

## *Contents*

Preface . . . . .	7
An Introduction to I Timothy . . . . .	9
An Outline of I Timothy . . . . .	13
An Interpretation of I Timothy . . . . .	19
I. The Charge to Timothy Concerning False Teachers, 1:3-20 . . . . .	27
II. The Instructions Concerning Church Order, 2:1-3:16. . . . .	49
III. The Advice to Timothy in View of the Charge, 4:1-6:2 . . . . .	75
IV. The Concluding Instructions and Exhortations to Timothy, 6:3-21 . . . . .	109
The Benediction, 6:21b . . . . .	125
Bibliography on I Timothy . . . . .	126

## I. THE CHARGE TO TIMOTHY CONCERNING FALSE TEACHERS, 1:3-20

CHAPTER 1, constituting the first main division of the Epistle, deals with the first duty laid upon Timothy as the apostolic representative at Ephesus. He is to check the false teachers at work in and around Ephesus. The chapter falls into three paragraphs. Paul states the substance and details of the charge to Timothy (vv. 3-11), expresses his thanksgiving to God for his relation to the Gospel (vv. 12-17), and renews the charge with special thought of its recipient.

### 1. The Charge to Timothy to Preserve the Purity of the Gospel, vv. 3-11

Paul at once launches into the purpose of his writing. Timothy is urged to carry out the charge given to him at Ephesus when Paul left for Macedonia. His first task is to deal with the false teachers perverting the Gospel. He details the nature of the charge given to Timothy (vv. 3, 4), states the aim of the Gospel charge (v. 5), and sets forth the reasons necessitating the task laid upon him (vv. 6-11).

a. The nature of the charge, vv. 3, 4. These verses give us the historical setting and occasion for the letter. In delineating the nature of the charge Paul indicates the circumstances for its impartation (v. 3a) as well as its contents (vv. 3b, 4).

1) The impartation of the charge, v. 3a. "As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia." These words clearly imply that Paul and Timothy had been together at Ephesus and that when Paul left for Macedonia Timothy was urged to remain to carry out the task assigned to him. These historical references to Paul's movements cannot be fitted into the Acts story. On the second missionary journey Paul touched at Ephesus but from there he left for Palestine and not Macedonia. On the third missionary journey Timothy was with him at Ephesus and from there Paul left for Macedonia, but then Timothy accompanied him into Macedonia. It is evident that this Epistle belongs to the time following Paul's first imprisonment at Rome.

Apparently upon his release at Rome, Paul sailed for Ephesus, visited Colossae as he had promised Philemon (v. 22), and returned to Ephesus, where he met Timothy coming from Philippi. A survey of the situation in and around Ephesus revealed the need to check the false teachers there. Paul urged Timothy to remain to deal with the situation while he went to Macedonia in accord with his promise to visit the Philippians (Phil. 2:24). Paul turned the work over to Timothy as his representative.

Paul begins with "as" but does not write the corresponding "so." The construction is left incomplete, but the completing thought is easily supplied. This our translations do in the italicized words at the end of verse 4. The words "so do I now," supplied in the American Standard Version, are less forceful than the "so do" in the King James. Paul was more concerned that Timothy charge the false teachers than that he should merely tarry at Ephesus. That Paul had some such conclusion in mind is obvious, but the expression of it was "lost in the abundance of the thoughts that streamed in on him" (Huther). Horton remarks, "This eager breathlessness of a writer who is too absorbed in the matter to remember the grammar is a mark

of Paul's style." It is characteristically Pauline but a matter which a forger could hardly duplicate.

Paul reminds Timothy of a previous exhortation given him. "As I exhorted thee." It implies that they had discussed the matter and that the charge had been orally given. In this letter "Paul repeats in writing what he had orally outlined for Timothy, both in order that Timothy might have it black on white, and that he might present it as written evidence to those who objected to Timothy's activities" (Lenski). The verb translated "exhorted" may imply that Timothy was reluctant to accept the responsibility. Paul felt that Timothy, with his experience from years of association with him, could well take care of the matter, so urged him "to continue on" at Ephesus while he went to Macedonia.

2) The contents of the charge, vv. 3b, 4. The task of Timothy was to check and suppress the strange teaching being propagated in the territory. "That thou mightest charge certain men." The term "charge" is the regular word for "an order" passed along the line and implies authority. As Paul's representative, he is to use that authority in dealing with these "certain men." Paul does not name them but refers to them as "certain ones."

These men are to be charged "not to teach a different doctrine." These words translate a negative and a present infinitive in the original. The construction implies that they are now doing it but that they must stop. The word *heteros* in the compound infinitive means "another of a different kind." These men were mingling strange and incongruous elements with their teaching of the Gospel. Because of their irrelevance and variance from the Gospel these elements might easily become hostile to it. By mingling with it elements that were foreign to its essential nature they were in reality changing the whole character of the Christian teaching. Doctrine inconsistent with the nature of the Gospel becomes false doctrine. Such teachings

must be resisted. The apostolic teaching was the norm by which all teaching must be measured.

Scholars are not agreed as to the source and precise nature of these divergent elements which these men were introducing. Some see in this teaching the influence of Gentile gnostic philosophy with its speculative views of religious beliefs and practices. Such incipient gnostic elements did circulate in Asia during the latter half of the first century and may have been present here. But that the false teaching combatted in the Pastorals had already become Gnostic in character is doubtful. The Jewish character of the teaching here denounced is obvious. These men claimed to be "teachers of the law" (v. 7). They were occupied with "fables and endless genealogies" (v. 4). In 4:7 Paul characterizes the teaching as "profane and old wives' fables," and in Titus 1:14 these fables are stamped as being Jewish. By their introduction of and preoccupation with matters incongruous with the Gospel they corrupted it. Lilley characterizes them thus:

Some tried to dazzle the minds of the people with matters that lay outside the sphere of revelation altogether. Others did indeed handle a Biblical theme, but in their ignorance and presumption were unable to expound it in its true relations and proportions. The one class took up fables and genealogies (v. 4); the other professed to teach the Mosaic law (v. 6).

These men Timothy is to charge "not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies." The word "to give heed to" means not merely to give attention to but to attach oneself to, to adhere to. The tense shows that they were doing this but must stop it. With the words "fables and endless genealogies," apparently two phases of the same aberration, Paul gives a more precise statement of the teaching. In New Testament usage the word translated "fables," from which we get our word "myth," means an invention, a fiction, a falsehood; it denotes something

without historical reality. They were fanciful tales such as abound in the rabbinical writings. They were apparently bound up with their fictitious amplifications of the Old Testament genealogies. These genealogies were expanded, the names of wives invented, additional stories woven into them, and given wild allegorical interpretations. Paul calls them "endless" because these inventions led to no certain conclusions.

Such things ("which"—literally, "things of this character") are to be avoided because of what they do and what they fail to do. Their positive effect is to "minister questionings." Occupation with them furnishes occasion for arguments and disputes.

The negative reason for avoiding them is that they do not further "a dispensation of God which is in faith." They are not practical. By being occupied with them the Gospel is relegated to the rear and the saving purpose of God is not furthered.

The reading in the King James Version, "godly edifying" rests on a very inferior reading. The reading of the American Standard Version, following the preponderance of manuscript evidence (*oikonomian theou*), is more difficult. The expression "dispensation of God" has been differently understood. If taken objectively it means God's method or plan of administering salvation to the world. These fables and genealogies do not help that work of grace which God is carrying on but rather hinder it. It seems better to interpret it subjectively as denoting "the work of man as a steward of God." Teachers of the Gospel are stewards of God, entrusted with the duty of administering God's grace and salvation to mankind through a clear proclamation of the Gospel. The added phrase, "which is in faith," means that this trust committed to God's stewards is exercised in the sphere of faith. The teaching of these men did not further saving faith since they dealt with their pet fancies and speculations rather than the Word of God.

b. The aim of the charge, v. 5. "But the aim of the charge is love." The translation "the commandment" in the King James

Version must not mislead us to think that Paul is referring to the Mosaic law or part thereof. It is the noun form of the verb "charge" in verse 3. The charge is not merely Paul's charge to Timothy but rather the charge which Timothy is to give to the false teachers. The "but" introduces the contrast between Timothy's message and that of these pretended "law-teachers." Their teaching produced strife and contention, but the charge of Timothy has as its aim the production of true and pure love. It was such love that prompted Paul to give the charge to Timothy and this charge is aimed at producing such love in the hearts of these deluded teachers. Their sterile occupation with their fables and genealogies blocks its development. The aim of Gospel ministry is the production of love.

The ultimate source of this love is the love of God poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). It is implanted on the condition of faith, but the soil in which it grows is described as being "out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." The one preposition with the three nouns unites them as a unit. "A pure heart" is a heart made pure in affection and single in purpose by faith. It is enabled to discern the presence and love of God. The "heart" in Scripture denotes the inward center of human life as the seat of spiritual emotions and desires. The word "conscience" quite literally means "knowing with" and "represents the self sitting in judgment on self; it stands for the self-conscious and rational element in the man" (Bernard). A "good conscience" is one that has been freed from the guilt of sin by the application of Christ's blood and is conscious of cherishing no impure, wicked motives. Faith is "unfeigned" or "unhypocritical" when it is not a mere lip-faith, mere pretense, but the sincere trust and confidence of the heart. "An unclean heart cannot have a conscience that is good and a faith that is unhyprocritical" (Lenski). When the whole moral and spiritual nature is thus purified by the Gospel it becomes a fertile soil that bears an abundant harvest of love. But

their occupation with their fables and genealogies and their pretensions as interpreters of the law choked the harvest in the lives of these men.

c. The reason for the charge, vv. 6-11. The reason necessitating the charge Paul views from the standpoint of the failure of the false teachers themselves (vv. 6, 7) as well as from the viewpoint of the truth concerning the law itself (vv. 8-11)

1) The failure of the false teachers, vv. 6, 7. Their failure lies both in the departure involved in their lives and the impure motive behind their teaching. Paul continues with a relative clause where in English we would have begun with a new sentence. "From which things" refers to those mentioned in verse 5. The failure of these teachers, to whom he again refers by the indefinite "some," lay in the sad fact that they have departed from the "pure heart and conscience good and faith unhypocritical" at which the Gospel aimed. The fact about them is that they "having swerved have turned aside." "Having swerved" is literally "having missed the mark" and graphically sets forth the change of aim which has come into their spiritual career. They once professed to follow the Gospel aim, but there came a day when they swerved away from it and "turned aside" on a different path. So instead of reaching the true goal, they turned off to "vain talking." The word translated "vain" is *mataios* which means vain in the sense that it does not lead to the goal; it is futile and ineffectual for its intended purpose. There was some content in what these teachers said, but it contributed nothing to the furtherance of the Christian life. Their vain talking, arising out of their occupation with their fables and genealogies and their views of the law, was antagonistic to evangelical results. The experience of these men is instructive. It was their failure in the moral realm which led to their perversion of the Gospel. "The heart is the real source of error in religion. Sin blinds the spiritual perceptions and perverts the spiritual



judgment. All false religious tendencies originate in a perverted heart" (Harvey).

In verse 7 Paul indicates their motive—"desiring to be teachers of the law." The word "desiring" implies that it was their continuing wish or resolution. They aimed at being professional interpreters of the law. They coveted the honor and respect which was paid to the acknowledged teachers of the Mosaic law. That they wanted to be "teachers of the law" plainly shows that the false teaching had its roots in Judaism, but it does not thereby follow that these were the Judaizers whom Paul combated in Galatians. Their desire to be exponents of the law was good but they failed because they lacked the necessary qualifications. "Though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm." They were insincere and misguided and did not speak from inner conviction but made up for its lack by the strenuousness with which they set forth their assertions. They failed clearly to apprehend the real significance of the law in its relations to the Gospel, nor did they truly understand the implications of the subjects concerning which they dogmatized.

2) The true knowledge concerning the law, vv. 8-11. Having exposed the failure of the false teachers to understand the use of the law, Paul now sets forth the truth concerning it. He thus shows his own understanding on the matter and guards against any suspicion that he is against the law. He presents the true nature of the law (v. 8), indicates its purpose (vv. 9, 10), and proclaims the harmony of a proper view of the law with the Gospel (v. 11).

a) The nature of the law, v. 8. His view is based upon knowledge—"but we know." "The Apostle places the declaration of his knowledge, which he has learned in the school of the Holy Ghost, against the arrogant view of the false Gnosis" (Van Oosterzee). The truth is that "the law is good." It is in accord with divine holiness, truth, and justice. (See Paul's

elaboration in Rom. 7:12-16). But there is one condition, "if a man use it lawfully." By "lawfully" he means not that which the law permits but that it must be used according to its original spirit and intention. "The law itself, because it is law, dictates its lawful use and condemns every abuse as unlawful" (Lenski).

b) The purpose of the law, vv. 9, 10. The purpose of the law is considered both negatively (v. 9a) and positively (vv. 9b, 10). He points out that the law is not intended for a righteous man but for sinners. In their ignorance the false teachers reversed these facts. He passes from their ignorance to true knowledge by saying "but knowing this," thus appealing to general knowledge.

True knowledge recognizes, negatively, that "law is not made for a righteous man." "Law" is without the article and goes beyond the Mosaic law to law as such. Some hold that by "a righteous man" Paul simply means a morally upright man as contrasted to the lawless man. But in the light of verse 11, which sets the whole sentence in the light of Gospel doctrine, it seems necessary to view it here in the Christian sense, a man who has been declared righteous through faith in Christ. The liberation of the Christian from the law, either for justification or as a rule of life, is one of the cardinal principles in the teaching of Paul. The law reveals sin and condemns the sinner and shows him his need of the Saviour. By the new birth he passes out from under its domination. Having been welcomed into the gracious presence of God and filled with the spirit of righteousness, the law has no hold on the righteous man. "He is rather occupied with it as a revelation of the divine holiness, and finds in its spiritual breadth a means of humbling his heart, and so leading him to fall back on the saving power of that righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith" (Lilley). All this the false teachers failed to see.

Positively, Paul asserts that the law was enacted for sinners. "A righteous man" is in the singular, thus individualizing, but

"all the wicked are named in plurals, for they are all an abominable mass" (Lenski). The list of sinners which follows is characteristically Pauline. It may be viewed as falling into two groups. (1) *Sinners as arrayed against God*. They are named in three pairs, apparently all condemned by the first table of the law. First he names "the lawless and unruly." "The lawless" refuse to recognize law, while the "unruly" refuse to be subject to law. They mean to act as they please, thus putting self before God. They are characterized by *disobedience*. The second pair are "the ungodly and sinners." "The ungodly" are people without inner reverence for God, who willfully ignore God and His commands. They are not necessarily professed atheists, but all who disregard God and His will for their lives. "Sinners" are those who in nature and action are opposed to God. *Irreverence* characterizes this pair. The third pair, "the unholy and profane," depicts people who are characterized by *impurity*. They are impure in life and irreverent toward that which is sacred. The word "profane" comes from a word meaning a "threshold," hence that which is trodden. The profane are those "who walk over everything and make it as common as dirt" (Lenski). (2) *Sinners as arrayed against society*. The first three pairs represented states of mind; what follows are examples of violations of specific commands. The first is again a pair—"Murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers." The Greek for each is a compound word which may have the wider sense of "father-smiters and mother-smiters." This is apparently in the writer's mind. They are "so lost to all natural affection and reverence that they will even strike their own parents" (Brown). For this extreme violation of the fifth commandment the law ordered the death penalty (Exod. 21:15). "Manslayers," or murderers, violate the sixth commandment. It is the supreme manifestation of human hate and was to be punished by death (Num. 35:16). The next two, "fornicators" and "abusers of themselves with men" relate to the most repulsive forms of the violation of the

seventh commandment. The first refers to unchastity toward the female, the other toward the male sex. The latter, one word in the Greek, means "one who lies with a male as with a female, a Sodomite, a pederast." They are the modern "homosexuals." "Menstealers" are the kidnapers. The crime of stealing children to be sold into slavery was common in Paul's day. It is the worst form of thieving and is a violation of the eighth commandment. "Liars" and "false swearers" are guilty of bearing false witness, forbidden in the ninth commandment.

The apostle breaks off his list by saying, "if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine." The form of the condition lets us understand that there are indeed other forms and shapes of unrighteousness. Only overt acts, and those the worst examples, of which the law can take cognizance, are listed, hence the tenth commandment, which deals with the inner desire, is not illustrated. The law deals with all such things as are "contrary to the sound doctrine." The word translated "doctrine" occurs fifteen times in the Pastorals and only four times elsewhere. It may mean either the act of teaching (as in Rom. 12:7; I Tim. 4:13; 5:17; Titus 2:7), or that which is taught, the body of doctrine. The latter seems clearly to be the meaning here. The expression "sound doctrine" (here, II Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1) has reference not to its correctness or accuracy but rather describes its nature as healthy and wholesome. It carries an implied contrast to the diseased teaching of the ignorant law-teachers, to partake of which is to make one sick (6:4). But the Gospel teaching is healthy and is productive of spiritual health.

c) The harmony of this view with the Gospel, v. 11. Verse 11 cannot appropriately be attached to anything in the preceding verse. In typical Pauline fashion, it modifies and brings to a conclusion everything said after verse 8. The view of the law which he has presented is not founded on his own private opinion but is in full accord with the Gospel, which he describes

as "the gospel of the blessed God." It is not simply the "glorious gospel" as in the King James. It means the Gospel which manifests the glory of God, since it is the highest revelation of His nature and attributes. It sets forth and proclaims God's glory.

Although it is common to the rest of the New Testament, only here and in 6:15 is this word "blessed" (*makarios*) applied to God; elsewhere the word is *eulogētos*, meaning "blessed or praised" and denoting the worship of the creature. This word means "blessed or happy." God is not only the object of His creature's praise, but as "blessed" (*makarios*) has in Himself the fullness of bliss.

This reference to the Gospel leads Paul to conclude the paragraph with a statement of his relation to it. "Which was committed to me," or more literally, "with which I, even I, was entrusted." Paul was keenly conscious that his position as a commissioned messenger of the Gospel was not due to any personal merit or choice; it was a divine trust to him. This concluding reference to that fact is appropriate in a passage where he is opposing his own teaching to that of the false teachers and vouches for its wholesomeness.

## 2. The Apostle's Thanksgiving for His Relation to the Gospel, vv. 12-17

This outburst of praise for the mercy shown him and his appointment to God's service is an elaboration of the concluding expression of the preceding paragraph. "The glory of the message of Christianity shone ever so brightly before him that he could hardly think of his position as a divinely appointed herald of it, as compared with his former attitude of antagonism (v. 13), without magnifying anew the mercy shown to him (vv. 14-17)" (Lilley).

This development of his relation to the Gospel is characteristic of Paul (cf. I Cor. 15:9-10; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:23-25). But this is not simply an unrelated digression, the writer going off

on a tangent at a favorite thought. Amid apparent digression he is building up his case for the Gospel against the false teachers. His own case is the best illustration of the true relation of the law to the Gospel and clearly shows how deep is the contrast between the Gospel and the speculations of these false teachers. His soul is stirred to its depth as he thinks of the folly of these men and their perversion of the Gospel which has done so much for him. Failure on his part to oppose them would have been a practical denial of his own experience and apostolic commission. This personal testimony will strengthen Timothy in the execution of his task in regard to these false teachers.

In this paragraph Paul expresses his gratitude for his Gospel call (v. 12), describes the dark past of the one divinely appointed to service (v. 13a), gives an explanation of the appointment (vv. 13b-16), and concludes with a grand doxology of praise to God (v. 17).

a. The thanksgiving for his appointment to God's service, v. 12. As Paul's thoughts turn to his own experience gratitude fills his soul. "I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord." The words "I thank" literally are "gratitude I am having." It is not a passing expression of thanks but the revelation of a constant attitude of gratitude, as the present tense shows. His gratitude is directed toward Him "that enabled me," or "put strength within me." He is referring to that new motivation and spiritual dynamic which was imparted to him by the divine forgiveness. The aorist tense points back to a definite time when he received this impartation of strength. The One who equipped him for service in the power of the Holy Spirit was "Christ Jesus our Lord." His use of "our" indicates that the Lord who thus dealt with him is likewise Timothy's Lord and Enabler.

The reason for his gratitude is "that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service." "Faithful" does not mean "believing" but "trustworthy." Not skill or knowledge but faith-

fulness is the first qualification for a minister of Christ (I Cor. 4:2). The evidence of the divine regard of him as faithful was his appointment to service. This quality of faithfulness, which seems to be the reason why the Lord chose him for this great work, Paul in I Corinthians 7:27 refers to as a gift of grace which he had obtained from the Lord. Paul here does not speak of his appointment to "apostleship" but rather to "service." The rendering of the King James Version, "the ministry," is too specific and has developed a specialized connotation today as relating to the ordained clergy. The word rather means service of any kind with the thought of carrying out the commands of another. The official status of the one serving is not involved.

b. The description of the one appointed, v. 13a. It was the remembrance of his career as an opponent of Christianity that enhanced Paul's gratitude for his appointment. "Though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." In the original the order of this triad forms an ascending scale of sin. He has been a "blasphemer" of the name of the Lord Jesus in the truest sense of that terrible word. He repudiated Christ's Messianic claims and stamped Him as an impostor. His sin was double-dyed because he himself thus spoke against the Lord and tried to force others to do the same (Acts 26:11). As a fiery "persecutor" he vigorously pursued the Lord's people as one chases an animal (Acts 22:4), and that even unto foreign cities. The translation "injurious" forms an anticlimax in the English. The original word (*hubristēn*) means one whose insolence and contempt of others break forth in wanton and outrageous acts. Brown says, "If the term could be allowed, 'a bully'—one who not only ill-treats others but does so with the insolence of superior strength." The climax is preserved if we translated it "a doer of outrage." Such is Paul's straightforward judgment upon his former conduct.

c. The explanation for the appointment, vv. 13b-16. The grace of Christ stands in striking contrast to his own shameful

conduct. It alone explains his appointment to the service of the Gospel. This appointment he sees as due to the outpouring of God's grace on him (vv. 13b, 14) as well as to God's purpose of making him an example of His grace to others (vv. 15, 16).

1) The outpouring of God's grace on him, vv. 13b, 14. "Howbeit I obtained mercy." That mercy which he wished Timothy in the salutation he has himself experienced. The verb in the Greek is passive and quite literally would be "I was mercied." The mercy bestowed was not given in response to any act of his own; he was the undeserving object of divine pitying love. God could act in mercy toward him "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Paul is not seeking to mitigate his guilt. His ignorance did not excuse him. Ignorance is itself part of the result of sin and is itself sinful. But he had not deliberately acted against better convictions, stubbornly hardened his heart, or willfully resisted the Holy Spirit. He had acted in blind unreasoning prejudice, mistakenly thinking he was thereby doing God a service (Acts 26:9). It had not set him beyond the pale of divine compassion. When his ignorance was shattered on the Damascus road by a mighty burst of enlightenment he was no longer an unbeliever.

Lest his reference to his ignorance seem to weaken the grace of God, he now sets it forth in all its riches. "And the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly." "Grace," the undeserved favor of God, "abounded," literally, "overflowed" its wonted channels, covering all of his sins. The fullness of the flood of grace poured out on him far surpassed that shown to ordinary sinners.

That this grace was successful in Paul's case is indicated in the words "with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (Scholars are generally agreed that the "which" refers both to faith and love.) The "faith and love," standing in contrast to the unbelief and hatred of his previous life, speak of the change which God's grace wrought within him. They are "the



subjective concomitants and results of the flood of grace" (Harvey). "In Christ Jesus" is the sphere in which they live, move, and have their being.

2) The purpose of God's grace through him, vv. 15, 16. Paul was keenly conscious that God in thus pouring out His grace on him had a larger purpose in doing so. The salvation of Paul was indicative of God's saving purpose for all sinners and was divinely intended to be an example for others who would believe in Christ.

Paul first sets forth God's saving purpose for mankind. "Faithful is the saying." This formula is peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles (here; 3:1; 4:9; Titus 3:8; II Tim. 2:11). At least here and in II Timothy 2:11 the words seem definitely to introduce the quotation of some pithy utterance of evangelical truth current in Christian circles. "Faithful" again means trustworthy and indicates that Paul evaluates the saying as a maxim on which full reliance may be placed. "And worthy of all acceptance." (Only here and in 4:9 is this phrase added.) "Acceptation" carries the idea of approval and welcome. "All" acceptance means that it is worthy to be accepted "in every way, without reservations, without hesitation, without the least doubt" (Lenski). Others interpret it in the sense of "universal" acceptance.

This faithful saying is "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It summarizes the essence of the Christian message, stressing the purpose of the First Advent. The "world" here means the physical world into which Christ came at the incarnation. It has often been pointed out that "came" implies the pre-existence of Him who came into the world. The object of the incarnation was "to save sinners." The emphasis is on "sinners." The nature of the sinners Christ came to save has been shown in verses 9 and 10.

The saving purpose of Christ concerning sinners generally included Paul. "Of whom I am chief." He says not "was" but

"am" and even adds the emphatic personal pronoun "I" (*egō*). "Chief" is literally "first," not in time but in rank. He considers himself the foremost of sinners. It is a striking confession of his own sense of sinfulness, and that at the end of his illustrious life. Such language is not to be discounted as mere rhetoric. It is a straightforward statement of his inner conviction. Brown well remarks:

The fact is that it is always the characteristic of a true saint to feel himself a real sinner. The air in a room seems to be clear, but when it is penetrated by the sunlight it is seen to be full of dust and other impurities: and so as men draw nearer to God, and are penetrated by the light of God (I John 1:5), they see more clearly their own infirmities, and begin to feel for sin something of the hatred which God feels for it.

After acknowledging himself as the foremost of sinners, Paul gives the reason why *he* received mercy from the Lord. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering." The career and conversion of Paul afforded Christ the occasion for an exemplification of "all his longsuffering." His case as a sinner drew out to its utmost extent "the whole of His longsuffering." "Longsuffering" is the divine attribute of God whereby He does not at once punish the sinner but forbears long under provocation and gives him opportunity to repent. "In the pardon of one less wicked than Paul, this grace could not have shown its full glory; but in him, 'the chief,' is revealed 'all his longsuffering,' so that Paul's conversion appears a very marvel of the love of Jesus Christ for sinners" (Van Oosterzee).

Thus Paul came to see in his conversion a larger purpose of God. It was "for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life." His conversion had world significance. "Paul stood before the eyes of all after generations as a witness to the power, the grace, and the love of the Lord;

so that the greatest of sinners need not doubt that grace" (Van Oosterzee). God had made him an "ensample" or "outline sketch" for the salvation of others. In his case "God has as it were sketched His own character in outline, and though many touches are required to complete the picture, they must all fall within—they cannot surpass—the extreme instance of His pardoning love which He has shown in this case" (Brown).

The saved are described as those that "believe on him unto eternal life." They continue to have their faith centered on Christ Jesus. The expression "on him" (*epi* with the locative) pictures the faith as resting on Christ as the sure and abiding foundation. The goal of that faith is "unto eternal life." It is imparted to us now but finds its consummation in eternity. It is not merely unending life but "connotes also life that is spiritual and therefore most real, life that is instinct with the energy and buoyancy and gladness of heaven, the life that is in the Son of God, yea, in God himself" (Lilley).

d. The doxology of praise, v. 17. Paul's thanksgiving turns into direct praise and worship. "Even in pastoral correspondence, the heart of this theologian beats with the pulse of the psalmist" (Lilley).

He addresses God as "the King eternal," literally, "the King of the ages." This title, used only here in the New Testament, pictures Him as the sovereign Controller and Dispenser of all the succeeding ages and all in them. Three co-ordinated epithets, modifying "God," are named. He is "immortal, invisible, the only God." "Immortal" is literally "incorruptible, imperishable," and speaks of His unchanging nature in contrast to the beings of earth. "Invisible" sets Him in contrast to the visible creation. He is the "only God" or "sole God," for there is none other beside Him. (The word "wise" in the King James Version is omitted by most ancient manuscripts and is perhaps inserted here from Rom. 16:27.) To Him Paul ascribes "honor and glory." And the duration of the worship ascribed

to Him is "forever and ever." Literally it is "unto the ages of the ages." It is the strongest term in the Greek for eternity. The infinite future is viewed as a series of ages of ages stretching endlessly onward. Surely every believing heart that likewise has experienced the grace of Christ joins in with the apostle's "Amen."

### 3. The Renewal of the Charge to Timothy, 1:18-20

In this closing paragraph of the first division Paul again turns directly to Timothy with his charge. He points out the duty of Timothy (vv. 18, 19a) and by contrast speaks of the shipwreck of certain men (vv. 19b, 20).

a. The duty of Timothy, vv. 18, 19a. There is a solemnity about Paul's address to Timothy and his invoking of the memories of the prophecies which led to Timothy. "This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee." "This charge" is the one named by the verb in verse 3 and the noun in verse 5. The verb translated "commit" means "to place alongside of, to set before," and in the middle voice, as here, means "to deposit, to intrust" as with a treasure that must be guarded. The terms of the direct address indicate a tender concern for Timothy.

The charge he describes as being "according to the prophecies which led the way to thee." The charge to Timothy to war the good warfare is "according to" or "in harmony with" those prophecies. The reference doubtless takes us into the assembly of the believers where the Holy Spirit, speaking through His prophets, singled out Timothy for special duty. These prophecies, previous to his ordination, marked him out for his office and sanctioned the laying on of hands. Thus in Acts 13 the Spirit's message, marking out Barnabas and Saul, came before they were publicly set aside for the work. So doubtless it was also in the case of Timothy.

The memory of these prophecies from the Lord are to strengthen Timothy in the performance of his duty, namely,

“that by them thou mayest war the good warfare.” He must continue (present tense) to “war the good warfare.” This is the personal aspect of Timothy’s duty at Ephesus. The military figure has reference not to a single battle but to the whole campaign. Paul, that doughty veteran in spiritual conflict, well knew that the Christian life is a continuing warfare under the banner of the King of kings. But here the special reference is to Timothy’s task of contending with the false teachers.

In his campaigning Timothy must possess the subjective conditions for victory, “holding faith and a good conscience.” He must continue to hold to, and not renounce, “faith and a good conscience.” “In the conflict which we wage outwardly against the enemy, our chief concern is with the inner state and disposition of the heart” (Van Oosterzee). The Christian leader must personally possess the spiritual qualities he would enforce (cf. v. 5).

b. The shipwreck of certain men, vv. 19b, 20. Paul stresses the value of these moral and spiritual elements by reminding Timothy of “some” or “certain ones” who have made a failure of their warfare.—“Which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith.” “Which” has reference to “a good conscience.” These false teachers treated the matter of maintaining their spiritual integrity as a minor matter as they played fast and loose with the Scriptures. When their conscience goaded them they “thrust” from them their good conscience. The word implies the violence of the act required. The result was that they “made shipwreck concerning the faith.” “The faith” may mean that their own personal faith was wrecked. “The Christian teacher who does not practice what he preaches will find his faith fail him” (Lock). But more probably “the faith” is objective and means the true doctrine of the Gospel. “The yielding to sin dulls the perception of truth, and opens the way for the influx of error” (Harvey). In reality both things actually occur. “Disaster falls alike on ‘faith’ and ‘the faith,’ when a good

conscience is rejected, or rather ejected" (Pope). Paul switches from the picture of a military campaign to that of a shipwreck. The picture of a shipwreck implies severe and unrecoverable loss.

These "certain ones" seem to be the worst representatives of the false teachers mentioned in verses 3, 6, 7. Paul names two individuals with whom he himself has dealt. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan." Hymenaeus seems to be identical with the false teacher mentioned in II Timothy 2:17, 18. Since Alexander was a common name it is precarious to identify him with either "Alexander the coppersmith" mentioned in II Timothy 4:14, or the Alexander mentioned in Acts 19:33.

These men Paul says, "I delivered unto Satan." The aorist refers to a past act. This difficult statement has caused much discussion. What is implied by that fearful term "delivered unto Satan"? It is generally understood as meaning "an act of excommunication, by which they were placed outside of the visible kingdom of God and, so to speak, replaced within the realm of Satan. . . . This general representation of Scripture, that outside of the visible kingdom of God on earth is the kingdom of Satan, is here probably the underlying conception" (Harvey). In the light of I Corinthians 5:5 it seems also to include the judicial infliction of bodily sickness or calamity by apostolic authority. That the expression includes more than simple exclusion from the fellowship of the church is plain.

Paul's statement shows that he has not finally abandoned them. "That they might be taught not to blaspheme" reveals that the discipline was not merely punitive but remedial in its intention. The intention was that thereby they might be "taught" or "disciplined" so as to be led to repentance. The word "blaspheme" shows that these men had arrived at a point where they were actually blaspheming (present tense) the truths of God in order to make way for and establish their fables and misrepresenta-

tions of the law. Paul hopes that the disciplinary measures taken against them may lead them to stop their offenses. “Even Satan’s power in dealing with the outer man, and perhaps in the infliction of anguish of mind, may be used under the hand of God to bring down the haughty spirit and make past blasphemy to be seen in all its offensive pride and opposition to God” (Kelly).