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*THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.*

## CHAPTER VI.

THIS Epistle bristles with sayings which, while they chastised the weakness and blunders of the practical ethics that had manifested themselves in the communities of Asia Minor under the broad and revolutionary teaching of the Apostle, still pierce the thin skin of our modern sociology. In writing to the excitable Galatians (Chap. iii. 28), Paul had declared that in Christ Jesus the difference between the "bond and free," as well as that between "Greek and Jew, male and female," was at an end, because all were "one in Christ." To the Colossians (Chap. iii. 11) he had made a similar statement, and the Churches on the Lycus had been taught, in addition, that the polished cultivated Greek was not to despise "barbarian or Scythian;" that, moreover, there was "neither bond nor free;" that Christ was "all things, and in all persons."

To come nearer home, these very Ephesians (Chap. vi. 8, 9) were told, with other sound advice, "that every man, whether bond or free, should receive from the Lord for whatsoever good thing he might have done," and masters (*κύριοι*) were reminded that they had "a Master in heaven," with whom there was no respect of persons.

Now a natural consequence of this pungent leaven working among the hundreds of Ephesian bond-slaves was to create a spirit of insubordination. A principle had been proclaimed, on the highest authority, which drove a wedge into the fetters of the slave and must ultimately compel every slave-owner

to manumit his bondsmen. Whenever society shall be interpenetrated with these sublime thoughts, and shall thus embody the Spirit of Christ, slavery will be impossible. It must be remembered, however, that war, forensic oaths, exclusive hereditary rank, the tyranny of fashion, the prejudices of race, the selfish pride of patriotism, the chartered immoralities of trade, the despotism of class legislation and prescription will, under the like circumstances, all likewise perish. The earth, in fact, and the works therein, will be burned up. But it does not therefore follow that the ideal of the kingdom involves that it should suffer violence, and that the violent should take it by force. Christian faith was not a charter of universal civil revolution. The law of its activity was that the leaven should be hidden and work *in* the meal; that the seed should be sown amid thorns; that, even on good-ground, the enemy would maliciously sprinkle tares; and that the revolution would take place in every department of human relations, not by forcible efforts to reconstitute society *ab extra*, but by the silent steadfast working of the law of the Spirit of Life in society and in humanity at large, after the manner in which the sanctifying process takes place in individual souls. Hence, if *slaves, under the yoke*, are disposed to act violently as though the framework of Romano-Greek society had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they would soon find out, not only their grievous mistake, but that the sound words of Christ and his Apostles were already registered against them. Two cases are suggested to Timothy,—(*a*) the temptation besetting the slave of unbelieving or of heathen masters, and

(δ) the special temptation to which the slave of Christian and believing masters was exposed. Mack thinks that the clause "under the yoke," being suggestive of special severity or cruelty, could not be applied to the servitude claimed by believing masters. Whatever may have been the case at Ephesus, I fear that multitudes of professed believers have in later days failed to sustain, by the suavity and unselfishness of their treatment of their dependents, to say nothing of their slaves, the justice of such an antithesis.

The broad statement of the first verse is here contrasted with the conduct due to "believing masters," and is in itself sufficient to shew that two classes or cases are in the mind of the Apostle. The first advice given is, *Let as many as are under the yoke, as slaves, not proceed to repudiate their social condition on the ground of their Christian faith, but esteem their own masters<sup>1</sup> as worthy of every honour that is fairly due to them, in order that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed*, which it would be if every Christian slave gave out the idea that the name of God was the justification of rebellion, and if the ideal of Christian life implied a claim to Christian equality which might be enforced by violence. Grave exegetical difficulty is involved in the bare reference to slave-owners who could be spoken of as faithful and beloved of God. The only explanation is, that such persons, even though they may have softened the incidence of the yoke, and made it less cruel; had not fully conceived the breadth of the command

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Titus ii. 9; *δεσπότης* is here used instead of *κύριος*, and it has the idea of rule less restrained by circumstances or prescription than *κύριος*. The word is applied to God as the Supreme Ruler, Acts iv. 23; also to Christ, Jude 4.

of Christ. Before we condemn these masters, or the Apostle for not bidding them at once to emancipate their slaves, it would be as well to look at home and see how far the most Evangelical professor has accepted the claim of Christ to the unconditional surrender of his heart and life. Paul accepts the position as for the time inevitable, and deals here with the duty of the bond-servant. *Let not those that have believing masters despise them because (i.e. on the ground that) they are brethren.* This serious advice is applicable to many who in these days trade upon the importance given to them by Church membership and practically disobey this injunction: *but let them the rather, or the more, serve these masters, because they who enjoy this benefit, that is the masters, are faithful and beloved (of God).*<sup>1</sup> Such service springing out of Christian love will modify the curse of the slavery and transmute the iron fetters into silken links. Slavery will never be other than out of harmony with the deeper broader principles of the Gospel. No abatement of its curse by kindly treatment or loyal obedience can palliate its violation of that law of brotherhood and of equality which is involved in the union of every believer to the incarnate Son of God. Such a supposition would echo the sophistry of Burke, that "vice can lose half its evil by losing all its grossness." At the same time the duty of the Christian slave of a "believing master" is clearly not to make his Christianity (so long as the relation subsists)

<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that *οἱ ἀνταλαμβάνόμενοι*, with the article, is the *subject* of the sentence, and that it refers to the masters, not to the servants. This signification of the word differs slightly from its ordinary use in New Testament and in classical Greek, but is generally accepted.

a justification of unchristian feeling. This practical wisdom is endorsed further by the often recurring advice, "These things teach and exhort."<sup>1</sup> To find in these words an apology for slavery is monstrous. The question of manumission is not discussed. The advice tendered is addressed to the slave rather than to the master, and proves how surely and consistently the New Testament keeps clear of political reconstruction, and how the Gospel of Christ will work by uttering and endorsing spiritual reconstructive principles, rather than by urging the immediate adoption in any sphere of new social or political platforms.

*Verse 3.—If any one teaches other doctrine.* The word here used is only elsewhere found in Chap. i. 3, but cognate combinations render it easy of translation. The word "other" (ἕτερος) means doctrine of a different kind, adverse to the principles and teaching of the Apostle. He is not confining his condemnation to some teaching antagonistic to the advice just given, but referring to a much larger group of errors; *and does not consent to or acquiesce in the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The verb προσέρχεσθαι can be shewn to bear the meaning here assigned to it in Philo, Diodorus Sic, and Irenæus; and, moreover, we see a similar idea involved in the derivative word "proselyte."<sup>2</sup> The "sound" or "health-giving" word or "teaching" has become a technical phrase with the Apostle;<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> The ταῦτα has been represented by some commentators as referring to the following words, and it may be fairly open to question whether they are not right; but, as Ellicott says, "the prominent position of ταῦτα suggests a more immediate connection with what precedes."

<sup>2</sup> προσήλυτος.

<sup>3</sup> See Introduction, THE EXPOSITOR, vol. i. p. 309.

here we seem to catch the echo of some Divine words of the Lord Himself circulating in the Church,—words resembling the sublime proverb, “It is more blessed to give than to receive;” or, “Who made me a ruler or judge over you?” or, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;” or, “If any one will follow me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me.” The great discourses of our Lord must have been already within the reach of the Ephesians. The substance of the Gospel of Luke may have been frequently read in their assemblies, and some persons seem already to have begun to criticize and question the meaning and bearing of some of the mighty words of Him who is the Truth. They were refusing to acquiesce, moreover, in *the doctrine which is according to godliness*, those special ideas the direct tendency of which is to promote piety, holy living, and devout relations with God. To resist these grand peculiarities of the Gospel, to despise the holy moralities of the Lord Christ, in virtue of crotchets or whims, or personal self-complacency, or eager hunger after the punctilio of religious observance, or the forms of dead orthodoxy, exposes such a one to the Apostolic condemnation,—*He is stupefied with pride,<sup>1</sup> though, all the while, knowing nothing, but diseased—i.e. “mad upon,”* in contrast to the wholesome influence of the words of Christ—*about questions and strifes of words.* Few things have acted more disastrously upon the Church of Christ than the verbal controversies, the “logomachies” here denounced. Words are

<sup>1</sup>The root of the verb is *τῦφος*, “smoke,” “steam,” “mist;” used also of “pride,” which envelopes a man so that he cannot know himself or others.

solemn realities when they contain under them thoughts of priceless value, and then, they cannot be repudiated without treachery or disloyalty; but when "the words" are half understood, and disputants refuse or disdain to admit that they are using the same words in different senses, or different words in the same sense; and when, if dispassionately examined, it might be seen at a glance that the contest was not about things but about the mere words or counters standing for them, then God is dishonoured and the seamless robe of Christ is rent in twain. Such words as "motive," "freedom," "election," "inspiration," "person," "regeneration," "faith," have been the occasion of many obstinate questionings, and much cruel logomachy. *Verily from such causes arise envy, strife, mutual recriminations (or blasphemies), evil suspicions, obstinate disputings<sup>1</sup> of men corrupted in their mind (i.e. not merely in the intellectual, but the whole willing and thinking faculty; for it has this meaning not infrequently in Paul's Epistles<sup>2</sup>), destitute of the truth (by a process of mental and moral deterioration which robbed them of what they once possessed). Many a controversialist since has lost his sense of truth by a contentious spirit, and by hypercritical jealousy for words which have changed their meaning. Words must always be the function, mathematically speaking, of two or more minds, and can have no significance*

<sup>1</sup> The Received Text reads here *παραδιatriβαι*, which has the meaning of *διatriβαι*, or "disputes," depreciated by the compound with *παρά*; the best MSS., and Ellicott, Tischendorf, Alford, read *διαπατριβαι*, where *πατριβαι*, meaning "friction," or "dispute," is strengthened by *διὰ* in composition. The former reading would be tautologous.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 28; Eph. iv. 17; Tit. i. 15; and the accusative with the passive indicates that portion of the subject of the verb where its action mainly lies. See Phil. i. 11, critical reading; 2 Cor. iii. 18.



at all apart from the involuntary convention which confers upon them their meaning. If, then, words are substituted for things, and obstinately contended for, although the thing connoted by them has ceased to exercise any force or attraction, then TRUTH herself is on the wing. One more touch is added in a participial clause—*supposing that godliness is a source of gain*, and acting accordingly, professing the faith with a view to worldly advantage, to an alteration or elevation of social position. Those who are taking this view of the Church or Christianity expose themselves to the severe words of the Apostle. The principal MSS. omit the clause “from such withdraw thyself,” and criticism brings out, by this excision, the close order of the thought.

*Verse 6.*—*But*, though the false teachers make this mistake, there is a sense in which *godliness with*, or accompanied by, *contentment is a great gain*. The classic writers abound in praise of *contentment*.<sup>1</sup> *Ἀντάρκεια* is satisfaction with one's own circumstances, not worldly sufficiency. It has this secondary meaning in later Greek, and perhaps in 2 Cor. ix. 8. Socrates, in walking through the streets of Athens, was accustomed to say, “How many things there are which I can dispense with.” The noble spirit here referred to is a “dower of inward happiness,” which cannot be overstated. Surely, contentment is gain, without godliness, and this admirable disposition is sometimes born of temperament, or may be due to a freedom from temptation. We are, however, surprised

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, Ep. 87 : Fecit sibi divitias nihil concupiscendo. Lucretius, v. 1116 ; Divitiæ grandes homini sunt vivere parce æquo animo. Wettstein quotes similar maxims from Philo, Horace, Diodorus Siculus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and others.

to find the suggestion made by this language, that "godliness" is separable from "contentment," and we account for the circumstance by remembering that godliness actually creates certain new temptations to a precisely opposite frame of mind. The struggle of the soul after a right relation with God reveals possibilities, failures, and weaknesses, and, moreover, originates strong desires and passionate yearnings, which themselves need the supplement of true contentment. If this combination, "godliness with contentment," is granted or possessed, there is in it a deeper grander sense than that conceived by the false teachers' *great gain*.

*For we brought nothing into the world,*—a solemn truth on which moralists have insisted continually. The reading upon which Tischendorf has finally (8th edition) determined is, *because neither are we able to carry anything out.*<sup>1</sup> In other words, the fact of our naked birth into this world anticipates the manner of our departure from it. We slip the mortal coil, bare of all treasure; we can take nothing that we have accumulated, hence the significance of the utter dependence, nakedness, and poverty of our admission to the world. The first clause teaches humility and the second contentment, hushing the idle clamour for riches and luxury and high position. This is the sentence quoted by Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians, and which goes so far to prove the antiquity of the Epistle.

*Verse 8.*—Ellicott has an interesting note on the

<sup>1</sup> The later MSS., many quotations, and most modern editors, preserve the word *δηλον* before *ὅτι*, "it is manifest that;" but, like the curious reading in MS. D., *ἀληθές* before the *ὅτι*, they merely reveal the difficulty of translating the clause without some explanatory term.

force of the particle δὲ, which suggests a certain reservation, and is not equivalent to οὐν. *But if* (not therefore) *we have nourishment and covering* (more than raiment, the idea of *shelter* is involved in σκεπάω, σκέπασμα) *we shall be sufficiently provided.* There is a discussion whether we may give to this passive future a jussive or imperatival meaning, as Luther, De Wette, and Lange have done; but I believe the translation above is more accurate, though the doctrine is difficult to receive, and scarcely compatible with the teaching of Chapter iv. 1-5. We can understand it best by perceiving that the Apostle is here setting himself against the base and truculent compromise with righteousness, of which certain false teachers were guilty; and the blessedness of the condition of "the lily and the sparrow" is enforced by the powerful contrast.

*Verse 9.*—*They who will, who plan wishfully to be rich, not those who are rich, in this world's wealth; because though it is difficult for them to enter into the kingdom, hazardous even to stoop like loaded camels in passing the narrow gates of the city (the needle's eye), yet it is those who "trust in," not those who merely possess, wealth, who all but debar themselves from the joys of the kingdom; nor are we to forget, in this connection, that "with God all things are possible."*<sup>1</sup>

*Those who will be rich fall into temptation*—the form of expression suggests the voluntary movement towards this great temptation. Few Christians pray earnestly not to be led into this great temptation to worldliness, selfishness, and pride. Many hope and

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 24-27.

pray that they may be put into the fire of this trial, and are recklessly confident of victory,—*and a snare* (a very tangle of imperfect and contending motives), *and into many foolish and hurtful lusts*; “foolish,” because no sensible or rational interpretation can be given of the passion of hoarding for its own sake. ἀνόητος is the insufficient exercise of the νοῦς, or intellect; it is not ἄφρων or ἀσύνητος.<sup>1</sup> Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom, and is not exactly stupidity. The hoards of the miser are often guarded by cunning and augmented with acuteness and intelligence; but the passion is unwise and injurious. Luther says these lusts are foolish, because hurtful—*such indeed as drown men*, pressing them down *into destruction and perdition*. It is not so much the gold which hangs like a mill-stone round the neck, but the lust which does the damning work. These two awful words are alike derivatives from the root of ἄλλυμι, “to destroy,” and are applied both to the destruction of body and soul. The latter word is mainly used of the soul. The shifts, lies, and lusts which accompany the eager search for wealth have been the theme of moralists in all ages, but never has more been crowded into a sentence. Montaigne would have expanded it into a long essay, Walter Scott into a volume.

Verse 10.—*For the love of money* (a word which is nowhere else used in the New Testament) *is a root of all the evils* (not THE root, which would be a statement difficult to understand, and would require a modification of the ordinary meaning of the term “all.” In other words, we may detect in this pas-

<sup>1</sup> Destitute of sense and reasoning faculty.

sion *one* of the noxious sources of all the evils that afflict human life. I do not suppose that by the word *φιλαργυρία* is meant the mere love of the precious metal, or even a lust after the concrete accumulation of tangible wealth, but the passionate desire, by any means, moral or immoral, to secure that which would guarantee the opportunity of satisfying selfish desires. The special peril of the "love of money" consists in this, that it may put on many plausible forms, and, particularly in early life, may be screened from view by a number of flattering titles. Under the name of industry, business habit, laudable enterprise, fidelity to the claims of home or country, even generous ambition and desire for usefulness and influence, the grasping faculty may be secretly indulged and selfishness be enshrined in the heart), *which some, reaching out after* (every commentator has admitted an apparent irregularity in this metaphor. Some, like Bretschneider, have suggested a modification of meaning, such as "giving themselves up to." Mack makes the money, *ἀργύριον*, contained in *φιλαργυρία*, the object of the verb, and indeed in the phrase we cannot but regard the object of the "love" and of the stretching forth of the hand as identical), *have wandered away from the faith* (the ends secured by money and the faith have been always profoundly antagonistic), *and pierced themselves through* (or *all over*<sup>1</sup>) *with many sorrows*, gnawings of conscience, bitter memories, cruel disappointments, moral deterioration, inward poverty.

<sup>1</sup> The old Lexicons give the second meaning. Probably *περί* intensifies the action of the verb. Suicer gives a number of proofs of its metaphorical use.

*Verse 11.*—*But thou, O man of God*—(this phrase is used also in 2 Tim. iii. 17, but, with the exception of St. Peter's reference to the sacred writers under this designation (2 Pet. i. 21), nowhere else does it occur in the New Testament. Still it was a common term enough to denote prophetic men and divine messengers under the old covenant, and in that capacity Timothy might be thus appropriately addressed),—*avoid these things*,—(would that all who have claimed to be “men of God,” in the ecclesiastical sense, had listened to the warning voice! If they had, what deathbed robbery, wanton luxury, hierarchical insolence, vain indulgences, and corrupting worldliness, would the Church have been spared!), *but follow after righteousness, godliness* (*i.e.* right relations with God, and the true feeling, religious emotions, sacred reverence, which will proceed from these), *faith, love*,—the twin principles of the divine life, the condition of righteousness, and the highest form of godliness, at once the hand that lays hold of Divine mercy and the life of all the virtues; together with *patience*, which, when it has its perfect work, will make the man of God Himself “perfect and entire, lacking nothing.” With these graces, involving endurance of wrong, submission to misunderstanding, persecution and poverty, he will be induced to manifest *gentleness* or *sweetness of disposition*. This rare word comes last, not because it suggests the least important of all the virtues, nor because it may be regarded as their climax. Probably the novelty of the Christian ideal, the startling elevation into a virtue of a certain characteristic which, in Heathen ethics, had been almost treated as a defect, required for it this

emphatic position. Moreover, a personal knowledge of Timothy's temper and needs may also have supplied an additional reason for the advice.

*Verse 12.*—*Fight the good fight*, or, "contend earnestly in the good contest." The image is that of the athlete in the games, rather than the soldier in the field *of the faith*. It is impossible to exercise faith without encountering competition and opposition, either from the flesh or the cosmos, from one's own weakness or the angry menaces of unsympathetic intellect. *Lay hold<sup>1</sup> of the eternal life* (the two imperatives following each other without a conjunction imply that the two actions are in a sense simultaneous. The contest of the faith is often this, and nothing but this, to grasp as a prize this invisible, supernatural, divine benediction held out to the eye of faith), *unto which thou wert called, and didst confess the good confession before many witnesses*. Nothing so nerves a man for any duty as the deep persuasion of a divine call. The word rendered confession is of frequent occurrence.<sup>2</sup> This "good confession" was probably made at Timothy's consecration to the special work to which he had been called by the Holy Ghost and by the Church. Some special moment memorable in his history was probably referred to.<sup>3</sup>

Such confessions of personal faith, such heart-searching realization of the divine and eternal life, such conscientious pledgings of the outward career

<sup>1</sup> Paul uses *λαμβάνειν* and its compounds in this sense, 1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxiii. 8; Rom. x. 10. It is used in the sense of profess, announce, Matt. vii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ellicott, Huther, think especially of the "ordination" of Timothy

to the inward calling, are great moments in the life of "men of God." They provide the epochs from which true workers date their highest inspiration. God uses them to encourage fidelity and secure loyalty to the great Captain of salvation. "The good confession" which Timothy "confessed" before many witnesses was based upon "the good confession" made by the Lord Jesus Christ. Another verb, however, is used by the Apostle when speaking of his Lord. Christ uttered the good confession as a "Witness" for God, as a Revealer of the Father, as claiming his own royal dignity, as ministering his very life a ransom for many, and in full view of the cross. I prefer, with Huther and Lange and Davidson, to take the *ἐπι* of verse 13 in the sense of *coram*. Nor do I see, with Ellicott and Alford and De Wette, that this reduces the two "confessors" to the same level. "In the presence of Pilate" Christ claimed to be the Lord of men, the King of kings, the Truth itself, and it was a confession which made the arrogant Roman Governor tremble on his judgment seat. That "good confession" doubtless sealed his doom, but it saved the world. With this in view we take the next words, as follows :

*Verse 13.*—*I give thee charge in the presence of God, who preserveth all things in life, and of Christ Jesus, who testified before Pontius Pilate the good confession,*—(the difference in text between the *ζωογονούντος* of the principal uncial MSS., and preferred by Tischendorf, 8th edition, Alford, Ellicott, Lachmann, &c., and the *ζωοποιούντος* of the Receptus does not give a very decided difference in meaning, although the latter is limited to the giving, and the



former includes the preservation of, life.<sup>1</sup> It also means to restore to life,<sup>2</sup> and may here point to the resurrection of Christ and of all men in Him),—*that thou keep the commandment spotless and irreproachable.* The New Testament idiom justifies this translation.<sup>3</sup> The commandment is the “law” of the divine life, the “law of liberty,” the whole preceptive aspect of the Gospel of Christ. He who is “under the law to Christ” is bound to obey in such wise that the nature of the commandment itself may suffer neither stain nor reproach, so that, as far as Timothy is concerned, no man must be tempted to think it vain, frivolous, unpractical, or perilous. The commandment is to be kept *until* (up to) *the manifestation* (epiphany) *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Although so old an interpreter as Chrysostom interprets this expression as referring to the time of Timothy’s death, and although this event would correspond to him in ethical sanction with the epiphany of Christ, yet we see that the Epistles of Paul and the Apocalypse are full of hope concerning the imminent approach, the ultimate, transcendent, sublime manifestation of the Christ, when “every eye shall see Him.” The prophetic faith of the Church has always grasped this great hope as about to be realized. Should the climax or consummation be delayed for milleniums, the Church will always speak of the coming of Christ as “at hand.” The element of time itself is lost in the vision of the Seer. A thousand years are as one day, or as “a watch in the night” when it is passed.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xviii. 33 ; Acts vii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chap. v. 22 ; 2 Cor. xi. 9 ; James i. 27, where qualifying adjectives are in apposition with the object of the verb *τηρειν*.

Every age echoes the cry, "Behold, He cometh." It is the stimulus of faith, the nurse of hope and love.

*Verse 15.*—Which (epiphany, which "divine event, to which the whole creation moves"), in his (God's) own appropriate seasons (these words are in the plural, because there is a succession of seasons and opportunities during which the *epiphany* is anticipated and the promise of its final glory renewed), the only and blessed Potentate will reveal. There is no need to imagine any reference to a full-blown Gnosticism in this phraseology. "The only God" is an expression used in John xvii. 3, and *Δυνάστης* is applied to God in Luke i. 52, Acts viii. 27, and frequently in the Apocryphal writings. The phrase cannot be exactly paralleled in the Pauline writings, but cf. Rom. xvi. 24, and Chap. i. 17. St. Paul merely gives the assurance that He in whose hands are "the times and seasons" "waits patiently" from no deficiency on his side of either power or authority. Further, a helpful thought, to which the writer had already given expression, reappears in the epithet "blessed," or "happy." The Sovereign Arbiter of time and judgment is the "happy God"—the Supreme Power is infinitely blessed. Then follows a sublime doxological burst of awful praise. The blessed Potentate is *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, or "King of those who reign, Lord of those who rule." Compare similar expressions in Rev. i. 5; xvii. 14; xix. 16 referring to the dignity of the Son of God. All authority is in his hands,—emperors, proconsuls, victors in the games, sages, philosophers, and kings of men, will not conceal Him when the hour has come; and He

has moreover infinite time at his disposal, for He adds,—*who alone, or only, has immortality* by inherent nature and right. All others have it as his gift and by his permission. The very idea of eternity is given to us primarily as a characteristic of the Divine nature—*dwelling in the unapproachable light*. This idea finds abundant confirmation in the symbolism of Scripture. The veiling of the seraphs' faces by their wings, the guarding of the bounds of Sinai, the significance of the Holy of Holies, the splendid imagery of the Psalms, where God clothes and hides Himself in light, are sufficient vindications of this solitary use in the New Testament of the expression.<sup>1</sup> *Whom no man hath seen, or can see, to him be honour and eternal might. Amen.* Mack has rightly connected these closing words with the *καίρῳ ἰδίῳ* which the Father has put in his own power. This magnificent description is not incompatible with the vision of God granted to the "pure in heart" (Matt. v. 8). They that see Christ, see the Father. They "look into a mirror, in an enigma," and behold his glory and are changed into the same image. It cannot be "until the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Christ," that we shall have the full manifestation of the eternal, invisible God. This doxology may already have been sung in the Church at Ephesus, and the Apostle was probably quoting familiar words. There is a rhythmical ring in them which is capable of exhibition in lyrical form, and which must, I think, have fitted them for liturgic use in the Christian congregation. This holy awe and hush of soul in the presence

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John i. 18; 1 John iv. 12; Matt. xi. 27.

of the Holy One, and when using the name or grasping the idea of the blessed God, is eminently Pauline, and the spirit which induced it is profoundly Christian.<sup>1</sup> The entire charge to Timothy, which is based on his avoidance of the temptations to wealth and urges the absorption of his mind in grander nobler thoughts, although it has burst into a triumphant song, has not, however, diverted Paul's mind from the theme then occupying it. The love of money is a root of all evils, but there are those who are "*rich in this present world.*"<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom says, in contrast to those who are rich in the world to come; but I do not think that this can be pressed, because the Apostle seems to regard them as men who may become rich towards God. *Charge such, says he, to be not high minded* (cf. Rom. xi. 20 and xii. 16), *nor to have hoped, so as now to hope, in the uncertainty of riches* (which take to themselves wings), *but in God.* "The uncertainty of riches" is a stronger and more rhetorical phrase than "uncertain riches." Trust in the uncertainty itself is a powerful augmentation of the main idea. The play upon the prepositions ἐπι and ἐν in this verse is very like the style of St. Paul, though the varieties of the readings prevent our laying any confident emphasis upon the usage. The *living God* of the Receptus is not sustained by the best editors. *Who affordeth to us all things richly for enjoyment.* This is a reminiscence of ideas already insisted upon in the Epistle.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rom. i. 25; ix. 5; xi. 36; xvi. 26; Gal. i. 5; Ephes. iii. 21; Phil. iv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> The connection of the ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι with the πλουσιοις is justified notwithstanding the absence of the article.

The rich are not to trust in riches, but in the God who gives them. His signature upon the *all things* doubles their value. Charge them, says Paul,—

*Verse 18.*—*To do good works, to be benevolent and abundant in their charities, and to be rich in beautiful deeds.* Τὸ ἀγαθὸν is good done to others; τὸ κάλον is that which is good, honourable, and beautiful in itself, *to be free in distributing, ready to communicate*; these words are nearly synonymous; *treasuring up for themselves a good foundation against the coming (time), that they may lay hold of the life indeed.* The “foundation” on which a man may stand and take possession of the true life, on which he may build for himself a holy rest, is contrasted with the uncertainty of riches that fly away.

*Verse 20.*—*Oh, Timothy, guard the deposit of the faith entrusted to thee.* There are three passages in this Epistle where this word παραθήκη is used with the verb φυλάττειν. In 2 Tim. i. 12, God, who has given the παραθήκη to Paul, is the guardian of it; and in verse 14 Timothy himself is bidden once more to guard it faithfully. The common interpretation in 2 Tim. i. 12, which regards it as the “soul” which Paul entrusted to God to “keep,” would be comprehensible, but is not altogether clear; but “soul” would be very unsuitable in either of the other passages. Vincentius Lirinensis suggested the interpretation given above, which is, in the main, accepted by Alford, Ellicott, Wiesinger, Mack, and Fairbairn. Paul, Timothy, and every Christian worker since, have received a sacred trust of truth, a deposit of faith; and they are each and all to see that they hand this on to the next gene-

ration unimpaired, neither sacrificed by vague compromises nor stereotyped into lifeless forms. There is some difficulty in applying this meaning in 2 Tim. i. 12; but with a slight modification it conveys a momentous truth. Paul was on the point of laying down the sword with which he had fought many battles. It must be wielded henceforth by younger hands, and would confront new forms of falsehood. It was a cheering reflection to him that God Himself would keep it. A whole generation might lose sight of it, or even abuse it, but he was "persuaded" that God would vindicate it, and in the great day reveal its transcendent value. Timothy is here charged to guard the faith entrusted to him with loyal enthusiasm, *avoiding the profane emptiness, vain sounds, and antitheses of a falsely-called gnosis.* It is not likely that the Apostle referred here to the Gnostic antitheses between Law and Gospel, between the Supreme God and the Creator of the world, so current in the second century, although the germs of these ideas were already active. His heart was grieved and pierced by the "contradiction" offered to his Gospel on the part of the false teachers of whom he has said so much. Paul rejoiced in a true *gnosis*, which was rooted in faith and developed and sustained by the Spirit of Christ. His enemies were undermining, by a falsely-called science, the truth of Christ, *which knowledge certain persons professing, have missed their aim in the matter of the faith.* Having lost their way in the beguiling pleasaunces round and near to Doubting Castle, and being grappled with in this enchanted ground by

Giant Despair, they have either been consigned to his dungeons, or left to fumble and tumble among the tombs, proving, as "the shepherds" said, the truth of the words, "He who wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall abide in the congregation of the dead."

"GRACE BE WITH YOU, AMEN."

H. R. REYNOLDS.

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*THE VINDICTIVE PSALMS VINDICATED.*

CONCLUSION.

IN Psalm lviii. it is not the imprecations which it contains that constitute its chief difficulty. It is quite true that some of these, to the cursory reader, wear an appearance of malevolence; but on examination, as we shall see presently, they are found to be capable of an easy and satisfactory explanation. The real difficulty lies in the vindictiveness and ferocity which seem to have inspired the 10th verse—"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." And so real a difficulty has this been felt to be that even Dr. Perowne, whose defence of the Vindictive Psalms accords in the main with that to which this and preceding papers have been devoted, abandons—if I understand him aright—this and similar passages as indefensible.<sup>1</sup> We can hardly be wrong, therefore, in regarding this verse as a *crux criticorum* and as likely to test our theory more severely than anything which has as yet come before us.

But before we attempt to vindicate even this

<sup>1</sup> Note on Psalm cix.

to manumit his bondsmen. Whenever society shall be interpenetrated with these sublime thoughts, and shall thus embody the Spirit of Christ, slavery will be impossible. It must be remembered, however, that war, forensic oaths, exclusive hereditary rank, the tyranny of fashion, the prejudices of race, the selfish pride of patriotism, the chartered immoralities of trade, the despotism of class legislation and prescription will, under the like circumstances, all likewise perish. The earth, in fact, and the works therein, will be burned up. But it does not therefore follow that the ideal of the kingdom involves that it should suffer violence, and that the violent should take it by force. Christian faith was not a charter of universal civil revolution. The law of its activity was that the leaven should be hidden and work *in* the meal; that the seed should be sown amid thorns; that, even on good ground, the enemy would maliciously sprinkle tares; and that the revolution would take place in every department of human relations, not by forcible efforts to reconstitute society *ab extra*, but by the silent stedfast working of the law of the Spirit of Life in society and in humanity at large, after the manner in which the sanctifying process takes place in individual souls. Hence, if *slaves, under the yoke*, are disposed to act violently as though the framework of Romano-Greek society had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they would soon find out, not only their grievous mistake, but that the sound words of Christ and his Apostles were already registered against them. Two cases are suggested to Timothy,—(a) the temptation besetting the slave of unbelieving or of heathen masters, and