

Titus Expository Commentary-J P Lilley

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

TITUS COMMENTARY

J P Lilley

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Review by D Edmond Hiebert - A scholarly, conservative work giving a comprehensive discussion of the Pastorals as a group as well as the individual epistles. A verse-by-verse exposition characterized by spiritual warmth and practical appeal.

THEME: THE ORDER AND LIFE OF A MISSIONARY CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION: Titus 1:1-4

As compared with that of the first letter to Timothy, the greeting of Paul to Titus is very elaborate. The apostle is evidently possessed by a deep sense of responsibility in writing to his young brother; and, brief though the communication may be, he wishes him to feel its weight. Hence, after indicating his own relation to God and Christ and the special object of his mission (Titus 1: 1), Paul refers also to the place which the Gospel occupies in the dispensations of God (Titus 1:2, 3), and then in the spirit of a father addressing a beloved son, greets Titus as identified with him in its service (Titus 1:4). Paul, a servant of God as well as an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's elect and the full knowledge of the truth that makes for piety, on hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before eternal times, but in its own seasons manifested His word in the message, wherewith I was entrusted, according to the commandment of God our Saviour: to Titus, true-born child after the common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

In most of his letters, Paul is content with speaking of himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ: when he introduces a reference to God, it is His "will" or "commandment" that he mentions as the ground of this calling. Here, along with this (Titus 1:3) he describes himself at the outset as "a servant of God" and attaches the apostleship thereto as an additional fact. The object doubtless is to lend impressiveness to what he indicates as the object of his apostolic calling, namely, the promotion of the faith of God's chosen and their full apprehension of the truth that is designed to cherish piety. In both of these clauses we have a preposition (kata) indicating not merely "conformity to" (as in A.V.) but direct purpose. It was the supreme aim of Paul's whole missionary activity to gather in all that God had given to His Son and to aid them in grasping the truth that would enable them to live in fellowship with Him.

Both the faith and the truth, however, rested on the hope of eternal life. Eager though he was to win every creature under heaven for Christ, Paul never failed to acknowledge that it was only "as many as were ordained to eternal life that believed" (Acts 13:48). It was the sovereign grace of God that brought souls to Christ; and the remembrance of their divine origin only made such disciples dearer to his heart. A chosen vessel himself (Acts 9:15), Paul was prepared to serve and suffer and die for the chosen of God (Col. 1:24; Phil. 2:17).

The eternal life on (Gr. epi) the hope of which faith rests is spoken of as promised before "times eternal." The terms of the statement show that the phrase is to be taken as describing the whole far-reaching past stages through which the hope of redemption had been gradually developed up to "the fulness of the times." The hope of eternal life fell first on earth as a spark of light from heaven. It was the perfect faithfulness of God alone that fanned it into a bright and steady flame. When the proper era arrived, God, who cannot deceive or disappoint men (Heb. 6:18), manifested the word which was the vehicle of this hope in the shape of a message or proclamation for all the world, and gave to Paul in particular the task of making it known to the nations outside Israel.

Like Timothy, Titus is greeted as a true-born child, perhaps because Paul was the chief instrument in his conversion; but he became such a child only by faith in Christ. Paul was a Jew: Titus was a Greek: yet the faith that knit them to Christ was the same in both and made them partakers of a common brotherhood.

The whole form of this salutation has been used to show that it could not have come from the pen of Paul. One has only to study its phrases in detail to see how vain the objection is. All the most characteristic ideas of Paul's teaching are here. Such an assemblage of them could never have been put together by any imitator into the same compass. Moreover, they are, as it were, the seed-plot out of which the rest of the letter springs. Paul himself was an official servant of the Church and therefore he will look to the choice of elders (Titus 1:5–9). He was sent to promote the faith of God's chosen and therefore he will expose the dangers of the times (Titus 1:10–16). He had to proclaim the truth that made for piety and he will point out how different classes are to behave (Titus 2:1–10). He was above all a herald of the Gospel, and he will set forth the leading elements of its teaching both doctrinal and ethical (Titus 2:11–3:11). He was an apostle of Christ as well as a friend of Titus, and therefore He will direct his movements to the end of his career (Titus 3:12–15).

I THE CHOICE OF ELDERS: Titus 1:5–10

A glance at this section is sufficient to show that it came from the same hand that wrote 1 Tim. 3:1–7. Any difference in the qualifications desiderated arises solely from the changed circumstances of the Church. The general coincidence makes any preliminary analysis unnecessary.

Titus 1:5.

The way in which Paul begins the formal part of his letter to Titus is due to the state of the Christian community in Crete. It had evidently been somewhat more recent in origin than that of Ephesus. It is not indeed necessary to suppose that the Cretan Church had been founded by the labours of Paul. There were inhabitants of the island at the feast of Pentecost, when the Apostolic Gospel was first preached at Jerusalem (Acts 2:11); and many of them may have been converted. These would carry the glad tidings to their friends throughout the country. Paul and Titus, however, doubtless extended the work and proceeded to organise the Churches, as far as was possible at the time. But being called away to another part of the fold, Paul could not accomplish everything in this department that had to be set in order, and therefore left Titus behind to see to the making of complete arrangements for the worship and service of the community. One principal item requiring attention was the ordination of elders. For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest arrange further the things that remained to be done and appoint elders in every city as I directed thee.

In Crete, therefore, Paul only followed the method he used everywhere else (Acts 14:23). The word here used for "appoint" (*kathistemi*) seems intended to mark the responsible part Titus took in the conduct of affairs. It does not imply that the people did not have their ordinary place in the election. Paul instructed Titus not only to have elders appointed, but also how it should be done. The fact that elders only are mentioned and not deacons is another sign that the communities in Crete were as yet in the initial stages of organisation. Very noticeable is the interchange of "elder" (Titus 1:5) and "overseer" (Titus 1:7) in the passage, as descriptive of the same office-bearers. It is a standing proof that the two words designated the same class. The statement of Jerome (fourth century) in his commentary on this chapter has become classical: "Presbyter therefore is the same with one who is bishop; and before that through the instigation of the devil ambitious strife entered into religion and the people began to say, 'I am of Paul' and 'I of Apollos' and 'I of Christ,' the Churches were governed by the common council of presbyters.... Let the bishops know that it is more from custom than from any true dispensation from the Lord that they are above the presbyters, and that they ought to rule the Church in common."

Titus 1:6, 7a.

Here Paul begins his statement of the moral qualities to be required of every one who was appointed as an elder. There is no mention at first of any special gifts or higher spiritual qualifications. The features of character are such as might well be required of all members of the Church. The apostle's primary object in the appointment of such elders was, as Hort suggests, "a necessary first step towards raising the standard of Christian life generally." At the outset, stress is laid on the necessity of blamelessness in domestic and social relations; and a strong reason is assigned for the demand. If any one is unblamed, the husband of one wife, having believing children who are not under charge of dissoluteness nor unruly: for it is necessary that the overseer be unblamed as God's steward.

These qualifications are practically the same as those already adverted to in connection with the corresponding passage in 1 Tim. 3:2–4. It is easy to see what a stumbling-block to success in his work an elder would find, if his own family life were not in harmony with the Gospel. His own children must believe, if he is to be helpful in winning others to the faith. Moreover, his whole life is to be judged from the standpoint of the special function he has undertaken and the close relation to God it implies. An elder is at once an

overseer of the life and progress of other disciples and a dispenser of the grace and truth of God in their behalf. As a steward is to represent his lord, so must an elder resemble God. For the sake of God whose he is and whom he serves, he must be without blame.

Titus 1:7b.

Five negative qualifications: Not self-willed, not prone to anger, not a roisterer, not a striker, not eager for base gain.

A list somewhat longer than that of 1 Timothy but in full harmony with it. "Self-will" denotes a spirit which takes no account of the feelings or judgment of others, but is bent on having its own way. It is therefore closely allied to pride and presumption, and might easily merge into rudeness or violence.

Titus 1:8.

Six positive moral qualifications, also found in 1 Timothy, though not in precisely the same order: but ready to be hospitable, loving to do good, of sound judgment, righteous, holy, temperate.

The word for "holy" here (*hosios*) was very commonly applied to the gods in ancient Greek, but is here loaded with the deeper meaning of "purity" in conduct as well as in character. "Temperate" (A.V.) is not merely "sober." It is the self-mastery which lies at the root of that well-poised state of heart and mind which is expressed in "sound judgment."

Titus 1:9.

The preceding moral qualifications of a general kind are followed by what is perhaps the only special characteristic required of elders: holding fast the word which is faithful according to the doctrine, that he may be able both to exhort in the healthful teaching and to convict the gainsayers.

In 1 Tim. 3:2, the elder is simply to be "skilful in teaching," probably because the whole function of teaching was well understood in Ephesus. In Crete, where it was not so widely practised, the apostle gives a fuller description. Two words for teaching, derived from the same root, are used. Practically they are synonymous, but from the regulative influence assigned to it, the former (*didachē*) seems to be here more definite than the latter (*didaskalia*). When the connection demands the idea, it may bear the sense of the special mould of Christian doctrine which had already begun to be associated with the Apostolic Gospel (cf. Rom. 6:17). The word spoken by the elders had to conform to the original type if it was to cherish faith in the hearers. In this way also they would be enabled to dispense teaching that, not being occupied with innutritious trifles, would promote the spiritual health of the hearers and lend itself readily to the conviction of opponents as guilty of sin and error (cf. John 16:8).

II THE DANGERS OF THE TIMES: Titus 1:10–16

The mention of gainsayers (Titus 1:9) leads Paul to advert more particularly to the kind of adversaries Titus had to encounter in Crete and to the way in which they should be dealt with (Titus 1:10, 11). The character they had was largely influenced by the debased condition of the people themselves (Titus 1:12, 13a). Hence Titus was to counteract his opponents by devoting himself to the correction of evil tendencies and erroneous ideas amongst the members of the Church (Titus 1:13b, 14). The section is closed with certain great maxims fitted to guide Titus in his teaching (Titus 1:15, 16).

Titus 1:10, 11.

A keen characterization of the gainsayers and the object of their activity. For there are many disorderly men, vain talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; inasmuch as they overturn whole households, teaching what they ought not for the sake of base gain.

Crete was a populous island, and Christianity seems to have already been established in it long enough to allow the growth of many heretics. It is taken for granted by many expositors (e.g. Ellicott) that these were members of the Christian Church. But there is grave room for doubt as to whether this was the case. It is difficult to conceive that any members of the Church would devote themselves deliberately to the practice of such mental obfuscation or deception as is spoken of here; and the difficulty is increased by the statement that the most persistent section of this class belonged to the circumcision. The probability rather is that these were men who kept alongside the work of the Church and exhibited some affinities with it, but never really identified themselves with its life and fellowship. This position enabled them to ply their insidious arts with greater effect. Apparently they professed to teach some hidden mysteries of the religious life, and accompanied their doctrines with the prescription of certain ritual observances to which they attached great moral and social value.

Such procedure had to be arrested at once. For, as the particular relative here used implies (*hoitines*, assigning a reason), they

were fast insinuating themselves into the families of the Church and perverting their faith, with no other object in view than selfish gain.

Titus 1:12, 13a.

It was a great calamity that such seducers should be at work in Crete. But after all they were only in harmony with the population amongst whom they found their prey. The character of the Cretans themselves afforded them a ready starting-point for their base work. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons." This testimony is true.

This terrible indictment is presented in the form of a hexameter verse. Paul's own observation enabled him to confirm its truth. Many ancient writers bear similar testimony. Jerome states that the line is taken from the writings of Epimenides, who was a native of Crete and flourished there as poet and seer towards the close of the sixth century B.C. Plato calls him "a divine man." A people amongst whom falsehood, violent temper and gross self-indulgence prevailed furnished the very kind of soil that was best fitted for vain talkers and religious tricksters.

Titus 1:13b, 14.

Ordinarily Paul was disposed to be very gentle with young converts to Christianity, and sought to attract rather than urge men into the ways of piety (cf. 1 Thess. 2:7). But when the occasion manifestly required it, he could use severity. Hence his counsel to Titus was not to spare reproof. For which cause, reprove them sharply that they may be healthy in faith, not giving heed to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

The "myths and commandments" in question have been already adverted to (cf. Titus 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:4, 4:7). The precepts given by such men were condemned by the fact that they themselves had no desire to promote the word of the truth of the Gospel. Their maxims were probably concerned with distinctions in food and ritual observances in daily life and worship that either never had divine sanction or were now abolished under the New Covenant. The aim of these deceivers in prescribing such commandments was simply to exalt their own authority, and puff men up with the sense of having by obedience to them attained a purity which made them superior to others. Such merely external religion was very different from the healthy development of the spiritual life which flows from the new birth of the soul through faith in Christ. A growing fondness for mere ritualism is a sure token of sickly sentimentality. Robust spiritual manhood cannot flourish in connection with it.

Titus 1:15.

The morbid views of purity which some in the Cretan Churches were tempted to adopt, led Paul to enunciate the verdict of Christianity on the use of the divine provision for human life on earth. All things are pure for the pure: but for the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure: but both their mind and conscience are defiled.

The opening statement of this verse has long had the rank of a great maxim in Christian ethics. Its real force, however, is very apt to be missed. There is, for example, no reference to the judgment or estimation of the pure, as the preposition "to" used in A.V. would imply. It is their use of the means and accompaniments of life that is in question. Moreover, the emphasis is not primarily on "the pure," but as in the Greek order on the "all things." The apostle intends to say that all things which God has provided for the maintenance and enjoyment of human life are in themselves pure and will minister nothing in the shape of moral impurity to those who use them, provided their own hearts have been purified through obeying the truth. But as used by those who in their own souls have become and continue corrupt and unbelieving, no part of the provision for human life and action can continue pure. The inward pollution of the carnal heart infects everything it appropriates, and so turns it into the means of gratifying its evil propensities, that the whole mental and moral nature, including even the conscience itself, becomes increasingly corrupt. If the very faculties that should themselves be the light of the soul become obscured, how great must the darkness be (cf. Matt. 6:13).

Titus 1:16.

A piercing glance into the depths of the depravity into which men may fall, if they give up practical allegiance to God and His truth: They confess that they know God, but by their works they deny Him, whilst they are abominable and disobedient and as regards every good work of no account.

The reference here is still to those that are defiled and unbelieving. There is nothing, however, to indicate that the apostle is speaking only of untaught heathen. He evidently assumes that these corrupt souls have been under the influence of the truth and have been so far awakened to its divine authority. But they were at no pains to let its power tell on the sanctification of their character and the guidance of their conduct. The result was that, while still acknowledging and claiming that they knew God, they yet practically renounced all obligation to obey Him. In truth, they only presented the sad spectacle of men who became in the sight of God a moral nuisance, ever falling away from loyalty to Him, and for any work that required stability and self-denial, worthless (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).

III THE SOCIAL LIFE OF CHRISTIANS AS GOVERNED BY THE GOSPEL: Titus 2:1–15

From the sad results of error, the apostle turns to the ethical obligations of the Gospel (Titus 2:1). He indicates to Titus how it affects the social life of the Church. The kind of Christian life expected of various classes is specified: for example, aged men (Titus 2:2), aged women (Titus 2:3), young women (Titus 2:4, 5), young men (Titus 2:6). In connection with this last class, the special responsibility resting on Titus as the evangelist of the native Churches is also clearly stated, alike as regards his conduct (Titus 2:7a), his manner of presenting truth (Titus 2:7b), and the substance of his teaching (Titus 2:8). The duties of household slaves are next set forth (Titus 2:9, 10); and since in this case as well as in the exhortation to Titus himself (Titus 2:1–8) pointed reference has been made to the Gospel as the starting-point and inspiration of all holy living, the apostle is led to give a grand outline of the evangelic teaching itself as it bears on the life of Christians in the world (Titus 2:11–14). A very pointed exhortation to Titus to maintain his ministerial authority closes this section of the letter.

Titus 2:1.

A direction to Titus concerning the way in which he was to guide the practical life of disciples. In contrast with the errorists alluded to (Titus 1:10), he is to set forth duties that spring naturally from the Gospel he has preached. But do thou speak what befits the healthful teaching.

Jewish myths and prescriptions of men generate at best only morbid sentiments about life and duty. As the vehicle of Christ's healing power over the soul of every one that believeth, the Gospel is not only healthful in itself, but bears healthfully on the conduct of men. It is the duty of preachers to exhibit this influence in detail with the utmost frankness.

Titus 2:2.

Elderly men are the first class in the Church which the apostle notices: That aged men be sober, grave, of sound judgment, healthy in faith, in love, in endurance.

Aged disciples are always spoken of in the Bible with great reverence. They may play a very important part in the life of the Church. But the extent of their influence will depend wholly on the sweetness, purity and mellowness of their Christian character. They are bound accordingly to exhibit the healing efficacy of the Gospel in respect of faith, love and endurance, as opposed to unbelief, self-seeking and disloyalty.

Titus 2:3.

Elderly women in like manner occupy an important place in Christian society and are to see to it that they fill it well: That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanour, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is seemly.

The compound adjective of the first clause (hiero-prepeis) is well rendered "reverent." The idea of the word is "what is becoming," not holiness in the abstract (A.V.), but "sacred things," places and services. They are to realise the priestly character of the Christian life as spent in God's presence and in His business. Hence their influence is not to be weakened by vicious propensities, like slanderous gossiping or wine-bibbing. They are by their example to teach all that is lovely and of good report.

Titus 2:4, 5.

The teaching by example enjoined on the aged women is further developed by an enunciation of the characteristics they are to foster in the young women under their care: In order that they may constrain the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children, of sound judgment, chaste, workers at home, kind, submitting themselves to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The verb of the first clause is not too strongly rendered "constrain." It implies that the younger women of the Church, and especially those that were married, needed drilling in the duties that fell to them as Christian disciples. They had to be trained to cultivate sanctified judgment and prudence in every relation they occupied, as daughters, wives and mothers. "Keepers at home" (A.V.) is now by the best reading, "workers at home." "Good" (A.V.) refers to "kindness" in manner and action towards others. The end the aged women were to aim at was the avoidance of any ground for thinking or speaking ill of the Gospel. It was the spoken word of God that originated the Christian society, and by onlookers it would be held responsible for every marked deviation from what was right and becoming in family life.

Titus 2:6.

After young women, the younger men came into view. The moral qualities desiderated in older men (Titus 2:2) are doubtless required of them also; but the apostle mentions only one, as if it practically included all the rest: The younger men likewise exhort to

be of sound judgment.

The meaning of the verb here used has been practically given in the explanations of the adjective (sōphrōn) from which it is derived (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8) and of the corresponding noun (1 Tim. 2:9). Youth is a time of great mental and moral fermentation. Its tendencies are in the direction of emotional excitement, impulse and enthusiasm. "Sound judgment" implies a state of mind generated and maintained by constant self-mastery.

As one who had to mourn the lack of it said at the end of his days, this last virtue is the beginning of all practical wisdom in life.

"Reader, attend, whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole
In low pursuit:
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root."
--BURNS, A Barn's Epitaph.

Titus 2:7, 8.

Titus was evidently still a comparatively young man, and therefore on the back of the exhortation which he was to give to others, Paul states the special obligations that rested on himself as the superintendent and evangelist of the Cretan Churches: In all things showing thyself an exemplar of noble deeds: in the teaching, showing uncorruptness, seemliness, healthful speech that cannot be condemned: in order that he who is of the opposing party may be put to shame, through having no vile thing to say of us.

There is a fourfold reference here: to Titus' personal conduct as a Christian; to the spirit of his teaching; to its substance; and to the aim he should cherish in his whole life and ministry. In his conduct and in every relation he occupied, Titus was to exhibit a pattern of honourable works that others might safely and eagerly imitate. The spirit and manner of his teaching were to be marked on the one hand by the absence of corruptness which in the diction of Paul is identified chiefly with deceitfulness and self-seeking (2 Cor. 4:2), and on the other by the presence of seemliness, or a due sense of the solemnity of his position as a teacher and of the truths he announced. As regards the contents of his teaching, it is to be, as ever before, "healthful," that is, avoiding recondite trifles or ceremonial precepts about which men are so ready to become crazed, and pregnant with the healing grace of the Gospel. His supreme object in this circumspect fulfilment of duty was to stop the mouth of gainsayers and to prevent their casting reproach on the message of Christianity.

Titus 2:9, 10.

The last class mentioned is the household slaves. In Paul's day, these formed a very numerous and important section in every Christian Church. It was a characteristic of the Gospel that it was preached to the poor and the down-trodden. The apostle would have glory accruing to God from the conduct even of those that in the eye of the world might be the least esteemed. Bondservants exhort to be in subjection to their own masters, to be well-pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying, not purloining, but exhibiting all good fidelity, that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in all things.

The opening verb is supplied from Titus 2:7. The features of character and conduct to be found in slaves are precisely adapted to the relation in which they stand and the temptations to which they are exposed. Their first duty is obedience, but they were to render this in a way fitted to win the respect and sympathy of their masters. Rebellion against the will of superiors, theft and unfaithfulness were vices very common amongst this class. Such sins were to be shunned and the opposite virtues cultivated, that, even in the lowest grades of social life, the Gospel might be found adorned with all the richest jewels of divine grace, in the sight of God and men.

Titus 2:11.

The connection and aim of Titus 2:11–14 have been briefly indicated in the introduction to this section. Paul's heart is filled with the thought of the healing teaching; and, having mentioned it once and again in the course of these precepts, he breaks out in this very comprehensive statement of its leading elements. Its entrance into history (Titus 2:11), its direct influence on human life and character (Titus 2:12), the hope it inspires of a blessed future (Titus 2:13) and the sanctifying energy with which it is still charged (Titus 2:14), are outlined with a master hand. The present verse shows the connection betwixt obedience and the Gospel to be that of fruit with root. For the grace of God was manifested, laden with salvation for all men.

The position of the words "for all men" in the Greek, shows that they are to be taken with "salvation"; and the adjective (sōterios) is best rendered, not by a present participle as in A.V., but by a past, in order that, as is evidently intended, the emphasis may fall on the initial participle of the next verse. Looking to the verb employed (epephanē), many expositors have referred the statement solely

to the epiphany or incarnation of Christ. But in view of the pædagogic function ascribed to the divine grace and especially to the universal offer of salvation associated with it, it seems more natural to refer its manifestation to the founding of the Church at Pentecost and the subsequent ministry of the apostles. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; but it was only in the Apostolic Gospel that the grace of God was fully manifested as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth and a new transforming force in the life of men.

Titus 2:12.

The spiritual discipline introduced by the Gospel: Training us, in order that, having renounced impiety and worldly lusts, we should live prudently and righteously and piously in the present age.

The Gospel is thus seen to be not a mere offer of escape from punishment but a means of changing the whole character and conduct into harmony with the will of God. Grace reigns through righteousness unto life. It places its subjects under divine law written in the inward parts, and follows up its beneficent action with all the discipline needed to subdue and guide the carnal heart. "As a man admonisheth his son, so the Lord thy God admonisheth thee" (Deut. 8:5). This is the distinctive feature of the Gospel. "All other religions tell tales about gods and goddesses and demand certain ceremonies. Christianity flies at the throat of sin: she throws her whole force into the endeavour to make men good instead of evil" (Buxton). Impiety is forgetfulness of God in worship and service. This is always accompanied by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life: the passions characteristic of the world (kosmos) or society moulded after the tastes of the natural man. Every Christian at his baptism pledged himself to renounce these and to live prudently towards himself, righteously towards others and piously towards God, remembering always that the time of the present age has been shortened (1 Cor. 7:31).

Titus 2:13.

The hope which the Gospel inspires. The Christian life will always be encompassed by difficulty and trial, but it has a happy consummation in view: Looking for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

On this grand issue, the children of God are to have their heart and hope continually set. It was to be realised at the second coming or appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. But was it His glory or that of the Father also that was to be thus manifested? Not a few expositors, ancient as well as modern, take the whole description of God here given as referring to Christ alone. It must be admitted that there is nothing in the construction decisive against this view. If it be adopted, there is here a very direct assertion of the divinity of Christ. The chief argument for it is that the idea of manifestation or epiphany is specially appropriate to the Son and not to the Father. On the other hand, it is extremely doubtful if such a combination of epithets as applied to Christ accords well with the usage of Paul. He does not hesitate to call God "our Saviour": but he here seems to separate "God" from "the Saviour" by the epithet "great," the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Most High," which as used of Christ would be needless. Moreover, "the manifestation of the glory" does not stand alone. It is preceded by "the blessed hope," which is here regarded as having its spiritual root in the heart. This duality in the objects of expectation suggests, if indeed it does not actually require, a corresponding duality in its divine source. The great God inspires the blessed hope, because He is the God of hope (Rom. 15:13) and is pledged to bring back His Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10, 4:14); it is "our Saviour," Jesus Christ, who is to be manifested (Col. 3:4). The Father and the Son have thus both an appropriate place in the furtherance of the glory that is to be revealed.

It ought to be added that, as Calvin (in loc.) has well pointed out, this view does not one whit lessen the attestation of the Godhood of Christ. No one could be so closely associated with "the great God" in the final accomplishment of this eternal purpose, who was not Himself divine.

Titus 2:14.

The present aim of the Gospel as expressed in the saving work of its Author. Christianity began with a supreme act of self-surrender to the will of God, and is not to be satisfied with anything short of a spiritual reproduction of it in the life of its adherents: Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for Himself a treasured people, zealous of noble deeds.

The reference is to the death of Christ. Surrender to God governed all His life, but it was consummated in the sacrifice for sin offered on Calvary (Ps. 40:7; John 10:17, 18). The purpose of the Cross is frequently connected with the forgiveness of sin: here as often elsewhere (cf. Gal. 1:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) with deliverance from its power. The ransom paid in the blood of the Lamb of God not only cancelled sin's guilt but made provision for emancipation from its dominion. This freedom is now ministered by the exalted Saviour through the Holy Spirit. He redeems His disciples from all lawlessness and purifies them for a closer fellowship with Himself (cf. Eph. 5:25–27). In doing this, He designs not only to form them into a society or people, but also to make them a source of abiding delight to His own heart and of beneficence to the world. In short, they were to realise in its highest spiritual form the grand ideal set before Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:5, 6).

It is doubtful if the word "peculiar" (A.V.), in spite of its well-known derivation from Lat. *peculium* (the share of booty allotted to the

captain), is quite appropriate. "Treasured" seems preferable, because it expresses the sense of value prominent in the Hebrew synonym (segullah, Ex. 19:5), and at the same time suggests the idea of continued preservation which underlies the original Greek word (periousios, from perieimi, to outlive). Christ was to purify for Himself an abiding people: one that, unlike Israel of old, would survive all the changes and conflicts of history and live in undying communion with Himself. "Zealous of noble works" recalls the burning enthusiasm for creed and practice that possessed the zealots of the Jewish Church. The Lord intends His people to be fired with a corresponding passion for deeds of love and mercy.

Titus 2:15.

The section closes with an expansion of the injunction with which it opened (Titus 2:1): These things speak: and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one despise thee.

Titus was to preach doctrine and duty together, exhorting the willing and rebuking the disobedient. This threefold task falls to the hand of every minister, especially of those that have the oversight of newly formed Christian communities. Since reproof is by no means welcome to men, it has to be backed up by requisite assertion of ministerial authority and the maintenance of ministerial dignity.

IV THE CIVIL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OF CHRISTIANS AS GOVERNED BY THE GOSPEL: Titus 3:1-8

The way in which Christianity affects the social life of the Church is followed by a statement of the duties that fall to its members in their relations as citizens. These are presented first in a positive (Titus 3:1) and then in a negative form (Titus 3:2). The necessity of exhibiting the spirit of universal benevolence which underlies these precepts is enforced by a reminder of the sad moral condition in which all who become Christians were themselves more or less involved (Titus 3:3), and of their absolute indebtedness to the sovereign grace of God for the spiritual change they have experienced (Titus 3:4-7). In stating this last point, the apostle gives a second grand outline of the evangelic teaching he had been wont to dispense. It differs from the former chiefly in the way in which it represents the Gospel as affecting the life of men. In the previous outline Paul emphasised the direct moral discipline which the Gospel of Christ exercised on the human heart. Here he rather points out the saving changes made on the life of Christians by the divine mercy as a preparation for a closer fellowship with God and a higher influence on the world. In both alike, the end aimed at is a new spirit of obedience showing itself not in word only but in honourable deeds (Titus 3:8).

Titus 3:1.

The obligations befitting the healthful teaching which Titus is to set forth (Titus 2:1) are not confined to the life of the Christian community. From the first the Lord Jesus recognised the existence of political authority, and taught His disciples to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's as well as to God the things that are God's (Matt. 22:21). So far was He from denying the validity of civil government that He admitted its essentially beneficent purpose and character (Luke 22:25). Paul charges Titus to maintain the same attitude: Put them in mind to submit themselves to governments, to authorities, to be obedient to superiors, to be ready for every good work.

It is quite possible that there is some reference here to the spirit of sedition which manifested itself in various parts of the Roman Empire. It was always at work amongst the Jews: it may have infected the Cretans also. In opposition to it, the Christians were to render due respect to civil officials of every grade. Nay more: they were to be animated by a benevolent public spirit and hold themselves in readiness to take part in any movement likely to ameliorate the condition of their fellow-countrymen. A most needful injunction for every age.

Titus 3:2.

While performing these positive duties, Christians were to avoid the corresponding sins and snares: To revile no man, to be averse from contention, to be forbearing, displaying all meekness toward all men.

Most of these features have been already noticed as moral qualifications for holding office in the Church (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3). The mention of them here shows that all the members of the Church were to join in exhibiting Christlike dispositions and conduct towards others, however much they might differ from them in religious convictions and practice. "Meekness towards all men" expresses willingness to bear all the rebuffs or disabilities to which fidelity to Christ might expose them. Jesus taught men no more precious lesson than "the efficiency of the passive virtues" (Bushnell).

Titus 3:3.

The benevolent spirit required of Christians is to be inspired and maintained by the remembrance of the moral depths to which human nature sank before it was taken in hand by the saving power of God: For we also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, going

astray, serving lusts and pleasures of divers sorts, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

That is to say, Christians may well show meekness and kindness, for in their unconverted state they stood in need of these very dispositions and have had them manifested by God Himself. The description is purposely general. It does not necessarily imply that every unsaved soul is marked by all of these features to the same extent. It is rather a picture of what human nature left to itself will always more or less manifestly become. Sin blunts the mind (foolish), perverts the heart and will (disobedient, going astray), stimulates carnal desires (lusts, pleasures) and encourages the growth of all forms of selfish feeling (malice, envy, hate).

Titus 3:4.

Here the apostle begins his outline of the evangelic salvation on which rest the moral obligations he has urged. In the present verse, he indicates the historical starting-point of the great change they had experienced. It began with the proclamation of the Gospel of the grace of God: But when the kindness and philanthropy of God our Saviour were manifested.

As before (Titus 2:11), there is no specific reference to the Incarnation. The word rendered “appeared” in A.V. is in its passive form, “were made fully known.” The period of time the apostle has in view is that of the universal preaching of the Gospel of Christ. It was then and then only that the benignity of God as a Saviour and His love towards man were announced to the world. It is now full time that the great word “philanthropy” were embodied in the text and so restored to its rights as a recognised Biblical term for the love of God. The adoption of it will only show that there is no human philanthropy worthy of the name which is not rooted in the divine. The two words here used are not mere synonyms. “Kindness” catches up the idea of “meekness” in Titus 3:2: “philanthropy” develops that which underlies “all men.”

Titus 3:5a.

The divine origin of the evangelic salvation. Man had no part in procuring it: Not of works in the way of righteousness which we did, but according to His mercy He saved us.

“We” in the first clause is expressed in the original and is to be emphasised. Men attempt many works with a view to secure a safe standing before God. But they are vitiated by inward corruption, are accompanied by ceaseless actual transgression, and can therefore neither blot out the sins of the past nor provide for the future. It is by God’s work of righteousness in the life and death of His Son that men are saved; and this was carried out “according to His mercy”: that is, as divine mercy dictated and by the method it alone had the right to choose and pursue. Hence salvation is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy (Rom. 9:16). As coming thus directly from God, salvation is presented in its ideal completeness. God saved us, alike for past, present and future.

Titus 3:5b, 6.

The agencies and nature of salvation as conferred by God: Through the laver of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

It is inadmissible to take the word “laver” in any but its literal signification. It is the vessel of water used in baptism, and is here taken by a common figure of speech for the initial sacrament itself. The fact that it is called the laver of regeneration, however, by no means implies that of itself or as a mere observance, baptism is the instrument by which this change is conferred. As everywhere else in the apostolic writings, baptism is regarded as nothing but the expression and accompaniment of faith. It is faith in Christ alone that brings the soul to the new birth (Gal. 3:26). But writing of the Christian experience of himself and others, Paul felt entitled to assume that baptism had in their case been the occasion at which their faith in Christ had been openly confessed before men and confirmed by inward consciousness of the new life in their own hearts; and therefore by a very natural turn of language, he attaches regeneration to baptism.

Regeneration or the new birth is the quickening of the soul by the Spirit of God through the implantation of the life of Christ, whereby it passes from the realm of fallen nature into the kingdom of God and lives as a new creation under the dominion of His saving grace. But the renewal thus begun has to be carried out and maintained by the continuous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This work is not directly expressed in baptism, and therefore “the renewing” in this verse is not to be construed as dependent on “laver,” but rather as co-ordinate with it. Initiated by faith expressed in baptism, the new life is thereafter developed by the Holy Spirit constantly imparted to us. The apostle says that as individual Christians they had the Spirit poured out upon them richly through Jesus Christ: that is, God the Father had through the mediation of His glorified Son, given them a rich experience of the blessing originally vouchsafed at Pentecost: He had filled them with the Holy Ghost. It is only as Christians are ever and anon filled with the Spirit that the work of renewal in the spirit of their mind can go on apace (Rom. 12:2). It is only as men are thus inwardly renewed that they can be really and consciously saved (Acts 2:47).

Titus 3:7.

The new and higher standing in the sight of God which the evangelic salvation also confers: In order that, “being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The sovereign grace of God manifests itself not only in imparting a new inner life to men, but also in rectifying their whole relation to God as it has become disordered by sin. By his apostasy from the Creator, man was at once placed under a sentence of condemnation, cast out of direct fellowship with God and bereft of all the priority that fell to him as His representative on earth. The salvation which provides inward quickening and renewal also restores man to a safe and honourable standing before God. In union with Christ at God’s right hand, the believer is enabled by the Spirit first to discern and appropriate the position in the divine favour which He as the Saviour has for us; and then to receive back again in a higher form the inheritance he lost. It is these two changes in man’s relations that are set forth here.

To be justified by the grace of God therefore includes forgiveness, acquittal and welcome into God’s gracious presence and favour. Yet this new relationship is bestowed only with a view to a higher. Justification, precious as it is, is but the preliminary of coronation. The child of God being introduced to the Father and accepted by Him, becomes an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17). The standard or rule by which this heirship is measured is the hope of eternal life—of the very eternal life that Christ Himself now has and is in heaven for us (Heb. 7:16; 1 John 5:20). Potentially it is in every saved soul now: in its fulness it will be bestowed, when Christ comes again. Justification thus corresponds to “our works in the way of righteousness” and blots them out: coronation magnifies anew “the divine mercy” (Titus 3:5).

Titus 3:8.

A reference to the preceding outline of the healthful teaching in Titus 3:4–7: expressing first its great importance in the view of the apostle and also the necessity of urging it upon believers. Regeneration, renewal, justification and coronation must all of them converge in holy surrender to God’s will and honourable service in His kingdom: Faithful is the saying: and concerning these things I desire thee to make affirmation boldly, in order that those who have believed God may take thought to practise honourable deeds. These things are honourable and profitable to men.

The reference of the introductory phrase is beyond doubt retrospective. It is possible that the clause of purpose immediately preceding may be most directly in view; yet the whole statement is virtually included. Titus is called upon to accept the apostle’s outline of evangelic truth as worthy of all confidence. But it has to be not only proclaimed but applied in the whole sweep of the spiritual obligations it involves. Man was created at first for obedience and service. This divine purpose cannot be abandoned. If by the grace of God the effects of sin on his nature and relations have been overcome, man is thereby only all the more bound to resume his original destination and, by all the richer resources placed at his disposal, fulfil his “chief end.” In view of the temptation to accept the blessings of grace without surrendering the will and life to its dominion, Titus is charged to make strenuous asseveration of the responsibilities of believers in this matter: while they in turn have to make their duty a subject of prayerful meditation (phrontizo, from phrontis, thought). To believe God and yet to attempt ignoring or thwarting His holy design in salvation is intolerable. If such faithful practical applications of the truth seem to involve irksome labour, the teacher is to be encouraged by remembering that they are honourable in intent and profitable in result.

CONCLUSION: Titus 3:9–15

In concluding his first letter to Timothy, Paul reverted to its leading theme, namely, the preservation of the evangelic teaching and therewith the avoidance of profane and vain babblings. In like manner, in drawing the letter to Titus to a close, he touches once more on what he had dealt with as a prominent danger of the times (Titus 1:10–14). Titus was to shun all the controversial questions which not a few, especially amongst the Jewish neighbours of the Church, were eager to raise (Titus 3:9). He was also to exercise disciplinary supervision of any one that endangered the peace of the community (Titus 3:10, 11). After giving directions to Titus to meet him speedily (Titus 3:12), to help Zenas and Apollos in their journey (Titus 3:13), and to stimulate the brotherly sympathies of the people also in such preparations (Titus 3:14), Paul ends the letter with an affectionate salutation (Titus 3:15).

Titus 3:9.

A reiterated warning to eschew the kind of frivolous investigations and debates that had been already condemned (Titus 2:14): But foolish questions and genealogies and strifes and disputes about the law, stand aloof from: for they are unprofitable and vain.

Incidentally this reference is of great value in vindicating the historic reality and unity of the apostle’s teaching. It is not only consistent with the earlier part of this letter, but harmonises with the whole strain of the statements in 1 Tim. 1:4–7. Such questions were unprofitable and vain, because they neither enlightened the mind nor quickened the conscience nor guided the will.

Titus 3:10, 11. Since the prevalence of a controversial spirit might affect the loyalty of members of the Church, the apostle tells Titus how he is to deal with individuals who attempted to break up unanimity of thought and action amongst them. The Pentecostal

community was of one mind: the disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship; and Paul was earnestly desirous that the same feature should characterise the Church of every age. Those who were self-willed enough to run the risk of forming divisions had to be treated as transgressors: A man that is factious after a first and second admonition refuse: knowing that such a one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned.

It is thus evident that the word here used (*hairetikos*) had not yet become laden with the significance it came to bear in later ecclesiastical history. But it is not difficult to see how the one meaning might easily be merged in the other. A man who would elevate minor points into matters of belief is mentally and spiritually akin to another who would cause divisions on fundamental articles of doctrine. Titus was to admonish the factious member once and again; and, failing to recover him, he was then to cease Christian fellowship with him. Refusal to hear an apostolic evangelist implied spiritual perversion, persistent sin and practical self-condemnation.

Titus 3:12.

Having finished his more formal instructions, Paul now directs Titus to look forward to joining him at an assigned spot: Whenever I shall send Artemas unto thee or Tychicus, give diligence to come to me to Nicopolis: for there I have decided to pass the winter.

These two brethren were evidently available for supplying the place of Titus in Crete, when he rejoined Paul. The apostle was not certain when either of them would be despatched: hence the conjunction, "whenever" (Greek *hotan*, not *hote*). Of Artemas we know nothing. Tychicus is mentioned several times elsewhere. He was a native of the province of Asia, perhaps of the city of Ephesus (Acts 20:4). He accompanied Paul on his return from his third journey and was with him at the time when he wrote to Titus. He had already shown himself "a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord" (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). He was yet further to prove his fidelity to the apostle in the course of his second imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:15, 4:12). The Nicopolis here spoken of is most probably the city in Epirus which bore that name. It was a centre of active commerce and favourably situated for missionary tours.

Titus 3:13.

While caring for his own work, Paul is not neglectful of the progress and comfort of others: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos send forward diligently, in order that nothing may be lacking to them.

Of Zenas (or Zenodorus) nothing is known. He had probably been an expert in Jewish law and still had the designation applied to him by his Christian friends. Apollos (or Apollodorus) is the eloquent preacher and theologian referred to in the book of the Acts (Acts 18:26) and the first letter to Corinth (1 Cor 3:4–6, 16:12). This reference shows that there was no real opposition betwixt his teaching and that of the apostle.

Titus 3:14.

While Titus was naturally to take the lead in seeing that the servants of the Church were suitably equipped for their journey, the ordinary members too were to keep such duties in view: But let our brethren also learn to practise honourable deeds for necessary wants, in order that they be not unfruitful.

Christian activity is to have definite aims. Work that does not meet indispensable needs is apt to evaporate in mere bustle. The fruit God requires is to be tangible and visible.

Titus 3:15.

The farewell greeting: All that are with me salute thee. Salute those that love us in faith. Grace be with you all.

Paul never lacked companions in work. His desire was to unite all disciples in the faith that worked by love and was nourished on the grace of God.