THE BOOK OF SECOND TIMOTHY
"Hold Fast"
2 Tim. 1:13-18

Introduction
1. The Gospel is a central factor in the life of Paul (vv. 8-12). He has been commissioned by the Lord as a preacher, apostle, and teacher of it. Oh, how critical the good news of salvation was to him.
2. Because of this passion on his part, Paul was constrained to urge a similar fidelity to the Gospel for Timothy. It is in this connection that the present verses turn themselves. Two major items are rehearsed:

1. EXHORTATIONS TO FIDELITY vv. 13, 14.
   a. To hold. v. 13.
      The verb for "hold" is the ordinary one for "have." Being in the present active imperative, however, the force is very demanding. Paul gives Timothy no wide options! Details are provided:
      1) What? The answer is that "the form of sound words" to be held fast. The word "form" is literally an "undertype." It really means "example" (1 Tim. 1:16). It suggests that Paul's teaching is an outline, a model to which Timothy should conform. It is further elucidated as being "sound" and this word means "healthy." Now it may be argued that Paul is not speaking about doctrine, but surely he is! At least, you can't have a healthy "body" without the "bones" and these are doctrine! The prevailing flaccidity of belief would have been anathema to Paul. Strange that it should be so popular today. In fact, most actually ridicule doctrine as if it were a plaque. Paul argues just the opposite. Would to God more pulpits and churches were firm on the form!
      2) Why? Paul did not countenance anything but what he had instructed Timothy! The care and instruction he had provided Timothy was to be held (2 Tim. 2:2). This sort of pedagogy is entirely foreign to modern methods, but then, it is what one would expect in dealing with divine truth as opposed to human speculation!
      3) How? The thought here is that truth is not to
be held formally nor coldly, but fervently and with trust. Truth is to be held with the right spirit. Faith is certainly trust in Him Who is the Truth and that which is the truth, but all this with love. Mark, love flows from faith; not vice versa.

b. To guard. v. 14
Here is a verb which is imperative, but in the aorist tense. There is an urgency and decisiveness expressed.
This is all said in association with:-

1) Something. This has reference to what God has entrusted to Timothy. It is a reference to the truth and thus the Word of God. This is to be kept (guarded) as a deposit (v. 12) unchanged, unalloyed, and unextended. No fresh truth was allowed! What an argument against any post-apostolic additions. There is a personal commitment here: "unto thee."

2) Some One. Of course, the reference is to the Holy Spirit. There is no human effort which "guards" the truth, but the Holy Spirit. In Him is possibility for all things. The Holy Spirit dwells within, as the compound verb indicates (Rom. 8:9). A glorious example of the thought here is given elsewhere (Acts 4:13-31). Note, however, that Paul includes himself in this doctrinal notation by the use of "us."

2. ILLUSTRATIONS OF FIDELITY vv. 15-18.

a. Unfavourable. Paul appeals to Timothy's knowledge about the affairs in Asia, the province in which Ephesus is located and where Timothy labored. Paul had spent 3 years there, but some had turned away from him. The aorist verb does not connote a turn away from the faith, but from the person of Paul. So many had done this that it is described as "all they who are in Asia."
Two are specifically mentioned: Phygelus and Hermogenes. Nothing else is known of these two men.

b. Favourable. Onesiporus is listed as being the opposite of Phygelus and Hermogenes. He "refreshed" Paul. This means he revived him! Further, he was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment. Indeed, he sought him out and found him, two effective aorists. When all others were leaving Rome, this man came to find Paul. For all of this, Paul expresses a prayer for him. Probably, Onesiphorus was absent at that time. There is no thought of him being dead nor any suggestion of praying for the dead. He must have been a gracious and loving man to Paul (4:19).