

A. D. 66.]

## LESSON VIII. THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

[May 24.]

1 Tim. 1. 15-20; 2. 1-6. [Commit to memory verses 15-17.]



15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Tim-o-thy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some

having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hy-me-ne-us and Al-ex-an-der; whom I have delivered unto Sa-tan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Je-sus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

## General Statement.

The book of Acts closes abruptly, leaving the apostle Paul a prisoner in Rome, and this is the last positive statement concerning his life. But from Philippians (1. 23-27; 2. 24) it is evident that after this he looked for a release, and to Philomen, who lived at Colosse, in Asia Minor, he wrote to prepare a lodging in anticipation of his coming. Philomen 22. We find also two epistles, which were evidently written late in the apostle's life, yet when he must have been at liberty. Add to these facts the early tradition of the Church that after a trial Paul was released, and we have ground for the conclusion that about the year 63 or 64 A. D., Paul's fetters were removed, and after five years of imprisonment he went forth free. We find him in the island of Crete, in Macedonia, doubtless among his beloved Phi-

lippians; at Troas and at Miletus, revisiting the scenes of his earlier ministry, and enjoying once more the meeting with beloved friends. How long this freedom was permitted to the apostle we know not, but it may have been from one to four years. Near its close he wrote this First Epistle to Timothy, whom he had left in charge of the Church at Ephesus. In it gives a summary statement of great Gospel truths; counsels to Timothy in the management of the Church; warnings against the influence of corrupt teachers who were arising in the Church, and admonitions against co-suetude, a prevalent sin in the commercial cities of the Mediterranean world.

## Explanatory and Practical Notes.

**Verse 15. This is a faithful saying.** An expression found only in Paul's later epistles, and introducing some weighty utterance. The word *faithful* here means "that which should be believed." **Acceptation.** Acceptance into the mind and the heart. **That Christ Jesus.** Christ was his name as promised; *Jesus* his name as manifested. — **Bengel.** Came into the world. Then he was existing before he entered into our world; the Son of God before he became the Son of man. **To save sinners.** It was our need and our sin which brought the Son of God to earth; and the deeper our need the greater his willingness to save us. **Of whom I am chief.** Literally, "first." This is the feeling of every man who looks honestly and deeply into his own heart. He feels himself to be the greatest sinner, because he knows himself most intimately. (1) *In this verse can be summed up the whole New Testament.*

**16. Howbeit.** The previous verse has revealed our need, this verse sets forth God's grace. **For this cause I obtained mercy.** To every converted sinner the wonder is that he could be saved. Paul seems to feel that God's grace to himself must have an especial motive. **That in me first.** The word translated "chief" above is here rendered "first." The Rev. Ver. has "chief" in both. The meaning is that as Saul had been foremost among men in sin, so Paul was the foremost or loftiest instance of God's grace; that if he could be saved any sinner might be. **All long-suffering.** The long-suffering of Christ was shown in not cutting down Saul in his hate and persecution of the Gospel; in giving him time for repentance, and influences toward repentance. (2) *Is not such God's gentleness toward every sinner who is spared awhile?* (3) *How many misuses God's long-suffering into opportunity for increased wickedness!* See Eccl. 8. 11. **For a pattern.** That is, the mercy which Paul had found was an example to encourage other sinners to seek salvation. **To life everlasting.** The Rev. Ver. changes this to "eternal life," as more than mere duration is implied in the term, which means an everlasting life at God's right hand.

**17. Now.** Paul sounds forth this song of rapture over his own salvation, to him the most wonderful fact in the annals of the race. **The king eternal.** Literally, "king of the ages," for as there is a glorious life through endless ages, so that life has its Lord and Ruler Immortal. Literally, as in Rev. Ver., "incorruptible." The one Being who in his nature is unchanging, whom

time cannot touch, whose powers never decay. **Invisible.** The kings of earth are but men, representing the eternal, visible empire; but this monarch dwells in the unseen and rules over the hearts of his subjects. **The only wise God.** The Rev. Ver. omits "wise," making this "the only God." **He honor and glory.** (4) *The highest glory of God is for his salvation of sinners.* **For ever and ever.** Literally, "unto the ages of the ages;" an expression denoting limitless duration. **Amen.** The Hebrew word used to express the full, solemn assent of the heart to the sentiment expressed.

**18. This charge.** The great truths of the Gospel enunciated in the preceding verses are here regarded as a trust placed in Timothy's care. In behalf of which he is to wage the Christian warfare. **I commit.** The aged soldier, soon to ascend from strife to rest, gives a charge to his young companion in arms. **Son Timothy.** My child Timothy. (Rev. Ver.) Timothy had joined Paul at Lystra, when he was still a youth, and had been his constant companion in all his wanderings since; so that Paul felt toward him as a father toward a son. See Phil. 2. 19-22, which had been written to him long before. The prophetic words which went before on these. The prophetic intimations, such as were common in the early Church, pointing out Timothy's fitness for the Gospel work. **That thou by them.** That, impelled and encouraged by these prophetic voices, Timothy might be all the more faithful to his high vocation. **War a good warfare.** Rather, "the good warfare;" fulfill the whole duty expected of the Christian soldier. (5) *Every Christian should reckon himself a soldier and Christ his commander.*

**19. Holding faith.** Not doctrinal faith, but personal trust in Christ, and showing the fidelity with which he rests in it. **A good conscience.** Being true to the inner light which God gives to every heart which follows it. **Which some having put away.** The reference of this clause is to the conscience, which some thrust from them (Rev. Ver.) as an annoyance to their sinful enjoyment. For the sake of their love for sinful pleasure they crush down their conscience, until it is dead, and warns no more. (6) *No man can continue in sin and yet keep a quick conscience.* Concerning faith here has a broad meaning. They are not faithful to the Gospel; they lose their faith in Christ, and finally become apostates from the faith, or open unbelievers in the Gospel.

**20. Of whom is Hymeneus.** He was undoubtedly