

are not acting under delusion, but deliberately and against their own consciences. The brand is not on their brow, but on their conscience and they stand self-condemned. The thought of this matter is that at one time a man might blush about a lie, but now with conscience seared, he does so without a flush in the face. Evil grows in a man's heart if unchecked!

- c. About marriage. Here is a species of asceticism. It is historically true that tendencies along this line developed earlier than this epistle among the Essenes. They repudiated marriage except as a necessity for preserving the race, and allowed it only under protest and strict regulations. Later Gnostics imposed this same prohibition.

A modern adumbration of a similar idea is well known. It has become an obsession to promote situations which would tone down the reverence and fulfillment found in marriage. Christians who hear the Word are alert to these seductive developments.

- d. About food. The verb "abstain" literally means to "hold ones self off" and therefore to reject foods. Meat alone is not conveyed by the original text, but all kinds of food as such. Regulations of this sort were early enjoined and are increasingly so in these modern times.

Conclusion In the light of these developments what does the Word of God say. Follow these injunctions as those who believe and know (have full knowledge of) the truth: 1. Accept God's creations as good. Realize that God's creative acts are purposeful (Gen. 1:31). The thought is that the Lord has made a generous provision for His own. 2. What God has provided is to be received with thanksgiving unto Him. There is to be participation in what God has provided. 3. Fill your thanksgivings with the Word of God. Prayer which is so constituted will set apart for God's holy uses what you participate in (Recall the use of prayer over food in 1 Sam. 9:13; Matt. 14:19; and Acts 27:35). To summarize, Paul warns, under the Spirit of prophecy, of dangers coming up. The true child of God will believe the Lord and know the truth fully.

THE BOOK OF FIRST TIMOTHY

"Impending Dangers"

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Introduction

1. Any news magazine or paper will list the latest impending dangers in our society. Undoubtedly in most the following would be listed: Russia, China, the Middle East, Communism, the Left, Student's rebellion, etc. Informed people are keeping a watch on these and other situations which might ultimately lead them into serious societal difficulty.

2. The believer on the Lord Jesus Christ rejoices in the marvelous confession of the early church hymn studied in 1 Timothy 3:16. Yet, he must not simply close his eyes to dominant issues which will arise! So it is that the Word of God proclaims a warning. The "now" of 4:1 is connective, but it is better rendered "but." In spite of the greatness of the mystery of godliness, there are impending dangers! The child of God must never relax his vigil.

3. What are those matters which may force themselves in upon the believer? They are given specific attention. Here they are:-

1. IDENTIFIED BY THE SPIRIT. v. 1.

The Spirit of God is operating in the apostle Paul in reference to prophecy. As He speaks, He does so "expressly." That word conjoined to the verb means that the Spirit enunciates in words clear and plain. They are words which just flow from HIM definitely.

Let it be remarked here with emphasis: the word which comes from the Spirit is all relevant and with purpose! Details which seem insignificant are, in fact, His Word, hence must be heeded (cf. John 6:4).

2. EXPRESSED AS TO TIME.

The phrase which is used here is the "latter times." It is only found here in the N.T. Strictly speaking, it does not say the same thing as "the last days" of 2 Tim. 3:1. What it does suggest is that in a time future to that of the writer, certain things will take place. The point is--there is no specific time indicated. But it does say generally that certain dangers will ultimately come into view! We believe they have come!

The child of God can rest in the Lord concerning the future (Prov. 3:5, 6). Or take that precious promise in Psalm 31:15. Our past is redeemed; our present is surrounded; our future is assured. Hallelujah!

3. PROPHECIED TO BE TROUBLE.

A variety of unseemly acts are stated by the Spirit to come. Each one is indicative a revelation by the Holy Spirit and is not to be tossed aside as irrelevant. Look carefully at the items presented:-

- a. About the faith. Some, says the apostle will depart from the faith. This is a reference to people and not teachers apparently as in 1:3. It includes all, but the reference is to the hearts led astray. This is a definition of apostacy. The verb used here and the noun form derived from it is just this (cf. Acts 21:21; 2 Thess. 2:3).

The fact stated here is that some will apostasize from the faith. It is a body of truth which is here indicated. Some will stand away from or fall away from this body of truth which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let no one think that we are not now living in such a day. It has been going on for a long time, but it will increase until the coming of our Lord for His own.

- b. About evil. Several details can be listed under this heading. Check them:-

- 1) Seducing spirits. The verb which precedes this is the word "giving heed to." This is exactly what will take place. Some will evidence their apostacy by giving or devoting themselves to such spirits.

The word "seducing" primarily means a wandering or roving spirit. These impious beings are expert in the art of seduction. They choose a victim at a time of intellectual doubt, or devastating sorrow, or spiritual failure. They insinuate a seed of what is false and which in time becomes the very ruin of the soul. We need eternal vigilance.

- 2) Doctrines of devils. This is better teachings of demons. It refers to matters which proceed or are inspired by demons. The specific form of false teaching involved is not indicated, but it is an effort to strike at the true teaching which underlies godliness. It is activity of this sort which makes alive a verse like Eph. 6:11, 12.
- 3) Speaking lies. It is not that demons actually speak, but they use men as their agents. It is the hypocrisy of these men that speak lies that such teachings are taught. Hypocrisy means to play the part. It is just this sort of thing which men do and they lie! Demonic influence perpetrates their situation.
- 4) Conscience seared. The metaphore here is from the practice of branding slaves or criminals, the latter on their brows. These deceivers are