

# NOTES OF ADDRESSES

ON THE

## Second Epistle to Timothy.

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LONDON :  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

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CHAPTER I.

THIS epistle no doubt contains some of the very last words of the apostle. The time for putting off his tabernacle had drawn near, and he pours out the exercises and desires of his heart into the ear of the only man in whom he could place real confidence. In writing of him to the Philippians, he says: "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." He had found Timothy at Lystra on his second\* visit there, after that Barnabas had departed from him and sailed away to Cyprus. It appears, as if Timothy had been brought to the Lord through his means, during his first visit to the place, for upon his second visit Timothy was already a disciple. Paul calls him his dearly beloved child, and writes this epistle to him to encourage his heart, when the profession of Christianity had got into such a state of indifference to Christ that the servant of the Lord stood in

\* Perhaps his third visit. (Acts xiv. 6, 21 ; xvi. 1.)

much danger of becoming faint-hearted. He does not seek to hide the true state of things from Timothy, but while he brings before him the true state of affairs, he seeks to stir up his faith by reminding him of his resources.

All that were in Asia had turned away from him. They no doubt thought he was too extreme. He was not open-minded enough for those who wanted to make the best of both worlds. They could not identify themselves with a man who was offensive to the rulers of this world, imprisoned as a malefactor and wore a chain. Their worldly pride would not consent to association with such a man. If he could not accustom himself to a little more moderation, he must do without the leaders in Asia, and so they turned away from him.

As the apostle draws aside the curtain a little way, and lets us see what was going on in his own day, we are a little appalled; but when he opens up the future before our gaze, and we see that there is to be no amendment, we may well desire to hear him tell us where we are to turn and find light for our path, and grace to tread it, in days when the evil would reach its climax. And how good and gracious of God to leave on record guidance for us in these days when the evil is fully developed, so that we might know how to behave ourselves when the whole profession is in ruins!

The prominent thing in the first chapter is

the testimony of our Lord ; in the second, Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead ; in the third, the apostles' doctrine and example ; and in the fourth, his departure out of the world.

One great object of God in His approach to men in grace is to bring His people up out of this present evil world into the place He had purposed for us before this world was. As Moses was sent to bring Israel out of Egypt into the land of promise, so Christ came into this world to bring His people out of it and to lead them to heaven. Our blessings are not in this world, nor are they given to us on this side of death. They are all in Christ. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, and the work of the Spirit is to bring us in our hearts and minds to the place and Person, where and in whom all our blessings are. Pardon, righteousness, redemption, salvation and eternal life are all in Christ, and in Him for all men ; hence Christ is the glad tidings, and as glad tidings He has been preached to the whole creation. If we are to possess these things which are in Him, we can only possess them in the power of the Spirit, and they are ours in Him as the One in whose death the old order has been ended, and who in resurrection is Head and centre of a new heavenly and eternal system which has no link with the old earthly order, and to Him we are attached, and in Him we live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father. The Father had something better for us than this world, and to this we have been called. There is a notion in people's minds that the great thought in salvation is salvation from hell, but I have no doubt in my mind that the enemy is at the bottom of this idea, and that to make it the prominent thing is ruinous to souls. The prominent thing is this evil age, and we may rest assured that if a soul is delivered from this world, there can be no fear of such an one going to hell, but no one could say that heaven would be a certainty to any one apart from deliverance from the world. If we were to be brought into the purpose of God, deliverance from the world was a necessity, and in order that a way of deliverance might be set before us Christ gave Himself for our sins.

But in order to frustrate the purpose of God, the adversary has his subtle and dangerous instruments, and in this epistle we get two prominent forms of evil whose efforts are directed to keep the people of God in the world; they are Hymenæus and Philetus on the one hand, and Jannes and Jambres on the other. These two forms of evil seem as if they were very wide apart and had nothing in common between them, but such is not the case, for they both conspire to one end, and that end is to

connect you with the old order and with the system of this world. The two former say that the resurrection is past already. I do not attempt to define their doctrine, nor to shew how they arrived at their conclusions, but if it meant anything to those who listened to them, it meant this, that the saints were already in their final condition, and the effect of this was to paralyse every movement toward the rest of God. The apostle writing to the Philippians refuses for himself the thought of being already perfected (Phil. iii. 12), but speaks of being in the race for the goal. I think we may in measure fall under the power of their doctrine by connecting the blessings which are in Christ risen with ourselves down here, as if they were deposited in us. This would go very near the doctrine of those two men who overthrew the faith of some. The two latter, Jannes and Jambres, imitate the power of God working through His servant, and lend themselves to the prince of this world in his efforts to keep people under his bondage.

Let us look now for a moment at the way this epistle opens. Paul speaks of himself as an apostle according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. At once our thoughts are turned into a new channel, entirely different from everything in the old order, whether it be of innocence or of guilt. The great thought of God for man was life, but not life as we view

it in an innocent creation, not life as it is seen in Adam and in his posterity, even if we could view them apart from the sin that has ruined everything, but life as it is in Christ Jesus. I suppose life consists in relationships and affections, but both the relationships and affections in Christ are entirely different from those which were in Adam.

When man sinned death came in and all was irrecoverably lost in the old order. Death lies upon everything, and everything pertaining to flesh and blood must go in death, nothing can be retained. It was this the prodigal learned in the far country. There came a moment when he found he had spent *all*. Everything had gone. What can man retain of all his earthly portion? "There arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." Man has squandered everything. The last thing God had to give man was Christ, and he murdered Him, and now eternal destitution stares him in the face. But the power of God has come in on man's behalf, and in Christ risen from the dead and glorified, God gives to man a new order of blessings, infinitely more and better than ever has been lost through sin. In Him is life for man, but life after a new order, consisting in new relationships and affections which subsist in Christ. It is now "*My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God.*" It is now the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*. Saints are His brethren, and all

in the relationship of brethren together. Here we are together to-night, and comparative strangers to one another, owning no kinship in flesh, and yet in a relationship to one another that death is powerless to touch. Sin disturbed the old relationship, separated man from God, and estranged men from one another, and all came under judgment and were plunged in hopeless ruin. But the blessed God had His purposes already formed, and He had life in view for man, life as it is in Christ Jesus, beyond the reach of sin and death. And He has died for us. He gave Himself for our sins that He might communicate to us His Holy Spirit, and in His life we are beyond the reach of death. In the old relationships, which belong to flesh and blood, the pressure of death lies heavy upon us; but in the favour of God, and in the love of the brethren, we know that we have passed out of death into life, we are beyond the reach of sin and its attendant consequences.

Paul was an apostle of this life, and when ruin had come in upon that which bore the name of Christ, he falls back upon the promise of life, the life which is in Christ Jesus, because here neither corruption nor failure can ever find an entrance. Whatever may happen to the outward profession that which is in Christ abides untainted in all purity and power. May we lay fast hold upon that which is in Him in the midst of the ruin of that which professes His name.



## CHAPTER I. (*continued*).

I WAS saying last evening that God's purpose by the gospel was to get His people out of this world, and I think this ought to be apparent to every one, for He is not setting us up here below. It was not to deliver us from the judgment due to us on account of our sins and to establish us as citizens of earth, in connection with the system of this world, that God has approached us in Christ. As it was the purpose of God to take Israel out of Egypt, and from their bitter bondage, and to bring them into the land of Canaan, so His object is to bring us into the place which He purposed for us before the world was. Against this the devil sets himself, and to detain us here as his servants in his dominions he uses all his power, craft and influence, so that we may not be able to move in the direction of the rest of God.

I drew attention to the fact that the apostle does not speak of himself in the beginning of the epistle as separated to the gospel of God, as he does in Romans, but as an apostle according to the promise of life, and he is very careful to emphasise that it is *the life which is in Christ Jesus*. This life, we can see at a glance, has nothing in common with the life of flesh. It has nothing to do with the garden of Eden and innocence; it is an entirely different order of life, and has not its existence in the relationships

and affections which would have been the unsullied portion of an innocent race had sin not invaded that order. I was seeking to point out that man, himself departed from God, had lost everything, that no matter what a man may have that he might be inclined to view as his own, it is already forfeited; he can retain nothing pertaining to this life, and the sooner he comes to this the better, for no one really turns to God until he finds this out; but when we come to this, a mighty famine arises in our souls and we begin to be in want.

Of this we all know a little. I might be made a millionaire or a monarch, but what is the good of it all? It will not bring me happiness. Why? Well, for one reason, I cannot retain it. Why not? Because death lies upon me, and I shall have to leave everything behind me. I might be surrounded with every comfort, and have relatives and friends who would lay down their lives for me if it were necessary, and I might find great enjoyment in their society, but death is there upon them and me, and that is the end of all these things. But the blessed God has come in to give us new things in Christ, all of which are beyond the intrusion of death.

What is this that is said of the two sons in Luke xv.? The father divided unto them his living. All that God had for man after the flesh He gave him. First, He made him lord of all upon earth; next, when he had become lawless,

His Spirit strove with him to turn him into the way of righteousness, and all to no purpose; next, He gave him His law, and he broke that; next, He sent prophets who spoke the word of God to deaf ears; last of all He sent His Son, and man murdered Him and all is gone.

But in the power of that precious blood God has brought Christ from the dead, and a new order of things has been brought about in Him in resurrection. God has got nothing for man upon the old footing. He gave him all He had, and he wasted it with riotous living. But in Christ risen there is abundance for all, but everything there is *new*. Righteousness is there, but not righteousness such as God required from man at Sinai, nor righteousness such as might have been deemed suitable for children of Adam, but the righteousness of God—Christ Himself as covering for man. Salvation is there in Him, but not temporal deliverance, and the reinstatement of man in the flesh secure from the invasion of foes, but salvation as it is in Christ Jesus, with which eternal glory is connected. Life is there in Him, but not the continuation of the life of flesh and blood, in the relationships and affections belonging to the old order, but life as it is in Christ in the light of the Father's love. It is not parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, but it is sons with God's Son before the Father's face.

I was speaking of this the last evening, but I

am a little loth to leave it, because it is of all-importance that we should be able to distinguish between what is in Christ and what is in the flesh, what is in the responsibility of man and what is in the purpose of God. Think of Christ, and of what is in Him. Think of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and of the relationship they bear to one another. And this is our place, the place Christ has as Man before the Father's face. And in the thought of God there never was any other place for man. And the gospel is preached that we might be brought into this place, that we might get the light of this place and relationship into our hearts, and that we might leave the old in our minds and affections.

To this the devil is opposed, and Paul has to see before he leaves this scene how successful the enemy has been in turning the hearts of the people of God back into the world. Paul was a strong man, and a man of God, but he is leaving the saints in this hostile world, and his heart yearns after some one to rise up and care for them with the care of God. And Timothy is the only man he can turn to in this evil day, and he longs to see him face to face. He wishes to have an interview with him before leaving the scene of his labours. He says here (ver. 4): "*greatly desiring to see thee,*" and "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" (chap. iv. 9), and, "Do thy diligence to come before winter." (Chap. iv. 21.) Three times over he expresses

his desire to see him. He called to his remembrance the unfeigned faith which dwelt in Timothy, his mother and grandmother. These things were to Paul very encouraging when he thought of his child in the faith. He had been brought up and nourished in an atmosphere of faith and piety, and through the grace of God the apostle trusted it would not be without its effect upon him. Then he thinks of Timothy's natural timidity, and fears that, on account of the opposition, both in the profession and in the world, to that which God has established in Christ, he would become faint-hearted, and he seeks to encourage him to stir up the gift of God that was in him, and brings before him the fact that God has not given us the spirit of fear or cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. The evil may increase and men may fall before its apparently invincible assaults, but Christ has overcome the world, and we have received His Spirit, and we have no need to be alarmed, for in His power victory is certain. But the testimony of our Lord is in affliction, and if we are to take part in those afflictions, if we are to suffer evil with the glad tidings, it must be in the power of God.

He speaks of the testimony of our Lord as the glad tidings; it is all that God has established in Him on high. It will all be in display in the world to come. The Lord is the One in whom God has entered the creation

to bring it back to Himself. He is the great Administrator of the whole will and counsel of God. All power is committed to Him. He is Lord of all. He is the One who will bring to pass a condition of things in which God will have His perfect satisfaction and rest. To this end He has bottomed the judgment of God which rested upon us. He went down into the lower parts of the earth, and He went there in obedience to God; all God's waves and billows passed over Him. He went down to the bottom of the mountains; the earth with its bars was about Him. But He has broken the power of death, and He has gone up far above all principality, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. And what has He gone up there for? That He may fill all things. I suppose the testimony of our Lord might be included in those two offices of Christ, *Lifegiver* and *Judge*. He will fill God's universe with light and life and blessing, and all who do not come under His lifegiving influence He will judge and place outside the circle of blessing. There is nothing in the universe of God but will benefit from the fact that God has entered His own creation. He is Lord of all: Lord of angels, Lord of men, Lord of living and Lord of dead. He has the keys of death and hades. He died, rose again and lives, in order that He might become Lord of dead and living. He is the only One who

has a right to speak or act in the whole creation of God. Everything is in His hand. He will fill all things. He will bring back to God everything that is to be in blessing, and what is not subject to Him He will banish from His face in unsparing judgment. He will make the heart of the universe palpitate with life, and remove every defiling thing from the sphere of blessing.

But this testimony was in reproach, and on account of it Paul was bound with a chain. But he was not ashamed, for he knew whom he had believed. He had no question in his mind as to the issue of things. Man was having his day. The day of the Lord was coming. What he had contended for, and that for which he had suffered the loss of all things, was certain to triumph. It was in affliction then, and he was willing to suffer affliction with it, and quite ready to lay down his life for it, for in the end victory was sure. He knew whom he had believed. He was quite satisfied Christ could not be defeated, nor could any one who believed in Him be put to shame. And therefore he seeks to stir up Timothy to suffer affliction with the gospel, according to the power of God, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the ap-

pearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the gospel." The salvation and the calling are both according to eternal purpose. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. He has called us with this hope in view, and we need to keep it before our souls. No man ever left this world until he saw a better, but a better is brought before us in the gospel. Death and corruption prevail in this world, but life and incorruptibility are brought to light in Christ, and the gospel testifies of them that we may be attracted to where they are. If God has brought life and incorruptibility to light it is in order that we might be occupied with them. It is not the thought of God that we should be occupied with death and corruption, nor with the failure of the profession, but with that world where Christ is and with the power that is in Him. People seem to be distressed and disheartened about the state of the profession around us, but I do not think that scripture gives us any warrant to expect a better state of things. The great thing for us is to get well acquainted with the Lord where He is, and take our part in the afflictions of the glad tidings, having the most perfect confidence in the One in whom we have believed, knowing that whatever things may look like to-day, the battle is the Lord's and therefore the victory is sure.



## CHAPTER II.

I WAS speaking on the previous occasion about the testimony of our Lord, and how it was in rejection and reproach, and how anxious Paul was that Timothy should not be ashamed of it. He does not give the servant of the Lord the impression that he is going to have easy times. He will have to endure hardships in the warfare. Whatever compensation we are to have, we must wait until the coming of Christ for it. I do not mean to say that there is no present compensation in any sense, for the love of God is our portion even now, and this is very far better than the friendship of the world; but if we are to be for Christ to-day, we must suffer affliction at the hands of men. The fact that countries have become christian does not alter this, for you will find that there are to-day "*all that be in Asia*" who will sanction the world's verdict that you are a sinner, and you will find many a Demas, who will prefer the friendship of this world to the company of the man of God, and to a very great extent your path will be found to be a lonely one.

Timothy was to be careful not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he might be at the will of his Commander. He

was also to strive lawfully in his service. In a day like the present some seem to hold the field against all who come, and in the estimation of men are those who must secure the diadem, but there is a Judge of all, who is looking on, and who takes account of how the race has been run and how the battle has been fought, and where the race has not been run according to the rules laid down, and where the battle has not been fought with lawful weapons, the crown cannot be given. He must also take a lesson from the husbandman, who does all his labour first, and must have long patience before he can partake of the fruits.

Then in verse 7 we have a very beautiful and encouraging word: "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Timothy was to keep in mind all that the apostle brought before him, and the Lord would give him understanding. Whatever the love might be that Paul had for his child in the faith, and however desirous he might be that he should make progress in the mind of God, he could not give him understanding. No one could do this but the Lord. People sometimes think that to understand the mind of God a good deal of natural intellect is required, but this is a very great mistake. Mere natural ability goes for nothing in the things of God. You must have understanding given you of the Lord. Your natural understanding will not

serve you in the things of God. You may be very clever in the things of men, politics, business and the like, and be alarmingly ignorant of the things of God; and you may be intensely stupid in the things of the world, but this is no reason why you should be stupid in the things of God, for the Lord can give you understanding in all things, and He will do so if He is sought. Let me say to the youngest here, keep the things of God in your mind that are brought before you, think them over in the presence of the Lord, looking to Him to make them clear to you, and you may rest assured He will never fail you. Sometimes when I have gone to some one about a point which seemed difficult to me, and perhaps have got little or no light, I have felt I should have gone to the Lord direct, and thus have saved myself a lot of trouble. If I go to a man, and I have not understanding, he cannot give it me. He may not be able to help me because I may not be able to receive the truth. He may answer my question, but he cannot make me understand; but the Lord can. I do not deprecate seeking help from those who know the truth better than ourselves, but I want to direct your attention to the only One who can give you understanding. We require more meditation, and we need to cultivate a habit of getting alone with the Lord, and thinking over His things in His presence. If we go to Himself about things that may be difficult to us, and

if we ask Him to tell us what His thought is, we will get more help in five minutes than we could get at a dozen readings or lectures, however important these may be in their place. It is our privilege to consider what is brought before us in the scriptures; it is the prerogative and pleasure of the Lord to give us understanding. He has given us His Spirit, the anointing which teaches us, and our ability to take in the mind of God lies in the Spirit; but having the Spirit is not in itself sufficient; we need to have our minds set upon the things of God and we require to be very diligent. You know the time has to be redeemed, and if you do not redeem it it becomes lost to you. We are exhorted in two epistles to redeem the time, because the days are evil. If the days were not evil the time would not have to be redeemed. Time is in the hands of the enemy. You have got to seize the moments as they fly past, to lay hold of every opportunity, to make every moment serve the eternal interests of your soul. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. If a man is bent on getting on in the world, his thoughts are full of it, and all his energies are directed to the one end he has in view. You have got to attend to your daily avocations, I know, but when the day's work is done and the mind released from the duties imposed upon it, where does it turn? Is it

idle and unfruitful? Some of us who have been long on the way feel where we have missed many opportunities, and this accounts for how little we have got on in the things of God; but some here to-night are young, and if they will only take warning, and keep much in the Lord's company, and seek to make every moment contribute something to the eternal profit of their souls, they will find that they will not only be greatly enriched themselves, but they will be of incalculable blessing to others. Some of us feel how very poverty stricken we are, but the fault is our own, for the Lord is not unwilling to help us. He helped Paul and Timothy, and He will help you and me. He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and intelligence. I have dwelt long upon this matter, because I feel in these days we must be careful as to what we hear; we must learn each one of us to get to the Lord for ourselves, and to be careful of trusting to the human mind, either our own or another's.

Look at verse 8 for a moment. See the great truth to which the apostle calls the attention of Timothy: "Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead." Here is an antidote to all depression. None of us can close our eyes to the Christless indifference of the mass of professing Christians; people giving up Christ and turning to the monstrous absurdities which are

bred in the depraved fleshly mind of man. Some, perhaps, in whom we have had a great measure of confidence, turning completely from the faith to follow some insane notion of darkness and error. You cannot understand it. But we must be prepared for all this. The Spirit of God would direct our hearts and thoughts to where there is no failure. Christ came of the seed of David in fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers, and when He was rejected, crucified and slain, God raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and established in Him in resurrection the sure mercies of David. Nothing now hangs on the responsibility of the creature, everything is made sure in a glorified Christ. Failure cannot come in there. We need to lift up our eyes from the evil and the ruin around us, and fix them upon Christ on high, in whom God has established everything for His own glory and for the blessing of the creature. Every blessing is in Him for man. Salvation is in Him, and nowhere else. And Paul says he endured all things for the sake of the elect, that they might obtain it with eternal glory. He did not expect the profession to obtain it; it was on the point of becoming a huge worldly system, and so he falls back upon the elect. Ruin and departure had set in, but his heart turns to divine counsel, and to the power established in Christ to bring the elect out of the world, and for them he endures all things.

He says: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." This is where salvation is realised; it is realised in the life of Christ. We are told in Romans v. 10 that "Being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, or in the power of his life." The salvation is in Him, who, "In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Rom. vi. 10.) And this salvation is to be wrought out in us, so that we may come out down here in moral correspondence with Him. He has died, and is risen again; His life has been taken from the earth, and we have the privilege of letting ours go. If we live in the life of flesh we live in sin. We cannot live to God only as we live in the Spirit, in the life of Christ, and this involves parting with the life of flesh here. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. As certain as we are dead with Him, we shall live with Him; as certain as we suffer, we shall reign with Him; and as certain as we deny Him, He will deny us, for if we believe not, He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself. The vast profession of Christianity has denied Him, and He will most assuredly deny it; but He will confess the overcomer before His Father and before His angels. (Rev. iii. 5.)

Timothy was to "put them in remembrance"

of these things, and to rightly divide the word of truth. There is a tendency in all of us to run everything on one line of truth and exclude everything else. But we should learn to rightly divide the word of truth. People would like to be able to live with Christ, without being dead with Him; and to reign with Him, without suffering; but it will not do; all that kind of talk is vain babbling and tends to ungodliness, and spreads as a gangrene. Where a soul is not going on with the Lord these vile doctrines find pasture, and spread death abroad through the whole system. Therefore it is of all-importance to have the soul kept in a healthy condition, so that these loathsome, infectious disorders may find nothing to feed upon.

But in the presence of all this moral corruption and ruin one might be ready to ask if there is nothing that will stand. To that question we can unhesitatingly answer, yes: the firm foundation of God is unshakable. There is no stability in the creature, but what is established in Christ risen is firm and immovable, and them that are His are placed upon that foundation and the Lord knows them. You and I may not know them, and it may not be necessary that we should. The only thing necessary for us is to see that we do not connect the name of Christ with iniquity. Paul likens the profession to a great house with all kinds of vessels in it, gold, silver, wood and earth. We are to avoid the



wood and earth, as soon as they manifest themselves, and follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. I am not bound to tell who the Lord's are. If I were set to pick the Lord's people out of the profession in this city, I would make a poor hand at it, but I might manage to pick out a few who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and I can go on with them.

Our instructions are very simple and plain and easily followed if we are content to be little enough. The great thing for us is to keep our eye fixed upon Christ where there is no failure, and from Him seek understanding to know the will of God in these dreadful days, and if we desire to do His will, He will not keep us in any doubt what that will is, but will give us understanding that we may know it.

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### CHAPTER III.

I SUPPOSE the state described in the latter part of chapter ii. was that into which the profession had lapsed in the days of the apostles, but the evil brought before us in this chapter is that which is present to-day. He tells Timothy that in the last days difficult times would be present. But the instruction the servant of God gets for days such as are described in chapter ii. is very needful for us, even though the last days may be upon us.

We were noticing the last evening we were together that we are not set here to decide who are the Lord's and who are not; the Lord alone can decide that. It might be thought that the ability to decide who are true believers and who are not could scarcely be dispensed with, but this does not seem to be so. The important thing for us is to take care that we do not connect the name of Christ with iniquity. Christendom is like a great house with all kinds of vessels in it; the servant of God is to separate from the vessels to dishonour, if he is to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and serviceable to the Master, and prepared to every good work. The next thing is to flee youthful lusts, to keep ourselves

personally pure from evil, and to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. This is not taking upon us the ability to tell who are the Lord's, though we may be very certain that all are His who call upon Him out of a pure heart. It is best not to be too pretentious. Things are in a weak state to-day, but this is no excuse for going on with evil. We are commanded to depart from iniquity if we mention the name of Christ. Our companions may be few, but it is better to go with a very few in the way of righteousness than with a multitude to do evil.

In chapter iii. we come to the difficult days. One would have thought them difficult enough in the days of the apostles, but however difficult those were, worse were coming. It is not of anything that lies outside the profession of Christianity the apostle is speaking, but of the corruption of the best thing that ever was set up upon earth. We are told that "men shall be lovers of their own selves," and if this heads the list of evils, we may well be prepared for all that follows. All that is here is utterly opposed to Christianity. There was no self in Christ: He loved the church and gave Himself for it, and He taught His disciples to love one another. "This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us

commandment." (1 John iii. 23.) Christ was to be the Object of faith, and the saints the objects of love, and where this was found in a company of those that called on the Lord, the apostles were encouraged to address them as saints. Self is to disappear in Christianity, divine love to take its place. Jesus says: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you . . . . this is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." All that the Father was to the Son in love, He was to His disciples, and all that He was to them they were to be to one another. Hence this is all divine. The life of Christ was a life of self-sacrificing love, and it all culminated in His death, and this is what is to obtain among His own.

The next thing is covetousness. If a man loves himself he is bound to be covetous. He wants everything for himself. Next, boasters, proud, etc., all under a form of godliness. This characterises the mass. It is not one or two here and there as in the second chapter, like Hymenæus and Philetus, but the whole lump is leavened. Concerning such the exhortation is very brief: "From such turn away." You need not occupy yourself with them. You will make nothing of them. God is wiser than man, and He says leave them.

Then we are told that out of all this corrupt mass arise men who "Creep into houses, and

lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." I suppose those designated "silly women" are not really women, but men utterly ignorant of God, and who, in divine things, are utterly unable to think for themselves, and consequently are entirely in the hands of these unscrupulous and wicked men who resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.

In this chapter we have only three classes of people, "*silly women*," "*magicians*," and "*the man of God*," and I think it is only the man of God that will be able to stand in a day like the present.

As we saw the other evening, the great object of the enemy is to hinder the people of God from leaving this world. He has many ways of doing this, and we ought not to be ignorant of his devices. He may use Hymenæus and Philetus, and he may use Jannes and Jambres, and he may employ many a ruse and many a decoy and snare. It is not of importance to him what means he uses to effect his purpose, the only thing he deems of any importance is, that the true object of the death of Christ, and of the glad tidings of the grace of God, be nullified, and that souls are kept in this world, in the acknowledgment of its prince and god, the devil. Let no one deceive himself, the object of the death of Christ, the preaching of the gospel,

and the gift of the Spirit to the believer is, that the people of God might be led out of this world into the purpose of God for them.

A person might say, "I go out of this world when I die, or when Christ comes for His own." All this is true as to actual fact, but you are to go out of this world *now* in heart and mind and affections, while you remain in it in body. You follow Him in affection into that place where He is gone—

" 'Tis the treasure I've found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below."

The boast of Paul was in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, he says, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And this boast is the boast of every heart on earth that beats true for Christ. Men like Jannes and Jambres will tell you the world is your place, and you must not leave it. Hymenæus and Philetus will tell you that you have no need to leave it; your blessings are all brought to you down here, and you have them in yourself; resurrection and heaven as future blessing is not to be thought of, but God says to him to whom both these forms of evil are devoted servants: "*Let my people go that they may serve me.*" And as the folly of the magicians was made manifest to all, a day is coming in which the folly of all who set themselves in opposition to the purpose of God will be manifest. In

what way God will do this I am not prepared to say, but that He will do it I have no manner of doubt.

In verse 10 we come to the safeguard against this tide of evil: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine." Timothy was well acquainted with Paul's doctrine. Paul's doctrine was, I suppose, the removal of the man after the flesh from before God in the cross, and the introduction of another Man in the person of the Son of God, the establishment of Him as head and centre of a wholly new system of things, where sin and its attendant consequences can never enter; also the assembly which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Christ and new creation have also a prominent place in Paul's doctrine. He preached the Son of God, and "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 5.)

But Paul's manner of life was consistent with his doctrine. He did not preach one thing and exhibit another thing in his ways. He preached Christ and lived Christ. There is a great deal of Paul's manner of life recorded in scripture, a great deal which if he had had his own way would never have been recorded. We get a good deal of it in the Acts of the Apostles, there not recorded by himself, and we get a good deal of it recorded in his epistles, some of which we never would have possessed if it had not been, as it were,

dragged out of him. The Corinthians provoked him by their ways to put a good bit of his history on record, and he calls himself a fool for doing it; but there it remains for your instruction and mine, and we require to pay good heed to it.

The persecutions and afflictions he endured are also recorded. He names three places to which he went almost immediately after he and Barnabas were sent forth together. He speaks of Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. At Antioch the Jews raised persecution and expelled him and Barnabas out of their coasts. At Iconium both Jews and Gentiles would have stoned them, and they had to fly to Lystra. At Lystra they stoned Paul, until they supposed he was dead, and then they dragged him out of the city. It went with him from bad to worse. There was no cessation of hostilities. The foe was relentless and implacable, and would be so until the end, for "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

But there was another thing well known to Timothy. Had he only known of the persecutions and afflictions, and that there was to be no abatement, his heart might well have failed him; but he knew also the faithfulness of the blessed Lord: "*Out of them all the Lord delivered me.*" This is very beautiful and encouraging. Trouble after trouble, and persecution following hard upon persecution, but the Lord



ever at hand, and ever ready to succour His devoted servant. If Timothy would stand in this hostile world for Christ, and Paul encourages him to do so, he must have the persecutions and the afflictions, and if you and I are to stand for that same Christ, we must take our share in these evils; but the Lord that stood by Paul, and who was to be the support of Timothy, will most certainly not fail us in our weakness.

Another thing, he was not to slip away from anything into which he had been instructed by the apostle. He was to continue in the things which he had learned and had been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them. And this is a word for us also. We need to keep ourselves from the mind of man, our own, or that of others. Timothy knew that Paul had what he taught from God, and we have all in the scriptures. I hear people say sometimes, that they have been taught such and such things, and that what was true twenty years ago must be true to-day. There may be some truth in the statement, but the questions arise in the mind, "Was it true? Of whom did you learn it?" If it was of the apostles, well and good; rather give up your life than part with it. But if not from them, then you do not know of whom you have learned them. I know the apostles, but no others, in divine things. As people grow in the things of God, especially in these dark days, when truth is

known but feebly, they often have to alter what they may have presented as the truth, because the things of God, now known more perfectly, take a different shape in the mind; but the apostles never needed to alter anything. When you come to what they have written, you come to perfection. We can thank God for the scriptures. Timothy had known them (the Old Testament scriptures) from a child, and they were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. We have both the Old and New Testament scriptures, and by them we may be furnished unto all good works.

If we are to stand to-day, we must be men of God. The promise is to the overcomer, and there is much to overcome, and we must overcome the evil or be overcome by it. We want to get better acquainted with Paul's doctrine and his manner of life, and to be well assured that, if persecutions come, the Lord is at hand to deliver us. Then we have the scriptures, and the Lord willing and ready to give us understanding, and therefore we need fear nothing.

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## CHAPTER IV.

HOWEVER corrupt that which professes the name of Christ may become, the servant of God has no need to be either discouraged or alarmed. God has not given to us a spirit of cowardice. We need not think that He is going to be defeated, or that anything which He has purposed shall fall short of fulfilment, or be in the slightest way impaired. In the presence of the ruin we can fall back, as the apostle does, upon that which is established in Christ. This was the support of his heart when the profession was falling into decay. The promise of life was in Christ, and according to that promise he speaks of himself as apostle. Salvation was in Christ, and he endured all things that the elect might obtain it. It may be, the servant to whom he writes may have been naturally of a timid disposition, but whether he was, or was not, fleshly courage does not count for much in the presence of the forces of evil. We are to be of good cheer, for Christ has overcome the world, and we are to go through it in the power of His Spirit. Life and incorruptibility have also been brought to light, and if we get our eyes fixed upon these things, we shall be less depressed by the corruption around us.

In this chapter he exhorts Timothy to make good use of the time when men were at least willing to listen to the word, for the time was coming when they would not endure sound doctrine, but will set up teachers, who will

instruct them in things pleasing to the flesh. The gospel has never been popular, and never could be, for flesh has no part in it. The cross is the condemnation of the flesh, and the gospel is the announcement that another Man, a Man after another order, occupies the place in the presence of God. Still in the days of the apostles, those who professed Christianity were, in general, willing to listen to the truth of God. It is not so now. The man who preaches Christ to-day will not have many hearers. People have no *felt* need. Rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing, is the attitude men assume to-day. There may be, and there is, a good deal of religion, but it is largely Christless. The state of things described here has actually come to pass. The gospel is considered antiquated and out of date, and not the Spirit of God, but the depraved mind of man is esteemed the source of light and knowledge. But no evil has come in that has not been foretold, and there has been a pathway and line of conduct indicated for us, so that we may not only not be taken by surprise, but thoroughly furnished as to how we are to bear ourselves with reference to everything around us.

In view of this state of things which was coming in, the apostle exhorts his fellow-servant, by some very powerful motives, to take hold of every opportunity for the ministry of the word. He charges him before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead,

and by His appearing and His kingdom. He would bring him face to face with those great realities. In the first epistle he is charged to keep the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing; here, in view of the judgment of living and dead, and His appearing and kingdom, that day which would bring everything to light, and in which all evil would be suppressed by Him who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and who will subdue everything to Himself, Timothy is to be instant in season, and out of season. He was not to be carried away in the restless activity of the flesh, which may have great pretensions to be doing the work of God; neither was his mind to be confused by the perplexing condition of this chaotic profession, but in all things he was to be *sober*, as it seems the word ought to be translated, not "*watch*." He was to do the work of an evangelist. I suppose this work goes on to-day almost entirely in the profession. At the beginning the apostles evangelised outside the profession, but to-day the work seems to be inside Christendom, and is needful for the establishing of souls in the grace of God. But however and wherever the work is done, it is to go on as long as the church is upon earth, for as long as the day of salvation lasts, God will be active in His grace.

Afflictions are to be endured, but they can be endured in the power of God; so the servant has

no reason to be discouraged or cowardly or faint-hearted. We need only to be strong in the grace which is in the risen Christ, and if we are thus strengthened, we shall be superior to all the power of the enemy.

Paul was leaving the battle-field. He was putting off his armour. He had given a good account of himself, not in his own power, but in the power of God. He says, "I have fought a good fight." He does not boast until the battle is over. The time to boast is not when the armour is being put on, but when it is being put off. Peter boasted, as also did all the disciples, a little too early in their history, and failure taught them the folly of it. Paul speaks of how he has behaved himself when he is about to quit the field. He says, "I have kept the faith." What else had he kept? He lost everything that is dear to flesh and blood in that mighty struggle with the powers of darkness, but he kept the faith. His reputation, religion, worldly status, friends and fortune, and now he is about to lose his life, but he retained the faith. The brethren were shy of him, or forsook him altogether; all in Asia turned away from him, Demas forsook him for love of the world, and when he had to appear before Cæsar, *all* deserted him. How heartbreaking all this was! He did not expect sympathy or fellowship from the world, but he did from those who professed to love and

serve Christ ; but it was only the cup the Lord Himself had drunk from, as He says in Psalm lv. : " It was not an enemy that reproached me ; then I could have borne it : neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me ; ... but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." This was what Paul was tasting from his friends on his way to be slaughtered by his enemies.

But there was One that stood by him under every form of tribulation and affliction, One who never failed him, and who, he knew, never would fail him. " The Lord," he says, " stood with me." Whatever he might find man to be, however well he might be made to learn how little the flesh could be relied upon, in learning this, and in tasting the bitterness of the sorrow connected with the hard lesson, he learned the faithful heart of the Son of God, and to learn this was worth all the evils that ever befell him, and all the desertion, and all the reproach he ever experienced at the hands of the brethren.

But now what does he look forward to as his reward ? " Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." He claims nothing but what every other saint will receive from the Lord ; for I suppose every saint loves His appearing. It

might be said that there are a great many saints who know nothing about His appearing. That may be, and it is sad to have to admit it, but every saint loves righteousness. I could not think of a saint not loving righteousness. And the reason he loves righteousness is because he has got the Spirit of the righteous One. What was said of Christ was: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." Man loves sin. What is sin? Sin is doing one's own will, and every unrenewed man loves to do that. Christ came to do the will of God; He delighted to do it, and if you have the Spirit of that Man (and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his") you will love righteousness. Now there is nothing but sin in the world. The Lord, going away, tells His disciples that when the Spirit would come, He would "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The presence of the Spirit here is the witness that there is nothing but sin in the world. It has rejected the righteous One, the Son of God. If you are to find righteousness, you must find it with the Father. You will not find it in the world. But righteousness will be brought in when the righteous One appears. So, if one loves righteousness, and longs for it to be brought in so



that God's will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, such an one will at that day get righteousness as his crown. He longed for it, and looked for it, and knew that no one but Christ could bring it in for earth, and his crown will be that he will have part with Christ in the introduction of it into the world.

Now a word in conclusion. Paul and Timothy are gone. Both have left the sphere of conflict, and you and I remain, and find ourselves in the midst of that state of things so vividly portrayed so many centuries beforehand. He who knew the end from the beginning used His faithful servant to warn us of the coming ruin, and to place before us where our resources would be found, and what our path was to be through the midst of the confusion. I do not at all believe that what Christ has built, or is building, has in the least suffered. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And it is in this our life and our relationship with God and our blessing lie. The blessed God cannot be defeated.

Let us be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. In the measure in which we are set for the interests of Christ we may count upon the whole power of God. If we turn to the world, and glide smoothly along in its currents, we can know nothing of His presence and support; but if we are for Him and are not ashamed of His testimony, we will find Him ever near to deliver us and to preserve us for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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