

## **PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY.**

"This charge [message] I commit to thee, son Timothy, in harmony with the teachings previously given thee [to guide thee], that by these thou mayest carry on the good contest, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck."

"I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, that thou keep this commandment [Greek, *entole* – "this thing given in charge" – this doctrine given by divine inspiration] without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which [good confession or sound faith] will be manifested in due time by that blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords – the only one possessing immortality, inhabiting light inaccessible, whom no one of men has seen, nor is able to see, to whom be honor and power everlasting." – 1 Tim. 1:18,19; 6:13-16.

We have frequently noticed and called attention to the earnest exhortations and careful instructions given to Timothy by the faithful Apostle Paul. But while these instructions were applicable and profitable to Timothy in his day, they apply with still greater force to the Gospel Church as a whole, of which Timothy was a member, and of which we have reason to believe he was a figure, or representative.

Of this we have evidence in the general character of the epistles addressed to Timothy, which implies either that Timothy, or the class which he represented and of which he formed a part, would be living down into the end of the age. We believe, then, that in the person of Timothy as a representative, the entire Gospel Church is here addressed by Paul, and we notice that the name Timothy signifies – "honor of God." The church honors God and is to have honor conferred upon her by God. In the present age the honor consists in

the fact that so important a "charge" is committed to her trust. And those thus honored in this age, and who prove faithful to the trust, will in the next age be yet more highly exalted and honored.

Three times Paul most solemnly and earnestly repeats this charge. He thanked the Lord that though he had been a blasphemer and persecutor of the church, yet he had obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and verily thought that in so doing he was doing God service, and had been put into the ministry, the glorious gospel of the blessed God being committed to his trust. (1 Tim. 1:11-13.) And now knowing that age was creeping on, and that perils surrounded him on every hand, and before writing the second letter, saying that he was about to be offered, he commits this charge to the faithful ones who must carry on the work after his departure.

The charge was to keep the blessed gospel untarnished and "without spot," to keep it in its glorious simplicity and purity, unmixed with human theories and [R1128 : page 5] false doctrines, which even then the enemies of the cross of Christ were laboring to introduce. The rising errors must be guarded against, first, by maintaining a clear conscience; and secondly, by faithful study of the word of God. To study the Word of God with a clear conscience is to study it with the single and only purpose of knowing and doing God's will. This, Paul says, some in his day did not do; they had theories and plans of their own, and endeavored to wrest the Scriptures to give their theories seeming support; and thus they made shipwreck of their own faith and turned others out of the way. As the end of the age should approach such false teachers he said were to multiply and gain great influence, and overthrow the faith of all who should not meekly and devoutly walk with God, trusting alone in his faithful word.

Next to guarding ourselves thus – and those who thus do so have the power of God pledged to keep them from falling – is the charge to help others to stand: to help them by *earnestly contending* for the faith; by pointing out the snares of the adversaries of the truth, and by

calling attention boldly and fearlessly to every pitfall and placing the light of truth over it.

To preach this "glorious gospel of the blessed God," to present it in its purity and grandeur, to contend against the errors which friends and enemies seek to engraft upon it, is the charge given to and the duty devolving upon the church in the present time – the charge which we must keep and labor to sustain *until the appearing* (manifestation, or bright-shining) *of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Before the brightness and glory of his presence the darkness of ignorance and error shall flee away, and no hiding place shall be found for them; for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, when his presence is fully revealed to all.

Till thus relieved of this duty of guarding the truth, the church must wait for her victory, must watch against the dangers of abounding and wide-spreading error, and the seducing temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, must pray for and use divine strength in enduring hardness as good soldiers unto the end, and must boldly and nobly contend for the faith delivered in charge to the saints. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Those not so doing will not be counted worthy to be gathered among Christ's jewels.

It should be borne in mind also that in the days of his presence, before his manifestation to the world, there is even greater necessity for watching and contending for the faith than at any previous time, – since his presence is discerned by the church only by faith in the foretold indications, and since the perils occasioned by numerous false doctrines and many antichrists are greatly increased; so much **[R1128 : page 6]** so, that only those who have on the whole armor of God are able to stand and to contend for the faith in the face of such subtle and crafty opposition. The charge is to stand well armed, and to contend for the faith *until his manifestation to the world*, in the close of the perilous times of this harvest.

How solemn the obligation: – "I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things" – the great Life-giver or Father of all, Jehovah. We are his representatives in the earth; the honor of his name is to be vindicated in the presence of his enemies and before many of his deceived children; his glorious plan is to be published broadcast in opposition to all the worldly-wise schemes which men are and have been trying to invent. And his eye is upon us, marking how faithfully or unfaithfully we as his ambassadors represent him.

Not only do we receive this charge in the sight of God, but also "before the anointed Jesus," our great example and forerunner, who also bore witness to the truth, sacrificing all things for the privilege of witnessing to it – even unto death.

All told, the church is but a little flock: they are generally also the humble poor of this world, who have little influence among men. Nevertheless their charge is an important one. They must "hold the fort" until the Lord himself shall in power and great glory establish the truth and exalt his church. He will complete what we in our present condition accomplish only in part: He will scatter all the mists and let in the broad sunlight of his truth, until none need say to his neighbor, "Know the Lord – for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest," as represented in his plan, work and office. Already the light of his presence begins to dawn. Already he begins to lift the veil of error and to restore, with increasing beauty and clearness, the truths he first inculcated and afterward left to his church in charge.

The substance of this sound faith left in charge at first was, "This is life eternal that they might know thee," Jehovah; – know his goodness, know his love, know his power and his justice; that *knowing* of God's character as revealed by Christ they might delight to accept his proffered aid through Christ, and returning to God be abundantly pardoned; and, continuing to grow in knowledge and love and devotedness to God, be accepted as co-workers and co-heirs with Christ Jesus, their Redeemer and Lord.

Our Lord's work at his second advent will be similar, the Apostle assures us: He will take up the same truth, which he first taught, the same that was given into the church's charge during his absence, and will **show** to all the world of mankind, the real character and plan of God the Father; – *i.e.*, he will cause all to **know** and appreciate the character and plan of Jehovah, the blessed and only potentate; King of all kings, and Lord of all lords; who alone possessed, originally and innately, immortality; who dwells in light unapproachable.

Courage, the, brethren! Our great Commander is even now upon the battle field. "Stand fast; quit you like men; be strong!" the fiercest part of the conflict is just before the shout of victory is heard; the darkest hour is just before the dawn of day. As triumphant conquerors, O faithful few, you shall soon wear the laurels of immortality and eternal glory.

The witnessing of the church through the long dark centuries of the Gospel age has not been in vain. The object of her mission was not to convert the world before the Lord's return, but to develop her own character and prove her worthiness of the high exaltation which she is called to share with her Lord, while bearing witness to the world of the facts of the glorious gospel, which shall be good tidings of great joy to all people, when in due time it is testified to all.

Then continue to preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season; – when it suits your convenience and when it does not. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and doctrine, and study to show yourselves workmen approved unto God, **rightly dividing** the word of truth. Thus, speaking the truth in love and growing up into Christ our living head, may we each be found in acceptable readiness to be gathered among the Lord's jewels. And to this end let us each see to it, that what faith we hold is held with a good conscience, – honestly held and honestly acted upon.

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