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2 Timothy 3: Part 1

Steve Walvatne

The third chapter of 2 Timothy looks forward – forward to “last days” that will be “perilous” or “hard to bear.” Some think they encompass the entire church age from Pentecost to the Rapture, but that’s unlikely. Past ages experienced accelerated moral decline near the end and ours will too. Still, each generation feels the downward pull of “last days”. Paul felt it, and Timothy felt it more. Two hundred and fifty eight years ago, the preacher Jonathan Edwards felt it, when he said that “truth and religion, both of heart and practice, are departing by such swift steps that I think...a crisis is not very far off” (*Letters and Personal Writings*). How much worse things are today! The fulfillment of “last days” could be here.

Timothy needed “to know” or “be aware” of last day conditions so their savagery wouldn’t startle or stall him. Paul, therefore, submitted what essentially is a chapter of lists to help in that regard. Four sections with four verses, each containing a list pertinent to “perilous times”, follow the introduction of verse one. We’ll consider them under four headings:

The Sordid Sins of Last Days	vv. 2-5
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The Sordid Sins of Last Days

Nineteen traits are enumerated in this first section, all etched in *moral* rather than *material* terms, in keeping with the letter’s spiritual tone. Romans 1 has a similar list, but it’s not identical. There “you have *heathendom* ... here you have *Christendom* ... In *heathendom* the

wickedness is open and notorious; while in *Christendom* there is an effort to preserve a good exterior” (*Ministry of J.B. Stoney*, vol. 1). This defining feature is nineteenth on the list. Many will act pious, but be powerless. They’ll know nothing of victory over sin. Organized religion is full of this. “Christendom,” said Alexander MaClaren, “is largely a mass of pagans masquerading as Christians” (*Expositions of Holy Scripture*). James Baker agrees, calling it “a paganized form of Christianity, or perhaps rather, a Christianized form of paganism” (*What the Bible Teaches: 2 Timothy*).

The apostle painstakingly lists the wicked traits of these false professors. We shouldn’t scan them casually. They deserve careful examination.

“Lovers of their own selves”: William Kelly calls this the “very mother of evils”, a characteristic so grieving, it justly holds “first place in this list” (*The Bible Treasury*, vol. 16). Self-infatuation prevails today: the mighty **“ME”** towers above all, even God.

“Covetous”: Or literally, “lovers of money”. This promotes self-infatuation. It runs counter to 1 Jn. 2:15, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...” and is often couched under the pretense of prudent enterprise. Religion is rife with panhandlers.

“Boasters”: Vain and arrogant “braggarts” that promise what they can’t perform.

“Proud”: “Haughty” and “condescending.”

“Blasphemers”: “Abusive” or “profane”; scorners of man and God. Moule says, “Foul-mouthed” (*Studies in*

*“This know also,
that in the last
days, perilous
times WILL come”*

*The fulfillment of
“last days” could be
here....*

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2 Timothy).

“Disobedient to Parents”: Insubordination to, and disrespect for, parental authority, culminating in a general disregard for all authority: human and divine.

“Unthankful”: “Ungrateful”: an attitude that *expects* rather than *appreciates*. It’s conveyed towards parents, other people, and God.

“Unholy”: “Irreverent” or “impious”. These serve the *secular* and scorn the *sacred*.

“Without Natural Affection”: Or “without family affection” (Earle: *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*); “hard-hearted” (Weymouth).

“Trucebreakers”: “Implacable,” “unforgiving,” “relentless.” They refuse reconciliation.

“False Accusers”: “Slanderers.” The Greek “*diabolos*” is used of Satan, the accuser of brethren (Rev. 12:10). “Is it not a solemn issue that the Holy Spirit should have thus to describe not mere heathens, but men bearing the Lord’s Name in the last days?” (Kelly).

“Incontinent”: “Without self-control,” “intemperate.” “Unrestrained” in passions, especially those of an immoral nature.

“Fierce”: “Brutal” and “savage” like wild beasts – “living only to satisfy their own desires and being unconcerned about any future reckoning with God” (Harold Berry: *Studies in 2 Timothy*).

“Despisers of Those that are Good”: Or literally, “Without love for good” (Kelly). They “hate the good and have replaced it with something less demanding” (Donald Guthrie: *The Pastoral Epistles*).

“Traitors”: “Traacherous”: they’ll “betray” or “give over” another person, regardless of the harm inflicted. It’s used of Judas Iscariot in Luke 6:16.

“Heady”: Literally, “to fall forward.” People who are “rash,” “reckless,” or “headlong” (JND). They “plunge ahead in their wickedness” (Hendrickson: *New Testament Commentary*).

“Highminded”: “Conceited” or “puffed-up” – “so suffocated with smoke as to be no longer sane” (John Albert Bengel: *New Testament Word Studies*). They display “unwarranted self-importance” (Guthrie).

“Lovers of Pleasure More than Lovers of God”: More accurately translated, “Lovers of pleasure *rather than* lovers of God”. They want pleasure, not God. Writes John Phillips: “There was once a time when Sunday was known as ...the Lord’s Day, and it was set aside for worship. Stores closed, public transportation operated on a reduced schedule, and places of amusement and entertainment were closed. But those days are gone. Sunday now is a day for sports and outings. We have become a nation of pleasure seekers” (*Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*).

“Having a Form of Godliness, but Denying the Power Thereof”: The key to perilous times: “These people hold onto the appearance of godliness, but they have repudiated its dynamic [*dynamis*] ...They have the right words and expressions ...the external forms (words, gestures) of Christian worship, but they have all this as ‘outside’ with no ‘inside’, a face with no heart” (Quinn and Wacker: *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*).

Paul attaches the warning, “From such turn away”. Timothy wasn’t to meddle with imposters and neither are we. Their religious deceit is dangerous. The next section bears this out.

The Subtle Seducers of Last Days

The seducers are “of this sort”. That is, they’re governed by the preceding traits. Here, Paul lists nine things concerning:

1. Their Method: “*They creep into houses*” or “worm their way into families” (Moffatt). Like Jude 4, where “*certain men crept in unawares*”, these enter by stealth, catching occupants off guard. It reveals evil intent. The Lord Jesus moved openly and preached publicly. So did Paul. Before King Agrippa, he silenced Festus’s outburst, saying, “*The king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner*” (Acts 26:26). We too, should be straightforward. Brethren visiting door to door, for example, send a bad signal if they misrepresent their link to the Gospel Hall. Why hedge? Are we ashamed of the local testimony?

2. Their Motive: They “*lead captive*” (‘captivate’). Once inside, seducers establish a foothold by controlling the occupants. “The verb [‘lead’]...suggests that the opponents do this with professional skill” (Quinn and Wacker). They’re masters at deceit. And selfish: power, prestige, and pelf are their goals, not the victim’s eternal welfare. “There is no doubt that one of the great evils of Christendom is materialism” (J. Baker). By contrast, the Savior came “*to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty*

them that are bruised" (Lk. 4:18).

3. Their Mark: "Silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They prey on women. Like the "Old Serpent" (Rev. 12:9) who beguiled Eve in Eden (2 Cor. 11:3), they entice the "weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7). These women are especially vulnerable because, (1) **They're silly** – a contemptuous word meaning, "little", one that is foolish; (2) **They're sinful** – "Laden with sins" (weighted with guilt) and "Led away with divers lusts" (ruled by a variety of sinful cravings); (3) and **They're senseless** – "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (In their "restless quest for the new and novel" [Hiebert] they go further from truth).

4. Their Models: "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses." Paul identifies the Egyptian sorcerers that opposed Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh (Ex. 7). How he learned their identities is immaterial; the significant thing is that the Holy Spirit wanted them named. Why? Possibly to warn present-day charlatans that God sees their clandestine activity and records their names for certain judgment. Two future charlatans, the Beast and False Prophet, will be the first hurled into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). If Jannes and Jambres were the only magicians Pharaoh used, then the devil imitated God's two men with two of his own. Some Jewish traditions suggest they were brothers. If true, then again, Satan mimicked Moses and Aaron.

5. Their Madness: "So do these also resist the truth." Like Jannes and Jambres, their mad ambition is to "neutralize the power of God by human ability" (J.B. Stoney). While feigning fidelity to Scripture, they preach "another gospel: which is not another" (Gal. 1:6, 7), but a perversion of truth. Christendom is full of manufactured professions. Soul trouble and repentance are a mystery to most of its ministers. They've stripped salvation of its supernatural quality, demoting it to an act of man's will. May God preserve us! Sin is too serious and hell too horrendous for that kind of nonsense. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus ..." (Eph. 2:10).

6. Their Minds: "Of corrupt minds." They are "utterly depraved" – with minds so wasted, they're "radically incapable of carrying out any magisterial function" (Spicq: *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*). Yet, people fall for their falsehood, confirming that "men [love] darkness rather than light, because their deeds [are] evil" (Jn. 3:19). To think! Filthy seducers meddling in sacred things - what high-handed desecration!

7. Their Measure: "Reprobate concerning the faith." "Worthless" or "counterfeit", they can't measure up to

divine scrutiny. Their "faith" is fraudulent. Like Belshazzar, they're weighed in the balances and "found wanting" (Dan. 5:27). They might fool men, but not God. "Men's balances may swing like a pendulum to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused, but God's balances are sure and accurate because known unto Him are all our ways, our debts, and our thoughts" (N.W. Hutchings: *Exploring the Book of Daniel*).

8. Their March: "But they shall proceed no further." How solemn. Their evil march is finally halted. Like grass, they're cut down (1 Pet. 1:24). The Psalmist "was envious at the foolish when [he] saw the prosperity of the wicked...They set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth." But in God's presence he saw the true picture. "Surely, Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors" (Ps. 73).

9. Their Manifestation: "For their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." Not only are these stopped, but they're exposed. Their "mindlessness" (Earle) is revealed. Like Jannes and Jambres, they run out of tricks. "Absurdity and fraud eventually overstep their bounds" (Hiebert) and their dupes "eventually see that they have allowed themselves to be fooled" (Lenski: *Commentary on the New Testament*). (to be continued)

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED

Ephesians 1:6

It is not said that God will make us accepted, if we do the best we can; but "He HATH made us accepted." Nor is it said that He hath made us accepted in the righteous One, for although this is true, it is not the truth here expressed; but, "He hath made us accepted in the BE-LOVED". The Apostle, when led of the Holy Ghost to write these words, was not referring to himself alone, but to all in every place who trust in Jesus as their Savior. Yet there are multitudes in the modern churches who do not believe they are accepted at all, and there are multitudes who think they are accepted according to the measure of their prayers and strivings, and good works; and few, alas, very few, understand by simple faith in God's Word that they are accepted according to the measure of the Father's love for His Son.

Before the foundations of the earth were laid, He was daily His Father's delight, rejoicing always before Him (Prov. 8:30); and when He walked among men, again and again was heaven burst open, as if God would repress His longings to utter in audible voice the love that overflowed

for the One Who came to do His will. At His baptism, and on the Mount of Transfiguration, there was heard a voice from heaven saying, *"This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."* (Mt. 3:17; 17:5) ; and He could respond with perfect truth, *"He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him"* (Jn. 7:29). How dear He is to the Father now that He has satisfied and glorified Him about the tremendous question of sin, no tongue can tell, no imagination can conceive.

We know that when He was here below, He spoke of Himself as the only begotten and well-beloved Son (Jn. 3:16; Mk. 12:6) ; and since He has been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, we are sure that He is not less cherished by the Father Whom He obeyed and honored. He is loved with an infinite love, and it is in Him as so loved that the feeblest and most unworthy believer is accepted. It is not the whole truth therefore, to say that we are accepted according to the estimate God places upon His finished work, or according to the value He puts upon His precious blood; but we are also accepted according to His love for Jesus, Who is more to Him, and nearer to Him than all the universe beside. This our Lord plainly teaches in the sublime intercessory prayer that closes His farewell discourse to the disciples. Seven times He uses the terms of comparison AS and SO to indicate that all who believe on His Name have His Own place and portion, and He ends and crowns the wonderful exhibition of grace by saying, *"that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me"* (Jn. 17: 23). Nay, we have something additional to the love the Father bestowed upon Him, for He adds, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them (v. 26). With such statements falling from His own lips, we cannot be surprised to hear the Apostle exclaiming as He was moved by the Holy Ghost, *"Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world"* (1 Jn. 4:17) .

Hence it follows that the measure of His acceptance with the Father is the measure of our acceptance; and the measure of His nearness to the Father's bosom, and the Father's throne, is just the measure of our nearness; for we stand not only in the acceptableness of His work, but in all the acceptableness of His person. If we would turn our thoughts from our unworthiness to His perfect love, we would have boldness instead of alarm at the thought of the judgment; for never until manifested at His judgment seat, shall we know what He has done for us, what He has been to us, and what He has endured from us. Then in the presence of His glory we shall see the shining forth of a love that manifested itself in patient grace and unwearied goodness amid our ever-recurring failures; and we shall retire from the scene overwhelmed, not with terror, but with a display of all His affection.

May He open our straightened and suspicious hearts to take in more of this amazing love now, and to be occupied more with His sufficiency for us, and His Word to us, and less with our infirmities and short-comings! Surely we dishonor and grieve Him, when we are wayward and worldly and walk as men; but if we really trust in Him to deliver us from sin and wrath and desire to live in the unclouded light of fellowship with our Lord, it is still greater dishonor and grief to the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, when He sees us calling in question His unmerited love, and refusing to take the place of an accepted child, which He gives every believing sinner.

Let every doubting, troubled Christian, in reading the blessed assurance and comforting promises of the Bible say continually, "I have all *this* or nothing."

WIS May 1940

Order in God's House

Joel Portman

Spiritual, or Scriptural Foundation

1 Timothy 1

Introduction 1:1-2

Paul's emphasis on his apostleship and mention of the commandment of God indicates that this letter was meant for the entire assembly and not Timothy only, else why emphasize his apostolic authority and subjection to the commandment of God? The truth of this epistle has divine authority and doesn't simply give suggestions for Christian conduct or assembly behavior. "The word 'command' is a military term and denotes an injunction or order that must be obeyed," (Hiebert, *First Timothy*). He writes with authority, but as one who is under authority. Mention of the commandment of God in his life indicates that

1. He personally was obedient and submissive to God's will in his life. Only a person who is exercised to obey God in his life has the weight to give instruction in godly living to the saints.
2. These teachings are meant to be obeyed by the entire company of believers. They are not optional. The attitude of some that we do not need to obey "Paul's teaching" is contrary to God's will and Word.
3. His position as an apostle was not of his own election, but he was an apostle because it was the commandment of the Lord that had made him one. Thus he could speak authoritatively.

God is seen as our Savior and our Lord Jesus Christ as our hope. The first term emphasizes a work that is past but also continues, since He is our **Savior** out of sin and our **Preserver** from sin, but it also emphasizes His absolute claims on His people that should cause obedi-

ence to His Word. "Our Savior," is an expression unique to the pastoral epistles and is applied equally to the Father and the Son. The latter expression ("Lord Jesus Christ our hope") is linked with the first, but it anticipates the future, our deliverance from the presence of sin entirely, and that hope is centered in Him who gives it and will fulfill all its expectations. It is similar to Col. 1:27: "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*".

He writes to Timothy, his genuine child (literally) in, or through, faith. It is not in "the faith" but rather that Timothy showed evidence of being a true child in contrast to some who professed faith in Christ but didn't manifest those characteristics. Evidently there were some like these in that day, a condition that is sadly also seen in our day. He had become that genuine child through faith, and he continued to display that faith by the character of his life.

In view of his heavy responsibilities in the assembly and his personal weakness (true of us all), he needed grace for his spiritual enablement, mercy to give him physical and emotional strength, and peace to give him inward calm amidst potential strife. Paul again reminds him of this need in 2 Tim. 2:1, "*Thou therefore my son (child), be strong (strengthened) in (by means of) the grace that is in Christ Jesus*". Grace and peace are usually mentioned when Paul writes to an assembly directly, but when individuals are being addressed, he includes mercy since we all have daily need of that preservation and benevolent supply that comes from our Lord. Grace is an expression of the Giver's character and desires, while mercy indicates the poverty and need of the recipients. These are received from "Jesus Christ (better, Christ Jesus) our Lord". He only has the ability to supply the needs of His people in their service for Him. "Grace, mercy and peace are the triple blessings of the Christian life, as faith, hope and charity are the triple fruit of the Christian character (Lilley).

Content of the Charge 1:3-11

Paul had spent 2 years and 3 months among these believers and they possessed a great deal of "light", but this charge shows that light doesn't protect from error. Clearly, others had risen from within or infiltrated the assembly in Ephesus from without and were teaching "other doctrine", doctrine different from the apostolic teaching that Paul had given to them. "Other" indicates it was doctrine of a different source or kind. Paul evidently knew who they were by his use of the expression "some" or "certain men." His concerns in Acts 20:29-30 were being realized. Men who carry responsibility in local assemblies must guard the teaching so that it is always consistent with God's Word. In 1 Cor. 14:29, we learn that in the assembly, the prophets had liberty to speak two or three with the others (other prophets?) judging, or discriminating, so

that what they spoke would be consistent with suitable and sound teaching. We have great need for spiritual discrimination today and the lack of it has disastrous results. Not all ministry is profitable, nor is it scriptural; a polished delivery never should substitute for suitable content or effective communication of truth.

This "other doctrine" relates to those things that naturally appeal to the flesh such as fables (myths, stories, reports whether false or true) and genealogies (possibly Jewish lineages or related to Gnostic heresies). Whatever they were, they were contrary to sound doctrine and only resulted in disputes, questionings, arguments, rather than producing godly edifying (strengthening, building up spiritually) that should result from teaching. "Godly edifying" is literally, "an administration, or dispensation, of God", which suggests that its purpose is to carry out God's purposes in the world and in the assembly to establish an order consistent with His holy character and the gospel. Jim Allen (What the Bible teaches: *1 Timothy*) says, "In the context of this letter it is clear that heretical teachings were inimical to the practical outworking of the stewardship, the household management, of divine things in the local assembly". Our aim in teaching or all speaking in the assembly must be to strengthen the spiritual character of the saints, to minister comfort, to exhort in right living, and to open the truths concerning the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 14:3).

This commandment, or charge, that Paul gave had three goals: 1. **Love** out of a pure heart, 2. A good **conscience**, and 3. Unfeigned (genuine) **faith**. This love is a spiritual quality that is of the heart and reflects God's heart. A good conscience is in the mind, and results from individual obedience to His Word, while Faith resides in the spirit, and it reflects an attitude of confidence in His Word. Faith comes from confidence in His Person and ability to perform all that He has promised to do. These three things should be the aim of all spiritual ministry and will strengthen the saints in their exercise for the Lord. This other teaching was undermining all three; love for God and others was diminished, a good conscience was defiled, and their faith was deflected. Paul is admonishing Timothy to reprove this kind of teaching. These results are the direct opposite of what their teaching produced, only strife and contention. Law teaching never can produce the results that God desires to see in His people.

Those who were teaching 'other' doctrine had deliberately turned aside from that purpose. The word means that they didn't intend to aim for that goal. Their ambition was different, their act was deliberate and their attitude was reflected in what they taught, which was a desire to teach the law to believers. They were

not desiring to produce godliness and instill divine order in the saints or in the assembly, and they expressed confusion of mind in that they didn't understand what they said or expressed confidence in. A similar expression is found in 5:15, 6:20-21, 2 Tim. 4:4, Heb. 12:13. That teaching was "vain jangling" or empty talk without any purpose or results for God.

Verses 8-11 give us the purpose of the law. It had a good purpose and was God-given, but its object never was to make a person righteous. A truly morally upright person (a believer) had no need of the law. Grace teaches him how to live and gives the power to do so. The law reprov'd unrighteousness, so it was for the law-breakers and disobedient, the unbelievers, with all the characteristics that marked them. These teachers were applying the law to the wrong persons! This list gives the **Characteristics** of the Persons first, their ungodly **Conduct** second, and then a comprehensive **Condemnation** of them last. Hiebert (*First Timothy*) says that the list is divided into two: First, Sinners as arrayed against God in their state of mind. This list is divided into three pairs. Secondly, Sinners as arrayed against Society in their violation of specific commands, and this list divides into three groups. We also can see that the first list corresponds to the first commandments of the law, which were godward. The second list corresponds to the latter commandments of the law which dealt with relations manward. The law could reprove wrong behavior, but it never could make one right or keep him right before God. That required the healthy (health-giving) teaching that was according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God that Paul had received and preached to them at the beginning. This other doctrine would never produce the desired results that should stem from such a great gospel that has come from our "blessed God".

At this point, Paul launches into a **Commendation of the Gospel**, (vss. 12-17), especially in view of what it had done for him, a work that the law had no ability to accomplish. (to be continued)

The Humanity of Christ

by the late William Hoste, B.A.
(AT Nov/Dec 1980)

The Person of Christ is the Citadel of Divine Truth, for He became in Incarnation, "*the Image of the Invisible God,*" the "*One Mediator between God and man,*" the only "Way" to the Father, and much else besides. He was the One into whose hands the Father had committed all things. To belittle His Person, then, is to degrade the true idea of God, compromise fatally His

Mediatorial work, and endanger the stability of the moral and material Universe.

Men will acknowledge His influence, laud His ethics, and profess to follow His example, who deny His Divine personality, miraculous birth, atonement and resurrection. But wrong here, wrong everywhere.

The Virgin Birth

The earliest attacks on the Person of Christ converged on His humanity. It was to prove "Jesus come in the flesh" that John wrote His epistles. To deny this is to undermine His atoning work. He must partake of flesh and blood in order to die; and to One of perfect holiness, death, viewed merely as physical dissolution, must have seemed more repulsive than to any man—not to speak of what His contact with sin and separation from God entailed. He must be truly man to be (1) the Seed of the woman and act the Kinsman's part* (Gen. 3.15; Gal. 4.4); (2) the Seed of Abraham to inherit the promises (Gal. 3.16); and (3) the Son of David, to claim the throne of Israel (1 Chron. 22.10). When king Ahaz refused to ask a sign, God gave one for all time greater than earth or heaven could afford: "*Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and shall call his name Immanuel*" (Isa. 7.14). This was fulfilled, as we know, by the birth of Jesus as narrated by Matthew and Luke.

* Goel is the equivalent of 'Redeemer' and 'Avenger,' because it was the next of kin who had the right to redeem and avenge.

Gesenius, the well-known Hebraist, of decided Modernist leanings, asserts that the word *galmath* does not mean 'virgin,' but "a youthful spouse recently married," and cites this passage in proof, which seems like begging the question. But it would hardly be a 'sign' for a "young married woman" to conceive and bear a son. Dr. Tregelles, a scholar of at least equal reputation with Gesenius, and his translator, denies his conclusions, and refers to the fact that the LXX renders the word 'virgin' by *parthenos* in this passage, which must have been a difficulty to them. *Galmath* in Punic does undoubtedly signify 'virgin', as the doctor points out. Gesenius says that, 'b'thoolah' is the true word for 'virgin,' but this is not always the case as a study of the references shows. *Galmath* occurs in six other places in the O.T.; in Gen. 24.16 of Rebecca; Exod. 2.8 of the Miriam; Ps. 68.25; Prov. 30.19; Cant. 1.3; 6.8. In not one of these occurrences is Gesenius' meaning apparent. One would suppose, as Dr. Tregelles suggests, that the use of the passage in Mt. 1.23 would settle the dispute for any Christian.

If the Eternal Son was to become incarnate how else but by virgin-birth could it take place? If Jesus were the son of Mary and Joseph, then there was no "incarnation" and those who worship Jesus are credulous idolaters. To deny the virgin-birth and His Divine

personality, while accepting results of His life and influence, is to accept transcendent effects without adequate cause.

But had Jesus not been what He claimed to be, there would have been no controversy about Him today. His very name would have sunk into oblivion, ere the first century passed away. How could a Jewish peasant, if He were only that, with a few unlettered followers, rejected by his own nation and dying a felon's death, have become the greatest influence the world has ever known, subduing empires and wills of men, so that nearly two thousand years after His death. His name is known and revered throughout the civilized world, and millions would die for Him, persuaded He is in fact "*God manifest in flesh*," their Redeemer and Lord?

Christ was then, indeed, "*The Word become flesh. "tabernacling among men," "in the likeness of sinful flesh,"* with a real human body, spirit, and soul, passing through all the experiences proper to man and his mission. His body was capable of weariness, hunger, pain and death; His soul of all true sinless affections; His spirit of grief and joy. But we must not allow all this to eclipse the facts of his miraculous conception and Divine personality and innate sinlessness. Rather than say "He assumed our manhood," which might convey the idea of His partaking of our sinful nature, we should say, "He entered into manhood" and "all that is truly man finds in Him its perfect exponent and fulfillment." (*Christ Crucified*, p. 80, by Adolph Saphir)

The much-debated passage in Philippians has usually been discussed in the light of the one word *ekenosen*—"He emptied Himself" (R.V.)—instead of the context, which seems to favor rather the A.V., "*He made Himself of no reputation.*" We are told (e.g., G. Bennets, B.A., D.D.) that, at the time the N.T. was written, the word *kenoo* like so many others, had lost its strict etymological and classical meaning, and had become equivalent rather to the A.V., "to make of no reputation," which seems to fit in better with the context, for whatever the word meant for our Lord, we are called to experience the same ourselves. It would be unsound exegesis, therefore, to give it a meaning for our Lord which would make it impossible for us. "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*" It is an attitude of mind we are to seek, not an evacuation of our memory, knowledge, scholarship, etc., which Modernism predicates of our Lord, without however, it would seem, any intention of emulating Him. We cannot perhaps close this section better than by quoting from the second of the "Thirty-Nine Articles." He entered into manhood "in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures . . . were found together in one Person, never to be divided."

Heresies relative to Christ's Humanity

But the integrity of the manhood of Christ has been tampered with and denied. The Docetae (dokein, "to appear") in early church times denied the reality of the Lord's body. It was only apparently flesh and bones. But His own words refute this, "*A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*" (Lk. 24 : 39). Though He was to be called the Son of God, because He Who was the Eternal Son had become incarnate (the calling succeeding the being). He was also the firstborn son of Mary (Mt. 1.25). His was a true human birth, though altogether unique.

In the 4th century, Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, in his eagerness to oppose Arianism and assert the Deity of Christ, was led so far as to deny the existence of a rational soul in Christ's human nature. For Him the Divine Logos took the place of the rational soul. If so. His humanity was defective and was that of an animal or idiot. Our Lord's words, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*" imply a rational soul. The idea that the body was a mere case in which the Divine person of the Son replaced the spiritual part of man, is entirely subversive of the truth of Christ's humanity. Man is tripartite, spirit, soul and body. Another heretical teacher of the 5th century, Eutyches, a presbyter of Constantinople, taught that the Divine and human natures in Christ, instead of continuing distinct, coalesced into a third Divine nor human. This also denies the true humanity of our Lord; but Rom. 9.5 describes Him in the following sentences as, "*according to the flesh*" and as being He "*Who is over all. God, blessed for ever.*"

On the other hand Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople (A.D. 428) held the distinction of the two natures in such an extreme way, as to involve a dual personality, the Eternal Logos and the human soul. All these erroneous teachings, together with the crude Modernist views of our day, which deny to our Lord His divine** attributes, as being in conflict with true humanity, "arise from the deductions and inferences of human minds working in things too high for them." The humanity of Christ, though in some ways modified by the resurrection, is essentially unchanged. Could we with anointed eye pierce the unseen, passing the angelic hosts and all the hierarchies of heaven, we should see on the highest pinnacle of the Universe, the throne of the Father, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the Son of Man, glorified with the same "*glory which He had with the Father, before the world was,*" no less truly and completely man than in this scene, for "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,*" still the one Mediator between God and man—and a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, "*being in all things made like unto His brethren,*" that is as Alford points out "all

things wherewith the present argument is concerned." Heb. 2.18 Greek Text (in loco).

** (Mk. 13:32. "Neither the Son" is quoted as disproving this. It would be strange if one verse nullified a hundred. Fortunately we are not driven to this. There are different lines of interpretation. Dr. Shedd (Dogmatic Theology, Vol. I, p. 319) writes: "An official ignorance is meant. Augustine so explains. Christ as the Mediator was not authorized at that time to give information respecting the time of the final judgment." See in this connection 1 Cor. 2.2, "I determined not to know, etc." The verse must be taken with Acts 1.7. Here, admittedly, Christ was no longer in any supposed "kenosis condition," and yet He says, "The Father hath put the times and seasons into His own power," and, therefore, it did not belong to the Son to reveal.)

God's Word: "The Best"

Alex Dryburgh

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."
Psalm 119:11

The Best of Provision: "Thy Word".

When you read the Psalms, you discover two things: that which David hated and that which David loved. We see that there are **three things in Ps. 119 that David hated:**

He hated vain thoughts, vs. 113

Linked with the Mind

He hated every false way: vs.128

Linked with the Feet

He hated and abhorred lying, vs.163

Linked with the Tongue

We also see what David loved:

In Ps. 119:47, **David loved the commandments of the Lord.** In verse 97, he loved the law of God. In verse 119, he loved the testimonies of God. In verse 140, he loved the word of God. In verse 159, he loved the precepts of God. In Ps.16:3, He loved the people of God: *"But to (or, as for) the saints that are on the earth, and to the (or, they are) the excellent in whom is all my delight."* Notice it is the saints on the earth:

"To dwell above with those we love,
That will be glory.

But to dwell below with those we know,
That's a different story."

Love for one another is vitally important.

1. It is a proof that we love God. If you don't love your brother whom you do see, how can you love God who you don't see? (1 Jn. 4:20).

2. It is also a proof that you love Christ: *"If you love me (ye will) keep my commandments"* (Jn. 14:15). "A new

commandment I give unto you that ye love one another," (Jn. 13:34).

3. It is a testimony to the world: *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (Jn. 13:35).

4. It is a proof that we are saved: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren"* (1 Jn. 3:14).

We should ever seek to keep before us the truth of brotherly love. We are to *"let brotherly love continue"* (Heb. 13:1). We are to *"be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another"* (Rom. 12:10). *"As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you"* (1 Th. 4:9). Always seek to keep the truth of "the brother" in the local assembly.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians, he mentions time and again the thought of the brother. He talks about Sosthenes, the brother. He talks about Apollos, the brother; about Timothy, the brother; about Titus, the brother. Read the little letter of Philemon. You read about Timothy, the brother; about Philemon, the brother; about Onesemus, the brother. In the Bible notice those who express the thought of a brother and those who don't; God does: *"Where is Abel thy brother?"* (Gen. 4:9). Joseph does: *"I am Joseph, your brother"* (Gen. 45:4). Notice that Joseph's brethren didn't: *"...whether it be thy son's coat or no?"* (Gen. 37:32). There are three speakers in Luke 15: the servant, the father, the eldest brother. Both the servant and the father maintain the thought of the brother, but the eldest son does not. Where you find hatred or jealousy, you never get the truth of the brother.

David loved the house of God. *"Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,"* (Ps. 26:8). If we love the house of God, the assembly of God, there are things we will do and there are things that we will not do.

1. We will not Desert it. Heb 10:2: *"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is."* There are far too many SMOS among us: Sunday Morning only Sometimes.

2. We will not Despise it. 1Cor.11:22: *"What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the Church of God?"*

3. We will not Defile it: 1Cor.3:17: *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."*

4. We will not Divide it. Rom.16:17: *"Mark them which cause divisions and offenses (occasions of stumbling) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."*

5. We will pray for its Perfection. Col. 4:12: *"... that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."*

6. We will pray for its Preservation, that it may be kept from evil and from the evil one, (John 17:15).

7. We will pray for its Purity: "Sanctify them through thy truth; Thy word is truth." (Jn. 17:17).

8. We will pray for its Peace. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee," (Ps. 122:6).

9. We will pray for its Prosperity. Ps. 122:6-7: "They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces."

David loved the God of the house; "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications," (Ps. 116.1). "We love (him) because he first loved us," (1 Jn. 4:19).

Think of God's love for us: It was **Causeless**. There was no reason that God should love anyone of us. Have you ever noticed it is not at the beginning of Deuteronomy, but at the end that you read those words in Deut. 33:3 "Yea he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand." After their murmurings and complainings, their sin and their backslidings, God still loved them. "God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. 2:4). He loved us and washed us from our sins.

The love of God was **Costly**. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son..." (Jn. 3:16).

Infinite love was wounded sore,

It sought to bridge the span
Shut out the separating wedge

And walk again with man.
He gave his best his well beloved,
He came he bled he died;
To reconcile he paid the price,
And bridged the great divide.

The love of God is **Ceaseless**. He loved us with an everlasting love. Nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. 8:39).

David loved the Word of God. "I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved," (Ps. 119:47). He loved the testimonies, the law, and the precepts. Paul, writing to Timothy, mentions the Word of God. In 1 Timothy it is behavior in the house of God, and the key verse is 1Tim.3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in (the) house of God, which is (the) church of the living God, (the) pillar and ground of the truth." In 2 Timothy it is belief in the word of God and the key verse is 2 Tim 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,

rightly dividing the word of truth." In 2 Tim.1:14, the Word is a treasure that has to be guarded: "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep (guard) by the Holy Ghost." In ch. 2:2, it is truth that has to be passed on to others. The best way to serve the next generation is to serve your own generation. "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able (competent) to teach others also." Also, in vs.15, it is truth to be rightly divided: "Study to show thyself approved unto God... rightly dividing the word of truth."

Three things in relation to the word of God mark the man who is approved of God: He looks it up: He gives attendance to reading, (1 Tim. 4:13). He lets it in: the word of God dwells in him richly (Col. 3:16). Then he lives it out: he adorns the doctrine of God his Savior in all things, (Tit. 2:10). In 2 Tim. 3:15, it is a text book that has to be studied. From a child Timothy had known the sacred writings which were able to make him wise unto salvation. Note **what** we have to study: All scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. Note **how** we have to study: Prov.2:4.. We are to seek it as one would search for silver, as one would for hid treasure. Note **when** we have to study: Psa.1:2: "In his law doth he meditate day and night." Then our **attitude**; a prayerful frame, an inquisitive mind, a meditative spirit, and an obedient heart.

The best use of the Bible is to Read it through, Note it down, Pray it in, Live it out, and Pass it on. Then in 2 Tim. 4:2, we see that it is a trumpet to be sounded; "Preach the word." The word of God is instrumental. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures (sacred writings), which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." The word is inspired: "All scripture is inspired of God." And the word of God is instructive. "It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Many reasons could be given why David loved the word of God. He loved it because of its **Perfection**. Everything about God is perfect. God's work is perfect. Deut. 32:4, "He is the rock, his work is perfect." Whether we think of His work in creation or His work in redemption, His work is perfect. In Ps.18:30, we are told that God's way is perfect. "As for God his way is perfect. His way is in the sanctuary and his way is in the sea." When His way is in the sanctuary we can trace God, we can trust God, and we can thank God. When His way is in the sea, we cannot trace God, but we can trust him and we can thank him. In Job. 36:4, His wisdom is perfect. "He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." God is a God who is too wise to err, too loving to be unkind. The will of God is perfect. In Rom.12:2, we read, "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." In Psa.19:7, The word of God is perfect. "The law of the

Lord (or the doctrine of the Lord) is perfect, converting the soul."

He loved it because of its **Purity**. "Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it." Whether it be the living word or the written word, both are marked by purity. Christ all pure.

"In softness unresisting,
the rough and ruthless touch;
In purity consisting,
as not another such;
In every feature flawless,
in every aspect fair;
the search of sinners lawless,
could find no blemish there."

He loved it because of its **Preciousness**. He loved the commandments above gold yea fine gold. Peter has been called our precious brother Peter, for he talks about things that are precious. He talks about precious faith, "being more precious than gold which perisheth." He speaks about precious blood; "We are redeemed not with such things as silver and gold But with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and spot." In ch. 2, He shows us a Son precious to the father: "Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious". We see a Savior precious to you and me: "Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious (the preciousness)". We learn of a stone precious to Zion: "Then behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone elect and precious." He talks about "exceeding great and precious promises".

He loved it because of the **Peace** that it brought. "Great peace have they which love thy law nothing shall offend (cause to stumble) them," (Ps. 119:165)

He loved it because of its **Power**. Notice eight times in Psalm 119, "according to thy word". You read about cleansing and salvation and the psalmist being strengthened, delivered, and comforted, and it was all "according to the word of the Lord". Let us notice what we are to do with the word of God and what we are not to do with it: We have to desire it. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby," (1 Pet. 2:2). We have to delight in it: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night," (Ps. 1:2). We have to devour it. "Thy words were found and I did eat (devour) them", (Jer.15:16). We have to display it: "...adorn the doctrine of God our savior.." We have to declare it; "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God", (Acts 20:27). We have to defend it; 2 Tim.1.14 says, "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep (guard) by the Holy Ghost".

Notice what we are not to do with the word of God. We are not to handle it deceitfully, 2 Cor.4:2. We are not to deny it, we are not to displace it, we are not to despise it. We want to prosper to be successful. We want to be a Christian that is fragrant, fresh, and fruitful. We want to be a Christian who is happy and makes progress in divine things. It depends on our attitude to the word of God. Notice Josh.1:8: "This Book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein ... for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success." Notice three things: The word is in the mouth first. Then it is in the mind, and then it determines the manner of life. Then in the light of Ps. 1: There has to be separation, there has to be meditation. Then think of James 1:25. He that looks, continues to look, He is also a doer of the word. He looks, he lingers, he lives; That man is blessed in the doing. Paul writes to young Timothy, "Till I come, give attendance to reading ... meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may appear (be manifest) to all," (1 Tim. 4:13, 15).

THE BEST OF PLACES: "In my heart" It does not say thy word have I hid in my head that I might not sin against thee. Nor does it say thy word have I held in my hand that I might not sin against thee, but thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

THE BEST OF PURPOSES: "That I might not sin against Thee" Think of the far-reaching effect that sin has. It affects God and Christ and the Spirit; it affects the assembly and a person's body, soul, and spirit. It affects God. Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Samuel said, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way of the Lord" (1 Sam. 12:23). David said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight," (Ps. 51:4). Sin affects Christ: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ," (1 Cor. 8:12). Sin affects the Holy Spirit; "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost," (Acts 5:3). Sin affects the assembly: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," (1 Cor. 5:6). Sin affects the body, the spirit, and the soul. "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," (1 Cor. 6:18). "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," (2 Cor. 7:1).