

his farewell address, which we study to-day. He reminds them of his three years' (v. 31) ministry among them (vs. 17-21), and refers to the future with its many uncertainties, but is unmoved in his purpose of preaching the gospel of Christ, vs. 22-24. He does not expect to meet them again on earth, but leaves them with the consciousness that he has been to them a faithful and true pastor, vs. 25-27.

I. A Solemn Charge, 28-31.

V. 28. *Take heed unto yourselves.* They needed salvation as well as others. If they neglected their own spiritual welfare they would not be diligent in seeking that of "the flock." *To all the flock*; a figure used frequently in the Old Testament (Isa. 40: 11), and also elsewhere in the New by Christ (Luke 12: 32; John 21: 15-17) and by Peter (1 Pet. 5: 2) to denote believers. *In the which* (Rev. Ver.). They were a part of the flock as well as having authority over it. *The Holy Ghost*; either directly (ch. 13: 2), or through appointment by the church, ch. 6: 5. *Overseers*. From the Greek word comes our word "bishop," and it is so translated in the Rev. Ver. The same persons, however, are spoken of in v. 17 as presbyters or elders; so that in the apostolic church a presbyter or elder was the same as a bishop. *To feed*; to care for, protect and guide them in spiritual matters with the diligence and tenderness of a shepherd for his sheep. *The church of God*. Believers are peculiarly God's people (Tit. 2: 14), for He has redeemed them (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19) and has made them members of the church under Jesus Christ its great Head, Col. 1: 18. *Purchased with his own blood*. Therefore Christians are very precious to God, and should be carefully and tenderly guarded by their overseers. Note that Jesus Christ is here directly called God.

V. 29. *I know*. He had learned this by observation and experience. *Grievous wolves*; false teachers, particularly those who sought to take Christians back to the rites of the Old Testament. They were known as Judaizers. *Enter in*; by becoming members of the church. *Not sparing*; but by their false teaching making unhappy divisions in the church, thus rending the flock like wolves.

Vs. 30, 31. *Of your own selves*. Danger would arise also from ambitious persons among themselves. *Speaking perverse things*; twisting and perverting the truth to suit their own purposes. *To draw away*; from the truth taught by Paul (Gal. 1: 11, 12) into error, thus breaking the church up into sects, 1 Tim. 1: 20; 2 Tim. 2: 17, 18. *Therefore watch*; with that unsleeping alertness which can never be taken by surprise, 1 Pet. 5: 8. *And remember*; Paul's life among them was to be their example and inspiration. *I ceased not*. Paul with constant watchfulness had looked after their spiritual welfare. *With tears*; showing how deep was his interest in their salvation.

II. A Noble Example, 32-35.

V. 32. *I commend you to God*; for safe-keeping from the errors and temptations of life. *The word of his grace*; the gracious promises of the gospel, such as those found in John 17: 7-12. *Which is able*. This must refer to "God" and not to "the word of His grace." It is God who can build up His people, and give them a heavenly inheritance. *To build you up*. Christians are likened to the costly and beautiful temples familiar to the Ephesians. (See Eph. 2: 20.) This is a frequent figure of Paul's to denote spiritual growth. *To give you an inheritance*. As each Israelite received a definite portion of ground in the promised land, so there is provided for every Christian his share in the spiritual blessings of the heavenly Canaan, 1 Pet. 1: 4.

Vs. 33-35. *I have coveted, etc.* Paul, in contrast to the example of the false teachers (1 Tim. 6: 5, 6; Rom. 16: 17, 18), did not seek their money, but themselves, nor did he envy those among them who were richer than himself. *Apparel*. The wealth of Eastern lands consisted partly in costly garments and ornaments, Luke 16: 19. *Ye yourselves know*. It was common knowledge that Paul supported himself and those with him (1 Cor. 4: 12) by working at his trade, ch. 18: 3. He had a right to his support, but he refused it in the Gentile churches, lest they should misunderstand his motives, 1 Cor. 9: 11-15. *These hands*; "holding them out, that all might see the marks of toil." (Lindsay.) *In all things I gave you an ex-*