

alerted to moral departures from the standards of His Word. Probably no other day needed this warning any more or more strikingly than our own generation.

b. Issued.

The doctrinal and moral defection ended in a deliverance over to Satan. The text does not point out what this involves. Other passages, however, shed some light on the matter. Consider 1 Cor. 5:5 where there was actual death for the flesh that the spirit might be saved! The same apparently happened to Ananias and Sapphira. Whatever is involved at this point, it is a matter of punitive activity! Something had to be judged. Today, these matters are considered all too lightly!

c. Purposed.

The hue and cry today is that punishment must not be an end in itself. This is not new, for the Word declares that the punitive item is to come with purpose: "that they may learn not to blaspheme." God wanted them to learn not to speak lightly of holy things. They were not to slander God! God is no respecter of persons. He is no one to just pass off lightly!

Conclusion Some are moved away from the truth of God. Somewhere along the line the matter of spiritual alertness has fallen into abuse. Doctrine becomes a matter of insignificance. Morality is toned down. The results are disastrous! Timothy is an illustration of one who persevered. He was urged to do this. Is there evidence that perhaps Hymenaeus and Alexander did not have such help? It may be suggested by the "therefore" of the following verse (2:1). Maybe that's why Paul urges prayer to be made for a variety of people! It is a suggestion that we need to watch our concerns one for another to hold together the gains we have made in His will. Amen.

BOOK OF FIRST TIMOTHY

"Holding Faith"

1 Timothy 1:18-20

Introduction

1. What makes people stand over the long haul? Why is it that some just don't give up? Others seem to drop along the wayside--why? Can we give some kind of reply to these inquiries?
2. That there have always been failures. That there have always been people who did not maintain what was first accepted is a truism. But what is involved in these decisions has not always been known. The present text gives a clue in a general fashion to some of these thoughts. One thing is certain: if a person lives up to the truth of the Gospel which he has heard, his life will be dynamically changed.
3. Timothy kept going on. Two others, Hymenaeus and Alexander did not. They represent success and failure. What can be said about them? Why was the one a dynamic life and the other two examples of backsliding? Examine the text and see the two courses of action enjoined and followed. Mark out success and failure from what is recorded in the Word! Study these two divisions in human experience:-

1. SUCCESS

Here the young son of Paul in the faith is held up as an example. He is the illustration. What is involved here? Consider these important items:-

a. His position.

Timothy was under a charge committed to him. The verb "commit" is an important one. It really means to "place along side" as food on a table. It is used to "entrust" (Luke 12:48) and by Christ when dying (Luke 23:46). Here and in 2 Tim. 2:2 it is used like a banking figure. Something had been deposited in Timothy! The word "charge" identifies an instruction or

command given to him.

This "charge" is probably best taken as the "good warfare" outlined in v. 18c. Timothy is expected, under a military charge, to do battle, or serve as a soldier in an expedition or campaign. This is very exciting because it points up the strong involvement for him. Let none think that being a Christian is some easy-going arrangement. This is far from the truth. It is a warfare, a campaign, an expedition in battle! The big point is: Timothy apparently recognized this and was alert to his responsibilities in this matter! Thus, the point or thrust of the charge deposited with him was for battle!

b. His preparation.

Some take the fact of prophecies here as a reference to the "gift of prophecy" which was extant in the early church. It is as though there were prophetic utterances which pointed to Timothy as a suitable person for the ministry.

Others feel it is more in line with 4:14 (and we do too) that certain prophecies were given over Timothy at the time of his choice for the service of our Lord (Acts 16:2). Prayers were offered and these were considered as prophecies of his upcoming service unto the Lord. This was his vital preparation of heart and life--the investment of godly prayers and concern that he might really be a true servant of God. If only people can come to grips with the investment of prayers and hopes upon their lives! --what a change there would be in many!

c. His perpetuation.

There are two specifics mentioned which were areas for Timothy to persevere in! The first is "faith." Some may consider this to mean the "body of faith" which one accepts, but it is more pertinent to the context to consider

this as the "matter of faith." This is the construct in mind. Far too many don't realize what this means. For Timothy it meant that he did not operate except on the basis of the "faith principle." Some have called this the "faith-rest life." Human speculation has no room here!

The other area which is for perseverance is a "good conscience." This is an outgrowth of a "pure heart" (cf. v. 5). It is the experience of knowing that all is right with the Lord and with one's own soul! This is great for it is the sort of arrangement which those who don't fall back possess!

N.B. Take a good long look at what Timothy had here as a source for success and continuance in your own life. The big word today is "change." Inroads have been made in our spiritual dimensions. May God grant that we may not change any of the basics in our relationship with the LORD!

2. FAILURE

Two men are mentioned here: Hymanaeus and Alexander. One is almost frightened to think that the Bible might be indicating that for every one who goes on with the Lord, there are two who don't! Hymanaeus is probably the same man mentioned in 2 Tim. 2:17 while Alexander may be the same as the one referred to in 2 Tim. 4:14. Consider their situation:-

a. Stated.

The figure of speech used to show what these men had done is "make shipwreck." There is no question here, however, that these men were involved in doctrinal affection! The definite article is used before the word "faith." They had some serious problems with "the faith." When this comes about, you may be certain that there will also be moral shipwreck. The two find themselves compatible! This then is the place to remind ourselves of the need to watch ourselves in "the faith" and be