” nourishing the seed that Paul had planted (1 Cor 3:5).

BRING THEM DILIGENTLY. Now we read that Zenas and Apollos were traveling together in some Gospel labors. It is of interest that both of them were experts in the Jewish Scriptures. Apollos was fully able to convince Jews that the Jesus they crucified was the Lord’s Christ – and do so out of their own Scriptures. It is evident that in the labors of these two men, they would encounter many Jews who were dispersed throughout that section of the world. It would not be appropriate to make an effort to bring them to faith in Christ if they were basically ignorant of their Scriptures.

The very fact that Zenas and Apollos had an excellent grasp of the Scriptures made them capable of having a greater understanding of Christ Jesus and the salvation that is realized in Him. This is because everything about Jesus – who is was and what He accomplished – was “*according to the Scriptures*” (Mk 15:28; John 7:38,42; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24,28,36; Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 15:3-4). One of the great weaknesses of our times is the prevailing ignorance of the text of the Scriptures themselves. This ignorance actually brings with it the inability to perceive Jesus as He is. It throws open the door to philosophy, religious tradition, and all manner of erroneous teaching.

When Paul says to “*bring*” Zenas and Apollos, he does not mean to bring them to Nicopolis with him. He rather means to bring them along on their own journeys, which had apparently brought them to Crete. Being there, Paul assumes Titus will be aware of their presence, and that they will eventually come together. Keep in mind that Crete is an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. It is approximately one hundred and forty miles long, and 40 miles wide. However, Paul does not think of mere location, size, or the fact that the citizens of this island were particularly wicked and indulgent. He rather reckons on the fact that brethren tend to gravitate to one another. He knows they have kindred interests concerning the work of the Lord, and possess a deep and abiding love for one another.

To bring Zenas and Apollos “*on their journey diligently*” means to see to it that all of the needs associated with their journey are met. This would include such things as food, clothing, possible escorts or helpers, and even letters of commendation. Thus Paul and Barnabas were “*brought on their way by the church*” (Acts 15:3). Paul wrote to the Romans about bringing him on his way to Spain (Rom 15:24). He wrote in the same manner to the Corinthians concerning bringing him on his journey wherever he went (1 Cor 16:6; 2 Cor 1:16). John wrote to Gaius concerning assisting the traveling brethren who came in contact with him (3 John 1:6).

THAT NOTHING BE WANTING. Other versions read, “*that they lack nothing,*” NKJV and “*that they have everything they need.*” NIV Speaking of those who labor in the vineyard of the Lord, Paul once wrote, “*Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?*” He testified that even the Law made such provision for oxen (1 Cor 9:7-11). That is a ministry concerning which many churches and brethren have not done well.

3:14 “*And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*”

This is particularly said in consideration of bringing Zenas and Apollos on their way. Remember, the citizens of Crete had been properly characterized as “*lazy gluttons,*” NKJV or “*idle and lazy gluttons*” AMPLIFIED (Tit 1:12). By their nature, they were basically an indulgent society, with no interest in supplying the needs of others. However, for those in Christ, that kind of conduct is not acceptable. Therefore Paul reminds Titus of the Kingdom view of work. He also clarifies that Titus is not to assume the total responsibility for assisting Zenas and Apollos. It is apparent that he had probably laid aside some funds to assist brethren – but he was not to be alone in this. The Cretians were also to participate, learning to share in the work of the Lord.

LET OURS. Other versions read, “*our people,*” NKJV and “*all our people.*” NJB This is a reference to the believer’s in Crete – those who had been taken out of that society for the name of the Lord (Acts 15:14). “Ours” is a term that identifies the people of God with one another. God taught this concept under the Law, teaching it in an environment where the people of God were outwardly isolated from the rest of the world. Under the New Covenant, this isolation takes place in the character and preferences of the saints of God. It is the result of regeneration and a fundamental identity with Jesus, not Adam.

The words “*let ours*” parallel the frequent apostolic expression “*let us.*” It is used thirty-eight times in the epistles, and has reference to special conduct and manners that is required of the people of God (Rom 12:6,7;

13:12,13; 14:13,19; ; 1 Cor 5:8; 10:8,9; 15:32; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:25,26; 6:9,10; Phil 3:15,16; 1 Thess 5:6,8; 1 Tim 6:8; Heb 4:1,11,14,16; 6:1; 10:22,23,24;. 12:1,28; 13:13,15; 1 John 3:18; 4:7). We may be in the world, but we are not of it. Let us admonish one another to conduct our lives in strict keeping with that fact.

LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. Other versions read, “engage in good deeds,” NASB “devote themselves to doing what is good,” NIV “apply themselves to good deeds,” RSV and “learn to apply themselves to good deeds (to honest labor and honorable employment)” AMPLIFIED The word “maintain” suggests this is an ongoing activity, and does **not** refer only to special occasions – like assisting Zenas and Apollos. This is a reference to the means through which one’s living is maintained – what we call employment. Our means of employment should be properly identified as “good.” In a practical sense, this rules out working in a casino, or bar, or a nightclub. A “good” work, or job, is not driving a beer truck, delivering drugs or stolen goods, or engaging in some form of extortion. Under the Law, dishonorable occupations prohibited a person from contributing to the house of God. “*You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both*” NIV (“dog” is a term for “male prostitute” HEBREW) (Deut 23:18).

NECESSARY USES. Other versions read, “urgent needs,” NKJV “pressing needs,” NASB “daily necessities,” NIV “genuine needs,” CJB “necessary wants,” DARBY “the urgent needs of others,” NLT and “meet necessary demands.” AMPLIFIED The word “necessary” means essential and basic needs. Scripture breaks this down as “food and raiment” (1 Tim 6:). The word “raiment” means covering, and would include housing, or a place to lay one’s head. Of course, such a concept is exceedingly difficult to embrace in an affluent society where there is much opulence and luxury.

As used here, genuine needs apply to one’s self, family, and those needful brethren who come within the sphere of their influence. However, considered within this context, the meaning is that when our excesses and luxuries render us incapable of assisting our brethren in their needs and labors for the Lord, we have spent too much on ourselves.

THAT THEY BE NOT UNFRUITFUL. Here, being “fruitful” has to do with meeting the needs of brethren – particularly those who are engaged in the work of the Lord – like Zenas and Apollos. This kind of activity is included in the “good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). In addressing assisting the brethren in Jerusalem, who had been deprived by a severe drought, and whose spiritual things had been enjoined by the brethren in Corinth, Paul said this: “*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may **abound to every good work***” (2 Cor 9:8). When Paul wrote to the Philippians concerning their faithful ministry to his “necessity,” he referred to it as “fruit” that was abounding to their “account.” In other words, what grace brings to us is expected to produce fruit in others – and a heavenly log is being kept of such occasions. In heaven’s perspective, which is the only valid perspective, an “abundance,” or possessing more than we need, is in order to supply the want of someone else: “*But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality*” (2 Cor 8:14).

Now, Paul instructs Titus to see to it that the brethren in Crete rise above their culture, and learn to maintain honorable ways of making a living. Should they do so, God will bless their labors so they will have enough for themselves, and also meet the needs of others.

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

by Given O. Blakely

“ Tit3:15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you

all. Amen.” (Titus 3:15)

INTRODUCTION

The epistle of Titus is a marvelous example of the kind of concern for the church that accompanies faithful involvement in the work of the Lord. In the world, a vocation, by its very nature, is accompanied with a lot of self-interest. It is not unusual to the interests of the individual to actually supercede those of the person or organization by whom one is employed. There is always the possibility of the collapse of an organization, and often opportunities arise to work for a better and more profitable employer. All of this is because of the prominence of self-interests. However, in the Kingdom of God, none of this is true. This is because of the fundamental association that exists between the individual and the Living God. That association is initiated and sustained through the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit. Further, the revealed will of the Lord is what brings both meaning and satisfaction to the laborer. There is also a meaningful and productive relationship with others who have been joined to the Lord. There is a prevailing desire for their betterment, for that is the will of God, and brings glory to Him. The laborer is not merely engaged in efforts to help his brethren. His aim is to assist them in being what God intends. This is precisely what we have seen in this epistle. There is a godly care for Titus himself (1:4). There is a concern for the brethren in the island of Crete, where Paul had left Titus (1:5). The work there was intended to be an ongoing one, and therefore shepherds were to be ordained in every church (1:5-9). There were corrupting teachers, whose mouth had to be stopped (1:10-16). The teaching of Titus was to be in strict accord with sound doctrine, never obscuring the message of the Lord (2:1-10). The objective of God’s salvation was to be carried out among the people (2:11-15). Conduct toward civil authorities and society in general was to be carried out in strict accord with the nature of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:1-8). There must be an avoidance of any and all unprofitable and heretical teaching (3:9-11). These instructions were not given in order to maintain a religious organization. They all had to do with the purpose of God’s great salvation, which had to do with separating from the world and getting ready for eternity.

Titus 3:15a *“All that are with me salute thee.”*

ALL THAT ARE WITH ME. The word “*all*” is more than a group word. It’s lexical meaning is “individually, each and every one,” as well as “collectively.” THAYER What is said of these people is not a mere formal statement. It will reflect the mind-set of each one for whom Paul speaks, and of the group as a whole. Paul does not share who was with him at the time of writing. When Paul sailed to Syria, Aquila and Priscilla went “*with him*” (Acts 18:18). Some of his traveling companions are mentioned in Scripture. Gaius and Aristarchus were described as “*Paul’s companions in travel*” (Acts 19:29). Those who “*accompanied him into Asia*” were *Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus*” (Acts 20:4). In writing to the Galatians, Paul referred to “*all the brethren which are with me*” (Gal 1:2). In his epistle to the Philippians he referred to “*the brethren which are with me*” (Phil4:21). In his trip to Jerusalem, Paul took Barnabas and Titus (Gal 2:1). In a rare occasion, Paul once said, “*only Luke is with me*” (2 Tim 4:11).

The Uniqueness of the Situation. Ordinarily, the fact that brethren traveled with a person doing the work of God would not be considered overly significant. However, when it is said that they traveled with Paul, that is entirely another matter. **First** , Paul was a prodigious laborer, doing extensive work for the Lord – so much so that he confessed, “I labored more abundantly than they all” (1 Cor 15:10). **Second** , this was a man who was

noted for being opposed and going through significant trials and danger (2 Cor 4:8-12; 11:23-33). **Third** , his doctrine drew all sorts of opposition from the Jews, who aggressively pursued him, seeking to take his life (Acts 9:23-24; 21:31; 23:15; 25:3). **Fourth** , he was often misrepresented and controversial because his doctrine so contradicted that of Jewish traditionalists (Rom 3:8).

Only Devoted People Would Choose His Companionship. Paul is not the kind of person with whom the faint-hearted sought to be identified. John Mark once left the work in which Paul was engaged (Acts 13:13; 15:38). Demas forsook him (2 Tim 4:10). Once, when giving an answer for the hope that was in him, he said, “*all men forsook me*” (2 Tim 4:16). The nature of Paul’s ministry, and his total involvement in it, had no attraction to the uncommitted.

The Manner in which Paul Speaks Reveals Several Things About “ALL” that were with him. Because this circumstance reveals much concerning the work of the Lord, and those who are identified with it, thoughtful consideration should be given to these unknown brethren.

They were with him in the work of the Lord. These were not merely personal friends, but were “*with*” Paul in the work he was doing. Their hands had also been put on the plow with him. Unlike John Mark, there were willing to go “*to the work*” (Acts 15:35).

They were with him in their hearts as well as bodily. This was not a formal assignment, but a personal commitment. Their hearts were in the work – that is, they preferred being with Paul in his labors, to other alternatives that were available to them. Like Titus, they had “*the same care*” (1 Cor 12:25) – and, as with Paul, it was “*in the sight of God*” (2 Cor 7:12). They were believers, and members of the household of faith. These were members of “*the whole family in heaven and earth*” (Eph 3:15). They had “*one heart*” (Acts 4:32), possessed “*one mind and one mouth*” (Rom 15:6), and were “*striving together for the faith of the Gospel*” (Phil 1:27). They had been “*joined unto the Lord*” (1 Cor 6:17), and consequently to one another.

They had a love for the brethren. This distinguishing mark (John 13:35; 1 John 3:14) is evidenced by their choice to be with Paul, and by them joining in the salutation to Titus and the brethren in Crete. They recognized the Source of faith, as well as those who possessed it.

SALUTE THEE. Other versions read, “*greet you,*” NKJV “*sends you greetings,*” NIV “*send you their love,*” BBE “*wish to be remembered to you,*” AMPLIFIED The word “*salute*” carries the idea of wishing well, showing regard to, and receiving joyfully. THAYER A “*salute*” is to speech what an embrace is in the body. It is an expression denoting respect, preference, and a desire for the betterment of the individual addressed. In Christ, a “*salute*” has to do with being blessed by the Lord, receiving an abundance of grace, and being made thoroughly adequate for one’s labors in the Lord. In the Lord, there is no attitude that is purely after the flesh, or human. As it is written, in living “*unto Him which died for them and rose again,*” and from the moment of the commencement of that life, “*know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more*” (2 Cor 5:15-16). That is the Kingdom norm.

The salutation is in the singular – “*thee,*” or to Titus himself. The other believers will be addressed in a separate statement. This salutation is for Titus alone. It must have been refreshing, for, although he was among brethren, they lacked stability. That is one reason why Titus had been left there, “*to set in order the things that are wanting*” (Tit 1:9). He was also dealing with intruders that had to be resisted, as well as believers that were yet “*babes in Christ*” (Tit 1:11; 3:9-11; 1 Cor 3:1). His great heart needed to be encouraged, and this brief salutation has all of the seed of edification in it. The heart of the brethren went along with the salutation, and there was a certain fellowship and unity in the faith that was promoted by it.

3:15b “Greet them that love us in the faith.”

GREET. The root word for “*greet*” is the same as for “*salute*.” Most modern versions employ the word “*greet*” for the salutations from those with Paul to Titus, and the greeting to be executed from Titus to the brethren in Crete. In this verse, the first salutation, or greeting, was by means of a letter, while with Titus it would be face-to-face.

Although the brethren in Crete were probably not as advanced as those with Paul, yet the same loving care and concern for them was to be exhibited. In the greetings sent to Titus, the enlargement of that word would be developed within the heart of Titus. The kindred spirit between him and them would allow for the extensive development of their desires within Titus’ own self. It ought to be noted that, for the brethren of Jesus, a considerable amount of edification and encouragement come from the implications of what is seen and heard. You have no doubt experienced moments of spiritual exhilaration at the sight of a brother or sister in Christ, or hearing but the mention of their name. I have often encountered a member of the body of Christ from a distance, or under circumstances that did not allow for extensive conversation. Perhaps a mere touch of the hand in a fleeting moment, or a loving embrace. Yet, a staggering amount of strength and encouragement were ministered by that means. Who can dare to imagine the benefit that will result from extended exposure to the saints, and the allowance of prolonged conversation in Christ Jesus.

THEM. The greeting of Titus to the brethren in Crete will not be by letter, but will be more immediate. He will greet them in the behalf of Paul and those with him, doing so in person. One of the marks of being a “*babe in Christ*” is that extensive profit often requires extensive elaboration. This is made evident in Paul’s writings to the Corinthian church, which he describes as being “*babes in Christ*.” For them, this involved retrogression, and therefore Paul also described them in the same breathe with the word “*carnal*” (1 Cor 3:1-3). He therefore had to reason with them extensively about the presence of immorality in the church (1 Cor 5:1-11), suing one another before courts of men (1 Cor 6:1-7), the various involvements and considerations of marriage (1 Cor 7:1-17), being considerate of weaker brethren (1 Cor 8:1-13), his apostleship (1 Cor 9:1-27), the necessity of holiness (1 Cor 10:1-17), spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12-15), and the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15). The need to reestablish these perspectives was owing to the lapse of the people into a state of carnality. It is certainly not that they had never heard these things before. Like the Hebrew believers who had a propensity to the Law, they had to be taught the “*first principles of the oracles of God . . . AGAIN*” (Heb 5:12). Such a state requires the kind of detailed teaching that is required when a person first believes.

As for the brethren in Crete, they were among those who were in the initial stages of spiritual life. That is why they required extensive teaching concerning proper behavior and what was required to lead the flock of God. This is why Titus’ greeting to them would no doubt be attended by words appropriate for the occasion – for he was giving them greetings from some brethren they had probably never seen before. It would be important that they comprehend something of the nature of spiritual life and its association with kindred spirits.

LOVE US IN THE FAITH. Most versions read “*love us in the faith*.” Some of the versions reduce the power of the phrase by a rather clumsy representation: i.e. “*Greet our faithful friends*,” GWN “*Please give my greetings to the believers-- all who love us*,” NLT and “*Please say ‘hello’ to all of the Christian friends there*.”
LIVING

To love someone “*in the faith*,” is to love them in view of the “*substance of things hoped for*,” and “*the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb 11:1). It is as “*the things of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:5; 1 Cor 2:14) become clearer to the heart and mind, that the people of God become more precious. In fact, the love of the brethren is the direct result of passing “*from death unto life*” (1 John 3:14). The absence of a love for the brethren confirms that such an individual “*is not of God*” (1 John 3:10), “*abideth in death*” (1 John 3:14), “*knoweth not God*” (1 John 4:8), and that he does not “*love God*” (1 John 4:20).

The point of this text is not to determine who does not love Paul and the brethren, but those who possess the evidence of such a love: “*love the faith*” – i.e. their faith, through the working of the Holy Spirit, is what produced this love. In other letters Paul identified such people as “*helpers in Christ Jesus,*” “*my wellbeloved,*” “*who bestowed much labor upon us,*” “*our helper in Christ,*” “*approved in Christ*” (Rom 16:3,5,6,9,10), and those who “*love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*” (Eph 6:24). Faith is the circumference within which love – discerning love – operates. That is, “*love in the faith*” functions within the framework of one’s awareness of and fellowship with the God to whom Jesus brings the redeemed (1 Pet 3:18).

Paul does not ask Titus to “*greet*” everyone for him in order to merely let them know that he cares for them. Rather, his desire for their well being in Christ is to be confirmed to those who have themselves embraced the Lord. This is certainly not intended to be an expression of lifeless legalism. However, it does confirm a level of discretion that is not common today.

3:15c “*Grace be with you all. Amen.*”

A FINAL WORD. Paul now leaves a final word with Titus. It is particularly from **him**, and **generally** from those who are with him as well. This word is more than a mere formality. It is in strict keeping with the personal affection of Paul, his discernment of the purpose of God, and the commission that was given to him by the Lord Jesus Himself (Acts 26:18). Ponder some of Paul’s marvelous summations. 1– “***Finally***, brethren, farewell. *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you*” (2 Cor 13:11). 2 – “***Finally***, my brethren, *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*” (Eph 6:10). 3 – “***Finally***, my brethren, *rejoice in the Lord*” (Phil 3:1).

This benediction, or closing word, has directly to do with the sustaining of faith, and the building up of the saints of God. Good instruction must be accompanied by sayings of this kind – words that put the people in mind that the God who saves also keeps, and the One who loves, also works in the justified ones “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Phil 2:13).

GRACE BE WITH. This is the fourth time that Paul has mentioned “*grace*” in this epistle. 1 – “***Grace***, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior” (1:4). 2 – “***For the grace*** of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us . . .” (2:11-12). 3 – “. . . ***being justified by His grace*** . . .” (3:7). Thus, prior to this text, “*grace*” is depicted as bringing salvation, justifying sinners, teaching them to love in a godly manner, and being sent in continual supply from both the Father and the Son. Now, in perfect concert with those representations, Paul leaves the vivid impression of the continual need for and presence of the grace of God. The grace that brought salvation cannot be discarded as though it was no longer required. The grace that justifies can never be abandoned, for salvation is being worked out in hostile territory, where men must contend with “*ungodliness and worldly lusts,*” and where they must renew their determination to live “*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*” There is not a single facet of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus that can be accomplished in the wisdom or energy of the flesh. There is no human or external discipline that can enable the believer to come away from sin, or come closer to God. These are things that can only be accomplished through the grace of God. Further, the word of God affirms the giving of grace is discretionary: “*He giveth grace to the lowly*” (Prov 3:34), “*He giveth grace to the humble*” (James 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5), and “***Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity . Amen***” (Eph 6:24). Grace is not for the unbelieving and rebellious.

YOU ALL. This expression refers to all who are in Christ Jesus, as it is so used elsewhere. “*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints . . . grace to you and peace from God . . . The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*” (Rom 1:7; 16:24). “. . . unto the ***church of God*** which is at Corinth, with ***all the saints*** which are in all Achaian . . . ***grace be with you and peace from God . . . The grace of the Lord***”

Jesus Christ . . . be with you all” (2 Cor 1:1,2; 13:14). “. . . to **all the saints in Christ Jesus** which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons . . . **Grace** be unto you and peace from God . . . **The grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Phil 1:1,2; 4:23). “. . . unto **the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** . . . **Grace** unto you and peace from God . . . **The grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (2 Thess 1:1,2; 3:18). “. . . to **the seven churches** which are in Asia . . . **Grace** be unto you and peace from God . . . **The grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Rev 1:4; 22:21).

This is family language! Grace accounts for our calling (Gal 1:15). We were called into the grace of Christ (Gal 1:6). We were called according to God’s own purpose and grace (2 Tim 1:9). We were justified freely by His grace (Rom 3:24; Tit 3:7). In Christ, we are what we are “*by the grace of God*” (1 Cor 15:10). In fact, the whole of salvation is “*by grace*” (Eph 2:5,8). When, therefore, Paul says, “*Grace be with you all,*” he has specific regard to the working out of salvation within the saints. The focus is not their lives in the flesh, but in the Spirit. This has to do with God performing the good work begun in the saints “*until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil 1:6). It has to do with the saved standing “*perfect and complete in all the will of God*” (Col 4:12). It relates running, and the patient completion of, the race that has been set before us (Heb 12:1-2). Grace is the appointed means by which we remain turned from idols, maintain our gaze upon the Lord, and remain active in the work of the Lord (1 Thess 1:9). It related to perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), and being ready for the appearing of the Lord (Matt 24:44). The appointed status of strangers and pilgrims in this world is maintained by the grace of God. Those are some of the reasons for committing men to God’s grace.

AMEN. Nearly all versions omit the word “*Amen*” – with the following exceptions: King James, Douay, Geneva, Murdock, Bishop’s, Webster, Tyndall, International Standard, Amplified. Most of the standard Greek manuscripts conclude with “*Amen*” (**u`mw/n**). The word means surely, truly, of a truth, and so be it. THAYER -The idea is that what has been written precisely reflects the nature, will, and salvation of God. There is no variance between the mind of Paul and the revelation of God. Further, Paul has accurately expressed his own heart. AMEN!