



Letter to

TITUS

—Apostolic Delegate

by Geoffrey Bingham

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FOREWORD

The person and character of Titus provide a fascinating theme for study of the young man Titus. It would appear that he and Timothy were probably of the same age. Timothy was not to let anyone despise his youth and Titus was not to let anyone despise him (I Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:15). Titus was of Gentile parents, but unlike Timothy, was not compelled to be circumcised (Gal. 2:3). Whilst he is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, we can work out quite a biography of him from the Epistles, and of course from the Epistle addressed to him by Paul. In the text of this present commentary, we have contrasted him with Timothy and so we will not enter into the subject here, except to say he seems 'to be a stronger character than Timothy (cf. I Cor. 16:10; II Cor. 7:15)—for the Corinthians received Titus with 'fear and trembling'.

Certainly Paul depended quite a lot on him. Calling him 'my true child in a common faith; Paul shows us that Titus came to the truth through him. Like Timothy he must have learned much from his spiritual father and older brother, yet it is his appointment as an 'apostolic delegate' to the Island of Crete which is impressive. There, he was to appoint elders in every town, he was to 'amend what is defective; i.e. in doctrine and practice, and he was to take a people who were quarrelsome by nature, and mould them—through the word of grace—into a loving community.

It is precisely here that the Epistle is of value today. especially to those in pastoral ministry. Directions for the choice of elders, advice to the different levels of the social community and directions for discipline within the community of Christ, are as relevant for today as they were then. Behind it all is the sweet and wholesome ‘word of grace’ which was to transform and domesticate—in the good sense of that term—a difficult race of persons whom Paul, quoting a Cretan poet, called ‘liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons’. If Titus could do that in his day, then how close to the mark is it for our day!

I trust that this simple little commentary may be of use to pastors, teachers, leaders of study groups and to those of us who love the word of God, and who are grateful to Paul the Apostle on so many levels for his clarity of thought, his keen discernment of the human dilemma and his boldness of exhortation.

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INTRODUCTION

In studying this Letter we need to know four things: (i) why Paul wrote the Letter. (ii) the nature and person of his young friend Titus, (iii) the nature and value of the contents of the Letter and, (iv) the particular position of the church of the day.

This will also require some understanding of the geographical, historical and cultural situation of the Island of Crete.

The Person Called Titus

We can discover quite a lot about Titus. He is first mentioned in Galatians 2:1 as a Gentile who went with Paul to Jerusalem 14 years after Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, i.e. following his conversion at Damascus. Titus, with Paul and Barnabas, met the apostles. If this is the visit referred to in Acts 15 then the theme of discussion on that occasion was the conversion of the Gentiles. Titus was not compelled to be circumcised. From that point onwards Titus may have accompanied Paul on his journeys. This is what we learn concerning him:

- (a) He was Paul's representative at Corinth for some time prior to Paul's writing his second Letter to Corinth. See I1 Corinthians 8:6. (Note: Paul is said to have written

four letters to Corinth. The original second letter was 'the severe letter' mentioned below.)

- (b) Titus with another person was to complete the collection for the needy saints at Jerusalem.
- (c) Titus had carried a special letter from Paul to Corinth. (See II Cor. 2: 1–13; 7: 13–16.) Paul was evidently under some strain after he sent the letter, wondering whether the Corinthians would receive it. They had, in fact, received it well.
- (d) Titus appears to have been competent in his ministry and visit, and well received (cf. I Cor. 16: 10, where Timothy seems to be a weaker sort of person than Tires).
- (e) Titus had gone to Paul in Macedonia, there telling Paul that the Corinthians had received his 'severe letter' well (II Cor. 2: 12–13; 7: 13). Titus had then gone back to Corinth for ministry, being recognised as a strong person with a firm character.
- (f) The character of Titus is seen from clear statements in II Corinthians 7: 13–15; 8:16–18, 23; 12:18. These show him to be a sympathetic person, concerned for others, not seeking his own advantage, someone both competent and authoritative.
- (g) He had been commissioned by Paul, as his 'true child in the faith', to be an apostolic delegate to the church in Crete. He was to appoint elders 'in every town'. (See Titus 1:4–5.) What more we need to know concerning Titus, we can pick up as we read the text of the Letter. Especially interesting to us is the commission to him to counteract Judaizing tendencies, which were being introduced by certain visiting teachers (Titus 1:5–14).
- (h) In II Timothy 4:10 we have the brief statement that Titus has gone to Dalmatia (i.e. present Yugoslavia), and it would appear this journey would have been a mission. In

'Titus 3:12 Paul wishes Titus to come to him at Nicopolis. These are all indications of the value and capabilities of Titus as a person and a minister.

The Island of Crete

Crete is an island, mainly mountainous, about two hundred and fifty kilometres long, with its breadth varying from eleven to fifty–six kilometres. It is situated in the Mediterranean Sea, south–east of Greece. It has a long history of high civilisation, and of a Jewish population during the time of the Jewish Dispersion, i.e. the dispersion which took place through the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Jews from Crete are mentioned as being present at the feast of Pentecost in Acts 2:1 I. Paul sailed along the coast of Crete in his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:7 – 21).

The People of Crete

For certain reasons Paul quotes a Cretan poet who describes the Cretans as 'always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons' (*RSV*), 'liars, evil beasts, slow bellies' (*A V*). This indicates the basic temperament and cultural nature of the Islanders. In the church there would be those, too, of other nations, but it seems the very nature of a people, i.e. their temperament and characteristics, determines to a great degree the problems that develop in churches.

Heresy threatened the church at Crete so that disciplined leadership as well as good teaching was needed. Titus 3:14 (cf. 2:11–14) indicates that there was a special need of teaching and training of the Cretans.

Authorship of the Epistle

Titus should undoubtedly be read with I and II Timothy. The Letters are pastoral in emphasis although opinion is divided as to whether Paul wrote these three Letters. Most agree that they are 'Pauline' in flavour if not wholly in character.

For our purposes we will assume they are written by Paul. It is suggested that Paul's great doctrinal themes are not to the fore, and that many words used in the Letters are not found in his other writings. These things do not, however, make it certain that Paul did not write the Letters, since style and vocabulary can change from time to time, and for various reasons, in any writer.

An Outline of the Letter

CH. ONE

- 1–4 Paul's initial greeting.
- 5–9 Titus must appoint elders of a certain kind. 10–16 Certain opponents must be withstood.

CH. TWO

- 1–10 Certain behaviour is set out. This concerns (i) old men, (ii) old and young women, (iii) the young men (Titus to be the model), (iv) slaves.
- 11–14 The basis of true action is grace and its discipline.

CH. THREE

- 1–2 The duty of the church members to the authorities, as also to one another.
- 3–8 God's grace contrasted with man's degradation with a description of the inner and dynamic effects of grace.

8–15 Teaching good works, false teachers, along with Paul's final injunctions.

The Need for the 'Pastorals'

By 'Pastorals' we mean the three pastoral Letters of I and II Timothy and Titus.

We need to read I and II Timothy in order to see the problems which confronted the churches at the time of Paul's later ministry. In Titus 1:5, 10, 11, Paul speaks of amending 'things which are defective', and indicates problems coming from the 'circumcision party', and both these matters show us that there were significant problems in the Cretan church, namely problems connected with faith and practice.

I and II Timothy show Paul urging and encouraging Timothy to stand firm in the face of similar issues and problems. In the three Pastorals the more explosive elements we meet in Acts, where the apostolic proclamation comes with dynamic, pneumatic (i.e. actions of the Holy Spirit) and charismatic (i.e. gift-manifestations of the Holy Spirit) ministries, have settled, and a fairly steady church community life has developed.

We mean that that ferment which caused and followed proclamation has now issued in a stable form of church life. Doubtless the dynamic of the proclamation was still present but would be more often seen in the bringing to birth of new churches, especially where new ground was broken in missionary outreach.

This way of life of the developing churches called for stability, leadership, teaching and discipline. That is why the Pastorals are often offensive to some of our modern

spirits. Where we wish mainly to see ‘action’, the (so called) ‘creative’ elements seem to be missing from the churches to which Paul addressed his Pastoral Letters. We really do not have strong evidence that life in these churches was at all institutionalised, but certainly there seems to have been less of a ferment than in the decades prior to Paul’s writing.

Even so, we ought to recognise the vast task facing church leadership, the task of bringing the church to a living, workable life and community. Even with the dynamic ‘washing of regeneration and renewal of the Spirit’, believers seemed to bring many personal, residual problems into their churches, and these required pastoral discernment, treatment and care. The community needed direction.

Little of that seems to have changed for us today. By ‘residual problems’ we mean those problems that are linked with our temperaments, dispositions, past experiences and future aspirations. We do not come to the churches as ideal and wholly normal persons, if indeed there are such anywhere! For these reasons we need to read and reread the Pastorals, since their relevance for today cannot be in doubt. Human beings have changed little—if at all—over the past two millenniums.

The Text of the Letter

In this section we will seek to cover the three chapters of the Epistle. This means we must take the text as it stands and try to see what it is saying. In order to do this we must use certain principles of interpretation, known as ‘hermeneutics’.

There are no infallible principles of interpretation, but commentators often vary somewhat in the hermeneutic they use, so that every commentary on the text will differ to some degree or other. Even so, it is not difficult to obtain the general sense and meaning of a verse, passage or chapter. Scripture—for the most part—has a way of unveiling its own meaning. Certainly this Letter must have been reasonably clear to those who read it at Crete, especially to Titus to whom it was addressed.

CHAPTER ONE

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness,

Paul, a servant of God: he generally speaks of being a slave of Christ Jesus, but here he is Christ's apostle. Being a slave towards God means he can have true dignity and authority towards men. The Father controls him wholly a rich claim and a high office (cf. Acts 22: 14).

apostle: is the word Paul uses to show his calling and authority towards men: his word is to be accepted and obeyed.

to **further the** faith of God's elect: Paul is God's slave and Christ's apostle in conformity with, and to further, the faith of God's chosen people. Coming to faith needs to issue in going on in faith.

God's elect: raises the question of God's choice (cf. 11 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3–7), but here it is used to denote God's true people, made secure by His choice. Israel was God's elect, but here the new people of God—the Christian community—is in mind.

and their knowledge of the truth: truth in this case is the Gospel, i.e. 'the word of his grace'. The believers have come to know this Gospel.

which accords with godliness: truth is not merely knowing about faith and practice. Ephesians 4:15, 21 shows that for Paul truth was something that one both

knew in mind and heart, and lived out in the practice of life. The apostolic responsibility in regard to teaching the truth was a demanding one in the face of heresies which always seemed to spring up in young churches, bringing confusion as to the true nature of the Gospel. The test of truth was that it accorded with godliness.

2 in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago

in hope of eternal life: hope is the basis on which the Christian life is lived (cf. Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:5; Eph. 1:18). In 1 Timothy 1:1 ‘Christ Jesus’ is ‘our hope’. The hope is of lilt eternal, and this is wholly unique to the Christian Gospel. (See 11 Tim. 1:1.) Hope in the New Testament is a great factor in motivating moral and ethical living, eg. I John 3:13. Paul links hope with suffering in Romans 8:18 25.

who never lies: some believers question God! See Numbers 23: 19, ‘God is not a man that he should lie’, i.e. He is the *true* God (cf. John 17:3; I John 5:20; I Thess. 1 Rom. 3:4). Paul is saying God’s promises are dependable.

promised ages ago: is literally ‘before times eternal’ (Gr. *pro chronon aionion*) i.e. in accordance with election. Such things do not happen fortuitously: they have been planned. Hence these statements of God’s integrity and intentions fortify the reader. Note that God’s promise is always the basis of hope. It is grace yet to be enacted, but the promise itself is grace, for it is as good as having happened.

3 and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by command of our Saviour;

and at the proper time: literally ‘times’, and means God’s own time i.e. ‘the fullness of time’. Salvation has now appeared (2:11; 3:4), verifying the truth of election. God always does things ‘on time’, i.e. ‘in His time’ (cf. Gal. 4:4f.: John 2:4; 7:6; 17:1 f.; 1 Tim. 2:6; etc.). This verifies the fact that God is sovereign in His universe.

manifested in his word: what He has promised God has revealed in His word. Peter speaks of this word as being God’s Messiah sent, and in action (Acts 10:34 38) and equates it with the Gospel. God’s word has always been the way in which He has communicated the truth, but the promises have now been fulfilled in Christ, only awaiting full communication through the preaching of this Gospel.

through the preaching: i.e. the proclamation (Gr. *kerugma*) of the Gospel. When the Gospel is preached, the effectiveness of the promises, and then the acts of Messiah, come through to the hearers (Rom. 10:16–17). If the word of the Gospel (‘the word of his grace’) were not preached then nothing would come to fruition. Hence the need preaching. Proclamation (*kerugma*) was the imperial edict, delivered by a messenger, which was not to be questioned, but directly obeyed.

has been entrusted by command: Paul sees no preaching but by command, no going but by being sent. See Romans 10:14 15. This gives dignity, responsibility and effectiveness to the proclamation. Also see Acts 22:15; 26:16ff.: Galatians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 9:17; cf. Romans 10:14–15. It is the means by which God effects His purposes. See I Thessalonians 2:13–14. Paul sees the preaching of the Gospel as ‘an entrustment’. See I Corinthians 9:17ff., also Acts 26: 16.

God our Saviour: shows the salvific nature of the Gospel, the proclamation, the act of God in Christ. Saviour is a rare term in the New Testament. See 1:4. ‘Christ Jesus our Saviour’.

4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: (Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

To **Titus my true child:** true means genuine, authentic. It may even mean legitimate, i.e. not illegitimate. Titus has come to Christ through Paul, but also he is like Paul in many ways. perhaps even more than Timothy who was also a ‘child ‘of Paul. (See I Cor. 16: 10.) In our introduction we have seen that Titus is a strong, tactful, loving, and firm envoy for Paul. See Galatians 2:3; 1I Corinthians 2:13; 7:13; 12:18; 11 Timothy 4: 10; Titus 3: 12–13.

in a common faith: means not only Paul and Titus have a faith common to them, but it is the one common to all the church. This makes for objectivity, strength, and a common recognition of the truth in which they live. It unifies them.

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour: Note that all Pauline Epistles commence with this salutation. and also end with it (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2; 11 Tim. 1:2). Paul is not saying that **grace and peace** are not available without his prayer but he is directing them to the source of all grace and peace—the **Father and Christ Jesus.** **Grace** is the basis for all life in God (see especially 2:11–14; 3:5–7). For the whole concept of God as Father see Ephesians 1:1–7; 3: 14; 4:6; Galatians 4:4–6; Romans 8: 14f. Grace is not a commodity or an element, nor is it detachable from the **Father and Christ Jesus.** Thus God’s

grace is His personal working towards us to do us good, and no less is this the **grace of Christ Jesus.**

5 This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you,

This is why I left you in Crete: Paul, it seems, could not remain in Crete to do this work. His trust was in Titus as a strong and competent person who could be his envoy.

that you might amend what was defective: Titus 3:14 indicates some defects are still present in the church, i.e. ‘what remains to be done’. It seems there were quite a number of defects at the point in time of Titus’ appointment to the work. Below we can see these related to the Judaising party (vv. 10–11). See Revelation chapters 2–3 regarding the problems in churches, for these letters show us that the early churches were by no means ideal. They were always confronted with problems, but for the most part these had to do with the life and dynamic of the church.

Problems other than the ‘circumcision party’ were: (i) the residual cultural defects (1:12); (ii) functional, structural requirements of elders, deacons, older teaching women (1:7–10); and (iii) ethical and moral problems which rose from false teaching (1: 13–16).

and appoint elders in every town: the appointment of elders was most important. Without elders the church is not functional, and so not able to minister fully. For eldership, see Old Testament eldership, for nations, for the tribes of Israel, for the whole community of Israel (70 elders: Sanhedrin; etc.), and then the heavenly elders (Isa.

24:23; the Book of Revelation, eg. 4:4ff.). In addition we need to see elders in the New Testament.

In Acts 14:23 we see the fact and mode of ordination. In Acts 15 we are made aware of the authority of elders and their function in determining the practical outworking of the Gospel in a pluralistic society. In Acts 20:17ff. Paul outlines to elders their pastoral responsibilities. Eldership in the Pauline Epistles can be studied in I Timothy 3:1, 5:17ff., and Titus 1:5–9. In I Peter 5:1–4 and in James 5:14–18 we obtain good information regarding eldership. For leadership such as is given by elders see I Thessalonians 5:12–13 and Hebrews 13:7, 17.

as I directed you: means authority for Titus for this was an apostolic commission. It gave him standing in the church. It also gave him a programme, details which he knew he must fulfil.

6 if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate.

if any man is blameless: there is a parallel passage to this section (w . 6–9) in I Timothy 3:2ff. Paul is dealing with the ministry of eldership and the qualifications required of those appointed by Titus.

blameless: this is a well-known word in the New Testament. Here it means ‘no reproach’. In I Timothy 3:1 the inference is that the congregation decides who are qualified for eldership. Here it is Titus (under Paul) who makes the appointment, but doubtless the congregation generally concurred. Since the elders are stewards (v. 7)

they must come under no reproach.

the husband of one wife: this can possibly mean ‘not polygamous’, or ‘not remarried’, but probably means ‘living morally’.

and his children are believers: the statement indicates some age and maturity, i.e. grown children for the most part. If this were the case then it would mean that parents may have had problems with children. but that children in their maturity had responded eventually to parental training.

and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate: i.e. they are obedient to parents as this is part of the Judaic morality (cf. Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; Exod. 20:12; etc.). The pressure in Cretan society would be towards moral laxity. The requirement, then, would be that elders were men experienced in family life, and so qualified to help others in difficulties with children.

7 For a bishop, as God’s steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,

For a bishop as God’s steward: there must be a sense of responsibility in all stewardship (cf. I Cor. 4: 1–2; II Cor. 4:1ff.). Note that the word **bishop** (Gr. *episkopos*, i.e. ‘overseer’) here is synonymous with ‘eider’. See Philipians 1:1 where the term is in the plural—‘bishops’. Some scholars think the **bishop** was the leading eider, presiding over the others, or *primus inter pares*—‘the first among equals’. Having lived in a self-regarding society there would be strong temptation to use one’s office for selfish ends.

must be blameless: see verse 5 above. **Blameless** means ‘beyond reproof’. The bishop must set an example and confirm the new way of life that believers had to live in a pagan society.

he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered: Paul elsewhere speaks of love and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:13, 22–23), and these are the harvest of the Gospel. When we ask the source from which arrogance and quick-temperedness derive, we are forced to see them as anti-Gospel elements. They belong to the old life. Anger was strongly forbidden by Christ (Matt. 5:21–26). A person of such meteoric temperament could not lead the congregation.

or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain: each of these wrong elements indicates a spirit incompatible with the Gospel, and with Christian community living. **Drunkard** is literally ‘given to wine’. Paul places the **drunkard** amongst the perilous states of man which prevent his entrance into the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–11). **Violent** means ‘a striker’, something out of character with humility and love. **Greedy for gain** (‘not given to filthy lucre’, A I/), would obscure the gospel of grace (free-giving), and bring discredit to the Gospel. If we ask how Titus (or the church) could even entertain the idea of appointing a bishop with these qualities we are faced with the fact that down through Christian history this has happened. Some good qualities of such persons may endear them to followers who might overlook these important elements of which Paul speaks.

8 but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled;

but hospitable: (Gr. *philoxenos*. meaning ‘devoted to hospitality’). The contrast with the former verse shows things opposite to wrong things. Note that hospitality had to be given not simply as social obligation, but to the poor, to the hungry and destitute. and even those persecuted for their faith. See Romans 12:13; I Timothy 3:2; Hebrews 13:13; and I Peter 4:9. Note Acts, chapters 2 and 4, where ‘no one thought anything was his own’.

a lover of goodness: goodness (Gr. *philagathos*. ‘devoted to good’) is love in all its forms. Here the bishop must be a man who *loves* goodness, and not merely gives a token assent to it. In tact in Asia the *term philagathos* became the title of an office in the associations. (This point is quoted in ‘The Pastoral Epistles’, by Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann. see Bibliography.)

master of himself: really means ‘commonsensical’. i.e. ‘one who fulfils his duty to himself’.

upright: means ‘righteous’, or ‘just’. Justice is the one thing for which all seek, and by which they judge.

holy: purity is required both as an example and a way of life.

and self-controlled: the word here (Gr. *egkrates*) is a strong one. As in Galatians 5:23 it indicates ‘self-mastery’ especially over the qualities in verse 7 which disqualify a man for the eldership. Passion having been brought under control, the person would then prove trustworthy.

9 he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it.

he must hold firm: hold firm (‘hold fast’; ‘cleave to’; etc.)

indicates a seriousness and an insistent grip, a not letting go of it.

the sure word as taught: is ‘faithful word’, i.e. ‘true teaching’. This would be the word of Christ himself, the Gospel. Thus the word (teaching) of the eider is reliable. See in 1 Timothy 3:2 that the eider (bishop) must be ‘an apt teacher’.

Teaching would not be along merely academic lines, or even plain propositional teaching, so much as teaching which fitted the situations arising within the church. The basic teaching of the Gospel had already taken place (cf. I Cor. 15:3ff.). As we see, the bishop must live in accordance with this teaching.

so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine: see 1:13, 2:15 (‘in the faith’), also 1 Timothy I: 10. **Sound doctrine:** as opposed to the false teachers and their false teaching.

and also to confute those who contradict it: in Crete there were many who followed heresy. The eider (bishop) then, was not merely a kindly person but one equipped with the truth. See Philippians 1:7, Acts 17:2–3, 19:8.

We must keep in mind that teaching was not simply doctrinal, but related to ways of living. Faith and practice are inseparable. The bishop, then, would need to be a strong person, and well-equipped with the truth. **Confute** is a strong word, carrying the idea of ‘rebuke’, cf. I: 13, 2:15 and II Timothy 3:16.

10 For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially the circumcision party;

For there are many insubordinate men: note the for,

which links the need for good bishops with the problem that the false teachers brought. One thing is clear, the church does not require elders from this subversive group, but men able to refute **insubordinate men**. The church faced a deep problem from such troublers. It is interesting to see that the problem of doctrine related to the problem of authority. Under the guise of ‘truth’, i.e. their heretical teaching, they were advancing themselves in the community of believers. They refused the right leadership of the elders.

empty talkers and deceivers: i.e. they were ‘vain’ or ‘worthless’, hence what they said was unprofitable and damaging. Empty has the idea of ‘empty-headed’ and so ‘vain-talking’, often linked with idols who are futile. We need to understand the whole principle of deception, for in the Scriptures the following are said to be deceptive: Satan, his powers (‘angels of light’, so-called), men, sin, idols and lusts. To deceive is to present the truth as the lie, the lie as the truth (cf. Rom. 1:25).

They were **deceivers**, i.e. being deceived they deceived. We note these elements are characteristics of heretics and sectarians who see things in a curious way.

the circumcision party: this party does not seem to be like that of the Galatian Judaisers, but appears to be linked with the mystery and occult elements such as we find in the Colossian letter. They are not so much on about law as about Gnostic things, things such as at the church in Colossae, involving philosophy and worship of angels. In emphasising their own position, and in opposing the orthodoxy of the elders and church, they constitute a party. Paul decries parties (I Cor. 3:1ff.), and with good reason for he sees them as fleshly.

11 they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for base gain what they have no right to teach.

they must be silenced: confuting these empty speakers will alone give rest to the church.

upsetting whole families: it is not that whole families are deceived, but certain members of those families, thus bringing division. When we remember the early unity of the church and its basic doctrine of one love and one Body, then distress is being caused.

for base gain: it is all for a matter of money and not the truth. (Note: 1 Tim. 3:3, the eider is not to be a lover of money; and 1 Tim. 6:9q0, 17 show the danger of coveting money.)

what they have no right to teach: i.e. ‘things not fitting’, ‘that are not right’, ‘that are unbecoming’. Not only are they unqualified but they have not been truly commissioned.

12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’

One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said: the quote is attributed to Epimenides (cf. Acts 17:28 for another quote from Epimenides). This poet also had the reputation of being a prophet, and it is interesting that Paul uses his utterances.

Cretans are always liars: they are liars hence they are deceivers (v. 10), and this is a characteristic of Cretans carried over into the Christian faith.

evil beasts: this means ‘brutish’, evilly malicious.

lazy gluttons: ‘idle gluttons’, ‘gluttonous and idlers’. The

AV has ‘slow bellies’. Paul in Philippians 3:18 19 speaks of heretics, of some who are enemies of the cross of Christ, saying, ‘Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame with their mind set on earthly things.’ It is interesting to see that gluttony has the same origins as the things mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9 10, such as immorality, homosexuality and drunkenness. Such things constitute rebellion against the creational order of things. Thus. in the church, these people were not industrious, did not work, and had no mind for the things of the Gospel.

13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

This testimony is true: the testimony is that of Epimenides (of Crete 600 500 BC). Paul is not certifying all Epimenides’ writings, but is endorsing this relevant statement. It may have been that Titus had complained to Paul about the nature of the Cretans and that Paul is saying to him, ‘Come to terms with reality. This is how they are. Accept the fact and start where they are.’ If this is the case, then it is a valuable principle.

Therefore rebuke them sharply: we now see the responsibility Paul has placed on Titus (i) to appoint genuine elders; and (ii) to apply discipline to church members. Church history has shown the difficulty of effecting these two things. We need to remember that even the circumcision party (1:10) was probably Cretan and not even of Jewish origin, although fascinated by Jewish folklore and (so-called) philosophy.

rebuke: i.e. ‘reprove’. See John 16:8 where the same

word as here carries the ideas of ‘convict’, ‘reprove’ and ‘rebuke’.

sharply: i.e. ‘severely’. This raises the whole subject of discipline and leadership. II Corinthians 7:15 is an interesting reminder of Titus’ leadership at Corinth. ‘And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, and the tear and trembling with which you received him.’ Paul’s apostolic figure may have been behind him, but the point here is that the genuine sharp rebuke can cut to the heart even of these coarse and fleshly Cretans, and bring them into a true experience of Christ.

that they may be sound in the faith: Paul gives the contrast in the next verse, i.e. of their unsoundness in the faith.

14 instead of giving heed to Jewish myths or to commands of men who reject the truth.

instead of giving heed to Jewish myths: the truth— as truth —is based upon the nature of God. It is who He is, what He does, and will do. Hence it is rooted in reality— ‘things as they really are’— and myths have no objective reality, and do not comport with the truth.

or to commands of men: commands here are human traditions which demand conformity from their followers. Such commands can be ritual ones, as seen in Mark 7:18–23, Colossians 2:20–23, and Isaiah 29:13. They belong to the mystique of law (so-called), but not to law’s true (essential) nature. Legalism, and especially esoteric and occult legalism, has a fascination for the human ego, in particular the religious ego. Men hope by their legalism to quieten the tyrannous conscience.

who reject the truth: this shows clearly the basis of the false teaching and teachers at Crete. Romans 1:25 says, ‘They turned the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator’. These Cretans have turned from the truth (Acts 13:46; Eph. 4:21), and that means falsehood, i.e. wrong doctrine and so wrong practice. It seems incredible that the church at Crete could contain such people, but that was the fact. II Timothy 4:15 is a good commentary on this sad reality.

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted.

To the pure all things are pure: in verse 8 Paul has said the elders (bishops) must be holy. The Book of the Acts is the story of unholy people—the Gentiles—being joined to the holy people, i.e. the people of God, the Jews, who have now come into true sanctification by following Christ as their Messiah (see Acts 10:9–16, 34–35; 15:6–21; 26:16

Paul’s Letters also speak strongly of this (Eph. 2:11–3:11; Gal. 3:29; 1 Cor. 12: 13; etc.). Again, I Peter 2:4–10 is a very strong statement on this theme. What, then, is the principle Paul enunciates here?

The pure must mean ‘the pure in heart’, i.e. those who have gone through ‘the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit’ (Titus 3:5), the pure heart promised in Ezekiel 36:24–28, and spoken of in Acts 15:8r9. See also Matthew 5:8; John 15:3; I Timothy 1:5; 2:8; Psalm 24:3–4. **All things are pure** must mean something like, ‘Evil be to him who evil thinks’. This is the thrust of Psalm 18:23–26, especially verse 26, ‘With the pure thou

dost show thyself pure; and with the crooked thou dost show thyself perverse’.

but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure: this comports with Psalm 18:26. Corrupt **and unbelieving** must refer to the Cretans who are ‘lazy gluttons’. The essence, then, of our present verse is, ‘These Cretans, having departed from the truth, so that they live grossly, and all this proceeds from unclean minds and consciences. They see everything from the centre of their own condition and state. They have become corrupt and unbelieving therefore they do not have a mind for the truth. Hence nothing can appear pure to them, for nothing about them is pure.’

This verse raises the whole question of conscience. Paul takes the theme up in the Pastoral Epistles (see I Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; II Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:15). In I Timothy 1:19 he links faith with a true conscience, lack of it with spiritual shipwreck. The writer of Hebrews also takes up the idea of conscience (see 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22). ‘Conscience’ is a word not used—as such—in the Old Testament where ‘heart’ has something of the same function. Paul’s ideas of conscience can be seen in Acts 24:16, Romans 9:1, and Romans 14 with 1 Corinthians 8. In Romans 9:1 Paul is saying that the conscience is only a good guide or monitor—when it is ‘in the Holy Spirit’. Romans chapters 14 and 15 with I Corinthians 8 treat the matter of a weak conscience and a weak faith, both of which are interrelated.

16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed.

They **profess to know God:** this phrase could mean,

‘They say they believe in one true God’, as against the polytheists. the pagans and the idolaters. They certainly claimed they believed in the God of Israel. They considered that their myths, fables, law, folklore, traditions and observances constituted one true system.

but they deny him by their deeds: the system they espoused had its practices and actions which were not in conformity with the Gospel, and the new purity it had brought to the human race. The things they did were not in conformity with the nature of God’s goodness, holiness, righteousness, truth and love. Their deeds are the fruit of their wrong teaching.

they are detestable: i.e. ‘abominable’ because of their disgusting hypocrisy.

disobedient: rejection of the truth means rejection of the God of truth, and hence of His authority. The rejection of authority—which these people evidence—arises from rejection of God’s authority and the authority delegated by Him.

unfit for any good deed: unfit (Gr. *adokimos*) carries the idea of being tested and rejected as not being competent. They are not competent to do good works for the reason outlined above. Titus 2:11–14 shows that good deeds and godly living all issue from grace (cf. Eph. 2:8–10). Good works and deeds are constantly called for in the Epistles, but they must issue from grace, and happen under the control of love (II Cor. 5:14; John 14:15; I John 4:19).

CHAPTER TWO

1 But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine.

as for you: is in contrast to the trouble-makers and impure in heart and those who work for base gain, of whom Paul has just spoken. Titus is to be strong and to teach. Keeping his own integrity he will stand in contrast to the evil ones in the church at Crete.

sound doctrine: see Titus 1:9 and also I Timothy 1:10 where immorality (law-transgression) is directly contrary to sound doctrine. Ephesians 4:14 speaks of doctrine taught by cunning and deceptive men whose teaching is not **sound**. Doctrine, whether sound or unsound, is powerful because it sets human minds moving along certain lines. Doctrine is teaching which determines faith and practice. Acts 2:42 places the 'apostles' doctrine' as the only sound truth.

2 Bid the older men be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Note: This passage should be read with I Timothy 5: which portrays the family set of relationships. 'Family' is the key word here. The church is the household of God (Eph. 2:19; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:1-6) and family relationships are something of the creational order of things.

Parents who are evil nevertheless know what to give to their children (Luke 11:13). This must mean that the knowledge of true relationships is innate in man.

Bid the older men: the injunctions here appear to be in the imperative, but they are not. Hence the word bid is not in the text. Even so, it is understood. The passage simply describes the true situation as it ought to obtain. This is done by using adjectives with the verb 'to be' (*einai*). **Older men** are not the elders, but their example to the younger men sets the tone of the church.

temperate, serious, sensible: temperate, i.e. sober, soberness having to do with the matter of alcohol. This we saw regarding elders (1 Tim. 1:3). Serious equals 'dignified', **sensible** equals 'prudent'. Thus the older men would show the wisdom they had accumulated in living with the transformation that the Gospel had brought to them.

sound in faith, in love: the early church knew much about the triad of 'faith, hope, and love' (see eg. 1 Thess. 1:3; I Thess. 3:6; II Thess. 2:13; I Cor. 13:13). This triad was not simply three abstractions put together, for these three innately constituted an inseparable unity: they were one. Life was lived in the unity of the three. It is true that hope is not mentioned here in the text, but see 2:13 where it is a great dynamic.

faith: is that trust, assent to truth, and belief which is born of the 'word of his grace', i.e. the Gospel (see Rom. 10:17), for faith is always born of grace: God's grace is prior to man's faith. Paul taught that faith without love is valueless (I Cor. 13: 1-3; Gal. 5:5-6). To see the older men soundly in faith and love, which are both concrete in action, would be edifying for the church.

love: is man's true response to God's love (I John 4: 19) demonstrated in the Cross, actuating propitiation (I John

4: 10). Romans 5:5–10 teaches that the Spirit floods our heart with love at the point where we realize the vastness of God's redeeming grace, i.e. His love. The older men were to teach this love by example. Only this love keeps harmony in the new community (Col. 3: 14).

steadfastness: hope is linked with endurance (**steadfastness**) in Romans 5:3–4. One endures because one hopes, for hope is present faith with a view to the future. The example of the older men living earnestly and not dissipating the later years of their lives would help to set the tone for the others—the older women, younger women, husbands and young people.

3 Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behaviour, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good,

Bid the older women: whilst elders seem to be drawn only from the men, some scholars see in I Timothy 3:11 that women can be part of the diaconate, but there and here it would seem Paul is addressing all older women, and neither as deacons or elders. The need is that the **older women** take their place alongside the older men in being examples to the family, 'the flock of God'. They are **to be reverent in behaviour**. The word for reverent is linked with 'priestly' or 'holy'. Behaviour equals 'demeanour'. The women are to have a holy demeanour of priestly nature. The impact of such would be incalculable.

All members of the church belong to the priestly community. See I Peter 2:4–10 where the church is a priestly structure, offering spiritual sacrifices (cf. Heb. 13:15–16). All members are 'living stones', i.e. their priestly

nature is dynamic and active. The ultimate destiny of believers is to be 'a kingdom of priests' (cf. Rev. 1:6; 5: 10; 22:5).

not to be slanderers: i.e. 'not given to gossip and scandal'. When we trace human interest in these negative and critical elements we see it is 'rejoicing in evil' (I Cor. 13:6), i.e. the slanderer is critical of the human race in its failure and depravity when he ought to be distressed by it.

The Greek word slanderer is *diabolos* (I Tim. 3:11), and is used of Satan many times in the Gospels, Epistles and the Revelation. It carries the idea of an accuser or calumniator. This tendency of Cretans to divisive living stems from the principle seen in Titus 1:15 where the corrupt conscience can only see corruption in fellow humans. Slanderers: those who vandalise by means of words.

or slaves to drink: the word slave (Gr. *doulos*) is apt. Apparently the Cretan society was given heavily to alcohol. 'Wine is a mocker; strong drink is a brawler' was the assessment of the writer of Proverbs (20: 1; cf. Isa. 28:7–8). To us it may seem strange that Christians should be heavy drinkers and become drunk, but in all these things we must remember Paul's statement—a cultural one—about the basic Cretan disposition (1:12).

they are to teach what is good: details of the new (ethical) life will have to be taught patiently. If slander and drinking are part of the old way of life, then these dignified women are to teach what is good, i.e. 'teach things which are excellent' or 'be teachers of all good things'. The idea of teaching in the Pastoral Letters is not formal but personal, not merely informative, but formative of character. It is practical in nature. That is why older women will be competent to teach younger women. There are some things

that men (the elders) would find difficult, by nature of the case, to teach young women. These older women have a functional place in the community life, being indispensable to the whole.

4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,

and so train the young women: the word really means ‘admonish’ or ‘rebuke’, i.e. counter things which are not good. The older women have learned these things through many years and they are passing them on to **the** young women to save them going through unnecessary failure and suffering. The older women, by reason of their maturity, would be equipped to be helpful leaders.

to love their husbands: it has been said that Paul never commands wives to love their husbands. Love of one another is the true order of Christian living, and so mutual love between husband and wife must operate. In Ephesians 5:25ff. the order is that husbands love their wives, and wives be submissive to their husbands (cf. Col. 3: 18–19).

Paul may mean that love of husbands is not ‘Cretan’, i.e. ‘cultural’ or he may mean that loving one’s husband is something that has to be learned over many years. More probably he is referring to 1:10–11, where false teachers and innovators are causing havoc in homes, and breaking up marital relationships. It may not, then, be a general word to all wives, but to those whose love for their husbands has grown cold. In the interchanges of marital life partners can become quite angry, and thus divided. The older women, having been through such crises, can help the younger wives.

to love their... children: where love for the husband is absent, true (i.e. Christian) love for children will also be absent. A wife will have obsessive and unbalanced love for her children where she is seeking to compensate for loss of wife–husband love. Many things can cause a mother to be irritated and angry with her children, for most people react sharply when under stress. Again, the older women would be experienced in such matters.

5 to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.

to be sensible: see verse 2, where it is used for ‘older men’. It contains the idea of self–control.

chaste: i.e. ‘pure’, or even, ‘in sincerity’. Christian wives were to have standards above Cretan society in marital behaviour and faithfulness. Timothy is exhorted by Paul to effect this same principle (I Tim. 5:22, ‘keep yourself pure’). The purity of the true Bride, the church, is enlarged by Paul in Ephesians 5:26–27 (cf. Col. 1:22). This ought to obtain whether the husbands were Christians or not. See Peter’s advice in I Peter 3:1–7.

domestic: i.e. ‘workers at home’ or, possibly, ‘keepers at home’. If the latter then Paul means not to desert their husbands (cf. I Cor. 7:10ff.) who are not Christians, but if he means domestic in our more modern sense, then this would be to carry out the tasks that fulfil household needs. The wife would then run the house (cf. Prov. 31:10ff.).

kind: this is the Greek word for ‘good’ (*agathos*) and Paul may be saying ‘have good domestic ministry’. In Matthew 20:15 the same word is translated ‘generosity’.

These elements in this fifth verse all combine to make a gracious and useful wife.

submissive: see Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 where the same verb is used. Whilst modern emancipation of women sees Paul's teaching as fitting the culture of his day, and as unduly oppressive, there is no indication here that the wife's submission is simply a cultural matter, since he refers this act to conformity to the word of God. Submission is in no way related to superiority or inferiority since this sort of question is not raised here. Paul sees older men, older women, and young women all fitting into functional roles. For a typical use of the verb see Titus 3:1.

that the word of God may not be discredited: **word of God** could be equally, 'name of God', or 'holiness of God'. It was the word which had brought the church into being 'in every city' (1:5). It was the Gospel, and so it was also the true way of life: indeed it was the truth. The whole family of the church had to live in conformity with it, or it would be **discredited**, i.e. 'blasphemed' (AV). Paul is reinforcing the statements about domestic living by insisting that they issue from **the word** of God as proclaimed in Crete.

6 Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves.

the younger men: are directly under Titus's training and exhortation, whereas the older women are to train the younger women.

control themselves: this is the term used in verse 2 of the older men, and in verse 4 for young women, i.e. to be prudent, sober-minded. It is Titus here who has to urge, i.e. exhort them. Exhortation is a continual necessity, as the young men are continually in a learning situation. Titus

would need Paul's exhortation to exhort!

7 Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity,

Titus is to be a **pattern** (Gr. *tupos*), i.e. an impression from a die, and so in practice the human *tupos* was to present a living paradigm. See also I Timothy 4:12 where Paul exhorts Timothy similarly. Titus's exhortation would be hollow without his living out its reality. Young people are prone to take an example and live by it. In fact this is the best way of **teaching**, i.e. by action which confirms precept.

good deeds: (cf. Matt. 5: 16; Titus 2: 14) are not works which justify us, but works which spring from justification. Good (Gr. *kalos*) is 'good to look at', as well as 'good in content'.

integrity: is 'uncorruptness' or even 'innocence', as against I Timothy 6:5 'men of depraved mind'. It is really being without false or base motive. Much teaching of the time was tainted.

gravity: means 'seriously-minded' (so see with I Tim. 3:8, 11). Light-hearted or flippant teaching will command no hearing and evoke no respect.

8 and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

sound speech: i.e. 'healthy speech', cf. I Timothy 1:10, 'sound doctrine'. This speaks not only of what is taught, but the way it is taught.

an opponent: there were those who would seek to oppose the Gospel, and Titus's handling of it. The very utterance will be convincing and so the opponents will be put to shame.

having nothing evil **to say of us:** the word evil (Gr. *phaulos*) is used only five times in the New Testament and means 'cheap', 'mean', or 'bad'. Notice the of us which means that Titus witnesses to the integrity of the whole Christian community and its Gospel. Paul may, of course, be referring to his own ministry of the Gospel when he was in Crete. He does not want this to be discredited. The integrity of the messenger thus certifies the integrity of his proclamation.

9 Bid slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to be refractory,

Bid slaves: there is no question about the meaning here. The word is **slaves** (Gr. *cloulous*) and not 'servants' (Gr. *diakonous*). The commentary on this is in I Timothy 6:1–2 and Ephesians 6:5–8. The question of the rights and wrongs of slavery are not discussed here: it is the question of honouring Christ and the Gospel. Paul is speaking of *Christian* slaves, and the whole point of authority and submission is raised. Acceptance of authority is presupposed, as we see in verse five, and I Timothy 5: 17. It springs from the Pauline view expressed in I Corinthians 11:3, where, despite modern exegetical and cultural protests, Paul is insisting on an hierarchical system, of God, Christ, husband and wife. It must be understood, however, as a hierarchy of love, and not as an authoritarian structure.

In Ephesians 5:21ff. Paul uses the Greek verb *hupakouo*,

i.e. 'to obey', but here in Titus *hupotasso*, 'to be in subjection'. The latter is a stronger word, and may suggest that the slaves have tended towards insubordination in the general Cretan atmosphere! There was also the wider question of Gentile masters who would ask things difficult for a Christian slave to do.

to give satisfaction: i.e. to be 'well-pleasing' (cf. Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21). Again there is the thought of witness to Christ and the Gospel in this.

not to be refractory: i.e. not gainsaying, answering back, or being opposed to the person and plans of the master.

10 nor to pilfer, but to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our

nor to pilfer: all servants are tempted to theft, especially petty theft, and slaves would feel even more justified in doing so. The verb relates to Acts 5:2–3, 'put away part of the price'. Almost all arts and crafts, and so tricks of the trade, were in the hands of slaves so that they had plenty of opportunity for trickery. Such dishonesty would demean the Gospel.

to show entire and true fidelity: it is not only to have ethical integrity but to demonstrate reliable faithfulness which in itself would be surprising, especially to cynical masters. Christian slaves would show the radical difference between what moved them and what moved most other slaves, thereby witnessing to the nature and power of the Gospel.

so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour: the verb **adorn** here means the way in which

jewels are arranged in order to show fully their beauty. It is not difficult to apply Paul's exhortation: the things slaves would do in Christian character would show the incomparable beauty of the Gospel.

the doctrine: the believer learns what he knows through revelation and not merely through a knowledge of ethics. His course is set in love and controlled by it. It springs from **the doctrine**. Nothing else could explain what Paul is saying, especially in the light of today's egalitarian principles. Most ethics are orientated to our humanity and its extension, and not to God's glory,.

God our Saviour: here it does not mean Christ, but it indicates it is the teaching which comes from God and is about Him as Saviour that causes us to **adorn the doctrine** in everything. The basic doctrine we have is, 'God is Saviour'.

11 For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men,

For: this conjunction links the wonderful things to follow with the injunctions that have gone before, especially to the slaves, though probably it includes calls for submission and (inspired) obedience. All the ethical precepts and their motive and control for operation depend upon **the grace of God**.

the grace of God: Paul mentions the word **grace** four times in this Letter—in the opening greeting (1:4), the closing blessing (3:15), and in 3:7, 'that we might be justified by his grace'. When we remember (1: 10–16) the nature of Cretans, and the things of their culture we see the need for grace in all church, family and community

relationships. Is grace, then, a power given to believers as a useable commodity? No: it is the unmerited action of God which He does for, and to, a sinner in order to redeem him, regenerate him, and enable him to live the new life in holiness, glorifying him by degrees in this life until that process climaxes in ultimate glorification, i.e. coming into full experience of resurrection to eternal life, entering the Kingdom of God, receiving the incorruptible inheritance—being made heir of all things—and receiving full sonship which is the redemption of the body, thus being made—with all God's elect people—a king and priest to God, so reigning for ever. For these things see Romans 3:24; 5: 17; Galatians 1:6; Ephesians 1:6–7; 2:5–8; I Timothy 1:14; II Timothy 1:9; II Thessalonians 1: 12; II Corinthians 12:9; Romans 6:1, 12–14; 11:5–6; Galatians 1:15; Romans 12:3; I Peter 1:13.

has appeared: we might think there was previously no appearance of **grace**, i.e. that there was not **grace** in the Old Testament but there was **grace** from the Proto-Evangel of Genesis 3:15 to the Messianic promise of Genesis 49:10, through the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant and following in the Mosaic Covenant (see Exodus 24:1 ff.), the Covenant with David (II Sam. 7:14 and other references), and finally in the promise of the New Covenant. Israel had two powerful words, **chen** and **chesed** and these were used as 'favour', 'loving kindness', 'compassion', and 'steadfast love'. They were all in the context of **ahab** which was the Hebrew word for 'love'. We conclude that grace was always operative since God was (is) 'the God of all grace' (I Pet. 5: 10). Even **so has appeared** means that in this sense—an epochal sense—**grace** had not previously appeared. John 1:14 speaks of the Word becoming flesh and his being 'the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth'. The

appearance of the Son *is* the appearance of **grace**.

Three times here (2:1 I, 13; and 3:4) Paul uses the verb (*epiphaino*) ‘to appear’ and these refer to the personal coming of Christ, and to the bringing of salvation, i.e. present salvation, and ultimate salvation, which are the action and fulfilment of **grace**. The two other times in the New Testament that the verb is used are in Luke 1:79—‘to give light to [i.e. to appear to] those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace’, and in Acts 27:20—‘And when neither sun nor stars appeared for many a day, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of being saved was at last abandoned’. These uses are remarkably linked. The appearing of the **grace of God for salvation** is itself a most striking thing.

for the salvation of all men: i.e. ‘bringing deliverance to’. Salvation can be described in many ways. In the Old Testament it is used for God saving His people from Egypt, from trouble (Jer. 30:7), from sickness (Isa. 38:20 *passim*), from confinement and limitation (Ps. 18:36; 66:12). He saves the poor who are oppressed (Ps. 34:6). The word ‘save’ was a dynamic word with Israel for they had seen God as Saviour in His great acts of deliverance, particularly from Egypt, and knew this was His action in ‘covenant’.

The word is used clearly enough in the New Testament in the same way. In the Gospels he comes not to condemn the world but to save it (John 3: 17) and says salvation has come to Zacchaeus’s house (Luke 19:9). In the Acts its meaning is also clear: ‘What must I do to be saved?’ and ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved’ (Acts 16:30f.). Then in the Epistles its use is plentiful and significant. The means of salvation are Christ and his atonement so that salvation, rightly understood, is deliverance from the enemies of sin, Satan, the world, the world

powers, the flesh, death, the wrath of God, the law, judgement and idols. Healing is also linked with salvation. The word ‘salve’ is linked with salvation.

of all men: is a significant statement. I Timothy 2:4 says God desires all men to be saved, and I John 2:2 says Christ is the propitiation not only for our sins but the sins of the whole world. Here, however, in ‘Titus’ Paul is directly addressing the slaves. Slavery often brings the sense of inferiority and of being abandoned by God. Paul is speaking of **salvation and grace** because these alone will enable the relationships demanded by Paul above. No one is too evil or inferior that he cannot be saved by ‘amazing grace’.

training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world,

training us: the verb can mean ‘teaching’, ‘educating’, ‘instructing’, ‘putting under discipline’ (cf. I Tim. 1 :20 ‘that they may *learn* not to blaspheme’; also II Tim. 2:25; 3: 16). Grace is often used as a licence for false freedom and careless living, but in fact grace disciplines. We would have to think of grace as having done a radical and regenerative work at baptism (cf. Titus 3:4–7).

to renounce: is really ‘having renounced’. Something has already happened (cf. II Cot. 5:17), even though grace goes on working. The seeming impossible demands Paul has made are quite reasonable in the light of this radical transformation of grace.

irreligion: is impiety, ungodliness, anti-godliness and is a state of mind that is basically blasphemous. It is a strong word, and a terrible state, arising from ‘no faith’ and ‘no

grace’.

worldly passions: are ‘the lust of the flesh and of the eyes’, and include ‘the pride of life’ (I John 2:16—17). Their background is a world—system divorced from God, its members seeking to find pleasure, power and fulfilment in the created world, yet ignoring its Creator and Redeemer, God. (See John 7:1; 1 Cor. 1:21; 7:29—31.)

to live **sober, upright, and godly lives:** i.e. they need to live consistently—as above—sober meaning ‘self-controlled’, ‘temperate’ (1:8; 2:2, 5). Notice that such sobriety is demanded of leaders, old men and young women.

upright: means ‘righteously’, i.e. according to God’s laws and requirements.

godly: is of course the opposite of ‘ungodly’, and just as dynamic—in the good way—so that the godly are those who know, love, obey and enjoy God in the relationship of grace through salvation.

in **this world:** i.e. ‘where we live’. It is a world of sin and confusion, that which tends to impinge upon life in the Christian community. See I Timothy 6:17 and II Timothy 4:10; riches are a temptation and the world itself can be attractive, seeing it gripped Demas. There is the warning that the world is dangerous, but also an assurance that the three things—sobriety, uprightness and godliness—can be carried out within it.

13 awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

awaiting our blessed hope: awaiting is a state of expectancy, and also of patience, but with a wonderful goal, for ahead of us lies the fulfilment.

blessed hope: in 1:2 it is ‘the hope of eternal life’. **Hope** is of many things. See Romans 8:24, for hope is linked with our salvation. Also Romans 5:1—5 because we rejoice in the **hope** of the glory of God. Hope must have an object, and from the true nature of that object comes the blessing. No hope? Then we are hopeless! So see Ephesians 1:17ff. and note the context of God’s plan in Ephesians 1:13—14.

the appearing of the glory: we saw in 2:11 and 3:5 that the verb is unusual and significant. It is *personal* manifestation of the Father and the Son, but manifestation as **glory**. Theophanies came to God’s people in the Old Testament but this will be God Himself. **Glory** is what man wishes to and needs to see, cf. Romans 8:17—18.

of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ: there is another possible rendering, ‘of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ’. Debate issues concerning these renderings. It is best to point back to **the glory** which is both of God and Christ. **Great** is not a term used elsewhere of God, and would fit Christ, who in any case is **the glory** of the Father. Matthew 16:27 says ‘Jesus will come in the Father’s glory’, and Matthew 25:31 ‘in his own glory’. See also I Corinthians 15:24 and Philippians 2:11. Even if the term **great God** is not applied to Jesus yet it will be the Son who will show that **glory**. He is one with the Father.

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

who gave himself for us: see Galatians 1:4; 2:20; I Timothy 2:6; Ephesians 5:2; and Mark 10:45. This is the gift of himself given voluntarily for us in death, cf. Philippians

2:8 and Ephesians 5:25. The act and work is indispensable. Who can plumb the depths and experience of ‘gave himself.’? **For us:** i.e. ‘on our behalf’.

to redeem us: the language of Mark 10:45 and I Timothy 2:6 relates here. Ransom was used in the case of a captive, a slave and a debtor. The thought behind ‘ransom’ is the *cost*. Psalm 49:7–9 emphasises this: ‘the ransom of a man’s soul is very costly’. Man is in the slavery of sin (Rom. 6:17, 20; John 8:34; Prov. 5:22; II Pet. 2: 19). He is in sin’s captivity—a prisoner of darkness. His debt to God is inestimable, cf, Matthew 18:21ff. The gift—the ransom—is his life given in bloody and violent death. There is no need to enquire as to who receives the ransom.

from all iniquity: in this case **iniquity** is the thing which possesses them. See Galatians 1:4—the giving is with a view to effecting something.

to purify for himself: Ezekiel 36:25–27 parallels this passage. (See also Eph. 5:25, 26; Heb. 1:3; Acts 22:16.) This carries the idea of personal purification (Titus 3:5; I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 9: 14) and such is seen in Titus 1:15. Note the pollution of man in Jeremiah 19: 7, Proverbs 25:26 and Mark 7:20–21. **To purify** also carries the idea of consecration, i.e. making a holy people for Himself (Exod. 19:5–6; I Pet. 2:9–10; I Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7). The whole thought here is sanctification and this involves personal cleansing, living in holiness, being God’s consecrated people, and the eschatological holiness which alone will permit entrance into the Holy City. See Matthew 5:8; Psalm 24:3–5; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 21:27; 22:11.

a people of his own: here the whole idea of the people of God appears. In both Old and New Testaments it is a covenant people. This is clearly expounded in I Peter 2:9–10. Often the term was ‘my people’. The AV has ‘a

peculiar people’, meaning—as in Exodus 19:5—‘my own possession’. It is the language of intimacy as in ‘Christ and his church’, but they are to be a people who are to share in the plan of God. For the whole idea of God’s people we must see the life and purpose of Israel, as also the life and purpose of the church, Christ’s true community.

who are zealous for good deeds: Israel had zeal but it was wrong (Rom. 10:2–3). Paul likewise had wrong zeal (Gal. 1: 14). The word means ‘eager for’. Note in Romans 12:1–2, Hebrews 9:14 and Revelation 7:14–15 (amongst other situations) that cleansing brings eagerness to worship and serve. Ephesians 2:8–10 with I Peter 2:9–10 shows the difference between works ‘not done in righteousness’ (Titus 2:5; II Tim. 1:9), and true works as seen in Matthew 5:16, Revelation 14:13–14 and II Corinthians 5:10. Note the difference that grace brings to the doing of works: it brings eagerness and not a legalistic obligation and pressure. Hence the works are pure worship (cf. Rom. 12:2; Heb. 9: 14; Rev. 7:14–15). The paradigm for the doing of works is Christ (John 5:17ff.; 9:4; etc.). Works that are true will be recognised as such (I Pet. 3:13). What we must realize is that we are co-workers with God (I Cor. 3:9) and that God is fulfilling His plan through us, which is His grace.

15 Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Declare these things: that is, all that Paul has been advising Timothy in regard to the church in Crete. Also too, the things which Titus is yet to say (3:1ff.). The verb *laleo* ‘to speak’ indicates that they must be spoken out.

exhort: often linked with prophecy (I Cor. 14:3f.), but

making demands whilst also encouraging, see 2:6f., II Timothy 4:1ff., noting I Timothy 3:14–17. All we need for knowing grace is in ‘the word of grace’. Titus is not simply to lay principles before them but give them instructions and directions.

reprove: the verb (*elegcho*) carries the idea of ‘put to the proof’, ‘test’, ‘convict’, ‘detect’, ‘expose’, ‘discipline’, ‘chastise’ and—here—‘rebuke’ or ‘reprove’. We see above that the Letter is all declaration, exhortation and reproofing.

with all authority: i.e. ‘with all impressiveness’. Titus must recognise the dignity and power of his commission. Each person must be ‘sent’ (Rom. 10: 10–15). Titus was an ‘apostolic delegate’ commissioned by Paul. See Titus I:15 where Paul’s authority is delegated to Titus, and a specific commission given to him. Even so the authority lies in the word of God (cf. I Pet. 4:11), and he who is under this authority speaks with authority.

Let **no one disregard** you: see I Timothy 4:12, where the word means ‘ignore’. The ministry is God–given and must be respected. Don’t put yourself down, and let others not do this. The word must be authoritative and make its impact. **Disregarding you** is ‘disregarding your commission’, and so, God! Note the forms of insulation and rejection that listeners develop to disregard the word.

CHAPTER THREE

I **Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, .to be ready for any honest work.**

remind them: i.e. ‘put them in mind’, ‘admonish them’, ‘bring to remembrance’. The thing is to keep them fresh in all these matters.

to be submissive: we have seen this principle of authority and submission in chapter two. Grace is its driving power, and of course, love, which responds to God’s love.

to rulers and authorities: this is always the burning human question, eg. ‘Are authorities *worth*’ of obedience?’ See Romans 13:1ff., I Peter 2:17. See also Acts 4:18–21; 5:28–32; 24:25; 26:25f.; cf. Matthew 10:20. All things are God’s though at some point they may be delegated to Caesar. See Matthew 22:21, Daniel 5:19. Crete had a history of civil disobedience (‘Polybius’, vi:46, ‘constantly upset by seditions and murders and tribal wars’).

to be obedient: that is, ‘absolutely obedient’. Sometimes it is translated ‘to be obedient to magistrates’, because the verb emphasises ‘obedience to civil powers’.

to be ready for any honest work: i.e. as against being forced to work. It links with the idea of obedience in community toil. Colossians 3:23, ‘Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men’. Note Paul’s ‘If any man will not work neither let him eat’ (II Thess. 3: 10), and ‘admonish idlers’ (I Thess. 5: 14). For

the doctrine of work see Ephesians 4:28. To be ready denotes the willing attitude.

2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all men.

to speak evil of no one: not to ‘defame, discredit, or rail at’. It is literally ‘blaspheme’ as in Acts 26:11, ‘I tried to make them blaspheme’. Here it is not so strong but see I Timothy 1:20, 6:1, Titus 2:5.

to avoid quarrelling: i.e. ‘not to be contentious, but to be peaceable, amenable’. What is the root of ‘quarrelling’ or ‘brawling’ (AV)? Is it not anger, insecurity and jealousy?

to be gentle: i.e. ‘forbearing’, ‘patient’. This goes with to show courtesy, which in fact is ‘meekness’ but not the sort that is servile:

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another;

For we ourselves were once foolish: by using we and once, Paul is including himself, and so all Jews and Gentiles. For **foolish** see Luke 24:25, ‘O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe’, Galatians 3:1, ‘O foolish Galatians who has bewitched you?’, and Romans 1:31, ‘foolish, faithless, heartless’. The idea is moral deficiency and defect, not seeing the truth, i.e. people who live in folly (I Tim. 6:9; II Tim. 3:9). It is the mind described in Romans 1:19ff.

disobedient: doubtless this refers back to the authorities of whom Paul has been speaking, but primarily disobedience is to God Himself (see Rom. 1:29–30). Romans 5:12–21 compares the disobedience of Adam to the obedience of Christ.

led astray: i.e. ‘deceived’. Deceit is basic to sin (Heb. 3:13; Rom. 7:11), to fallen man (Ps. 10:7; Jer. 19:7; Rom. 1:29), to lusts of the flesh (Eph. 4:22). Being deceived does not excuse us. Eve was deceived but punished (cf. Gen 3: 13; I Tim. 2: 14, ‘the woman was deceived and became a transgressor’).

slaves to various passions and pleasures: there is a range of **passions and pleasures**. **Passions** are lusts: **pleasures** are not the simple ones given by God and appropriate to genuine living—i.e. ‘He has given us all things richly to enjoy’—but the strong drive for compensatory joy to be an antidote to the dreads and fears of a guilt-ridden life. We were in fact **slaves** to these, not the initiators of them in free choice.

passing our days in malice and envy: Romans 1:28–31 shows the break up of all relationships when God gives man up to a ‘base’ or ‘reprobate’ mind. When the moral sense becomes calloused (cf. Eph. 4:17ff.) then all social unity and integrity fragments itself. In becoming anti-God, man becomes antisocial and anti-self. To hit at one’s fellow-man is to strike at God, in whose image man is made. **Malice** is not merely an attitude, but practical determination to be evil, and **envy** (the basis of malice) is self destructive. See Proverbs 14: 30, ‘A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion [**envy**, jealousy] rots the bones’.

hated by men and hating one another: man’s break with God is his break with man. In Romans 1:30 ‘haters of God’. The first word conveys the idea of ‘odious’ or

‘abominable’ (Titus 1:16), and the second the descent of man into the most terrible hopelessness. All love has been decimated.

In this one verse Paul has shown the state into which man has come by sin. This is the state from which the Cretans had to emerge.

4 but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared,

but when: Paul contrasts the ‘then’ of us as sinners, and the advent of Christ.

goodness and loving kindness: really cover the Old Testament idea of ‘grace’. Thus there is a parallel between this verse and Titus 2: 14.

goodness: (Gr. *chrestotes*) is really ‘kindness’ (AV) and is a word used only by Paul in the New Testament. It means ‘graciousness’, ‘kindness’, ‘God ever ready to pour out blessing and to forgive us’.

In Ephesians 2:5–8 Paul presents a similar contrast to verses 3–5 here and says, ‘that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in **kindness** towards us in Christ Jesus.’ See also Romans 2:4 and 11:22. The word in Matthew 11:30 is *chrestos*, i.e. ‘my yoke is gentle’, i.e. ‘kindly, not galling’. Thus **goodness** is contrasted to the harshness and bitterness of man in verse 3. Man also can exercise such kindness (II Cor. 6:6; Col. 3: 12). It is part of the harvest of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

loving kindness: the literal meaning is ‘love to man’ (Gr. *philanthropia*) from which we get our English ‘philanthropy’. It is generally the affection which equals share,

but also kindness towards those in trouble (Acts 28:2), and an active pity for the unfortunate.

of God our Saviour: not a new name for God. It is really ‘the Father our Saviour’. In 3:6 the same title is referred to Jesus Christ who is the Son (Titus 2:13). **Saviour** is (Gr. *soter*) and was applied to conquering kings who delivered the people from tyranny. It was the title given to Alexander the Great. Note the term **appeared** as in 2:11. This signifies a new epoch, the epoch of grace.

5 he saved us, not became of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit,

he saved us: i.e. from what we were as described in verse 3, but also from the penalty, pollution, and power of our own sins, as indicated in this very verse. Salvation is not *just from* the evil we have done, but *to the* new life given by that salvation, as we saw in Titus 2:11–14.

not became of deeds done by us in righteousness: this reminds us of II Timothy 1:9. The question is, ‘Did we (could we) do any works in righteousness?’ In the light of Isaiah 64:6 and other references (eg. Ps. 143:2; Gal. 2:1–21) it seems not. Paul, in other places, has dealt with the righteousness of the Mosaic law, and confessed that he had thought, once, that he had attained to it (cf. Phil. 3:9). The principle of Ephesians 2:8–10 applies to this passage. See also Galatians 2: 16ff.

but in virtue of his own mercy: i.e. that act of compassion wrought in the cross and resurrection of Christ, without which mere pity for our lostness would have been but pointless. The whole weight of the law we

once transgressed was against us, and although Paul does not mention it directly, it is by His mercy that **he saved us**.

by the washing of regeneration: some have ‘the laver of regeneration’ to point to the place of **washing**, but it is the **washing** itself to which Paul refers. Ephesians 5:26 has likewise, ‘the washing of water by the word’. This would refer to the principle of baptism, i.e. of death and resurrection with Christ.

The Greek word *paliggenesia* was a term used by the Greek Stoics to refer to certain restorations of the natural world. In Matthew 19:28 ‘in the new world’ means the regeneration of the original creation.

Acts 3:21 virtually refers to it in, ‘the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets’. The prophets in many ways promise ‘new heavens and a new earth’, eg. Isaiah 65: 17ff. and 66:22f. This regeneration is making the old to be new, though not necessarily different, so that the word ‘restoration’ must be one aspect of the radical and total *paliggenesia*.

This regeneration is not only universal, but national, as is shown in Ezekiel chapter 37, where it is first national in the regeneration of Israel, and then universal as the sanctuary of God—on earth—is established. Even so, the regeneration is also personal, for Ezekiel 36:24ff. is the pattern of the changed human heart, and doubtless one of the Scriptures Christ expected Nicodemus to know (John 3:1–14).

The **washing of regeneration** must be referred to the washing away of sins, a principle Paul knew personally and thoroughly. So see Acts 22: 16, I Corinthians 6:9–11, Titus 1:15, etc. As said above, it is linked with baptism (I Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16) but primarily to the atonement (Heb. 1:3; 9:14), so that the ritual of baptism does not *ex opere*

operato effect cleansing. In any case it is God who is active in baptism (cf. Rom. 6:1–10; Col. 2:11–15). In Ezekiel chapter 36 it is ‘the new heart’, and ‘the new spirit [Spirit]’ which is linked with ‘I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols’.

This new birth is spoken of by Paul (here with II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:14–15; cf. 5:5); by James (1:18); Peter (I Pet. 1:3, 23); John (7 times; cf. I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5: 1, 4, 18); and Jesus (John 3:3f.), where new birth is linked with seeing and entering the Kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 18:3–4).

and renewal in the Holy Spirit: we have seen above that the *paliggenesia* in the Old Testament (both universal and personal) is linked with the Holy Spirit. See, too, Psalm 104:29–30, ‘You send forth your Spirit, and they are created, and you renew the face of the earth’. The Greek term **renewal** is *anakainosis* and is used only in Romans 12:2, II Corinthians 4:16, and Colossians 3:10. It can be understood in the light of Ezekiel 36:25–26, and Paul’s conversion linking Acts 9:17 and 22:16 where baptism cleanses and the Spirit fills and renews. The preposition *in* is used in this verse, but some translations have *by*. I Corinthians 12:13 combines both thoughts. In any case the Holy Spirit effects new birth which is **renewal**, but then **renewal** is not only an initial crisis but a daily work also (Eph. 4:22ff.; Col. 3: 10). Believers live/n the Spirit, and they live also *by* the Spirit, as also the Spirit lives/n them, as we see in Romans 8:9–11; II Timothy 1:14; II Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 5:16, 18, 25; Ephesians 5:18; Jude 20.

6 which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour,

which: refers to the Holy Spirit.

he poured out upon us: tells us that regeneration and renewal are by the Holy Spirit. The idea of ‘pouring out’ is found in many Old Testament passages, and also in the New Testament, eg. Isaiah 44:3; 35:6–7; 41:17–18; Joel 2:28–29; Zechariah 12: 10. The passages of Ezekiel 36:25–26 and 37:1–14 are also linked. This would relate to John’s promise of a baptism in the Holy Spirit, confirmed and effected by Christ, and seen at Pentecost (compare Joel 2:28 with Acts 2: 17–18).

In Acts the Spirit ‘falls’ or ‘comes upon’ or ‘fills’. The term **richly** is ‘abundantly’, i.e. ‘all that is needed ‘fitting the ‘abundant life’ of John 10: 10, and the ‘abundant grace’ of Romans 5:17– 21. We note that the richness of the Christ is dependent upon God as Saviour, Christ as Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as the applier of salvation.

through Jesus Christ our Saviour: Acts 2:33 makes it clear that Jesus sent the Spirit, having ascended. John the Baptist’s promises were that Jesus would be the baptiser. John chapters 14 to 16 show that Jesus prayed that the Father would send the Spirit, and that Jesus himself would send the Spirit.

7 so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

so that: i.e. the action of the sending of the Spirit and his work is to effect justification and the making of heirs who have hope of eternal life.

we might be justified by his grace: for notes on justification by grace see our exposition on Titus 2:11. The emphasis is **justified by his grace** and not ‘justified’ by

faith. God is the initiator of grace (Rom. 3:24; 5:17), and such grace evokes faith, and faith is the means of receiving the effects of grace. We see that ‘the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit’ cannot be divorced. One never exists apart from the other. The faith used in justification is not faith/n justification but faith/n Christ who is the justifier.

and become heirs in hope of eternal life: not ‘heirs of eternal life’ but **heirs in hope**. Everything the believer has is **in hope**. Romans 8:24 says, ‘For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?’ Galatians 5:5 teaches, ‘For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of justification’. This principle obtains for all things. **Hope of eternal life** covers everything that will be eternal such as resurrection, glorification, inheritance, the becoming a kingdom of priests, and thus our reigning upon the earth, forever.

8 The saying is sure. I desire yon to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men.

The saying is sure: some scholars see this as affirming what is said above, and so as setting the note of authority for all the things that have been said, whereas others see it as setting authority for what will be said following this verse. In any case the Pastoral Letters often use this formula as in I Timothy 1: 15; 3:1; 4:9; and It Timothy 2:11. This kind of statement is much like the ‘Truly, truly’ Jesus so often used. It draws attention and demands obedience.

I desire yon to insist on these things: to insist on these

things certainly refers primarily to what follows, but then what follows is dependent upon the work of grace outlined in verses 4 to 7.

This is confirmed by **those who have believed** in God. Believing is not just for salvation, but for good works (Eph. 2: 10: see what we have said on Titus 2: 14). Believing is not just assenting and trust, but is also obedience.

be careful to apply themselves to good deeds: to apply means ‘to be master of’, ‘practised in’. Doing good works is a deliberate act, and, in one sense, an art learned, and a way of life that is habituated. The AV has ‘to maintain’.

these are excellent and profitable to men: i.e. no work is without point and purpose. All the ethical admonitions (as in the Sermon on the Mount) are intended to be practical and effect results.

9 *But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile.*

But avoid: Paul is thinking of two things, (i) the false teachers who always seem to be in the early (and later) churches; and (ii) the quarrelsome nature of the Cretans. and, indeed, of anyone. tie speaks similarly in I Timothy 1:4. **Avoid** in English means ‘make void’, and Paul is really saying, ‘Make a point of doing this: don’t be caught up in these things’.

controversies: are really ‘questionings’, i.e. calling the truth into question, and casting aspersions upon it, thus creating doubt. In this case, the **controversies** are **foolish** (cf. II Tim. 2:23).

genealogies: relate to long and rambling stories from the

past, fables and myths, and the colouring of the Gospel truth with, and from, these stories, so altering things. They are something like ‘traditions’, and are Jewish. They are certainly not the Gospel.

dissensions and quarrels over the law: see again I Timothy 1:4. The law constitutes one of the deepest problems of man, hence dissensions, i.e. ‘contentions’ (cf. I Tim. 6:4), and quarrels, i.e. ‘strivings’ (II Tim. 2:23). Paul is always at pains to explain what is sensible and necessary, but not to seek to answer intransigent attitudes to it, as the next verse shows. He is of course referring *to false* teaching concerning the law.

10 *As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him,*

As for a **man who is factious:** The word is in the Greek *hairesitikos*, from which we get our modern word ‘heretic’, but it was not used in that way in Paul’s day. See I Corinthians 11:19 and Galatians 5:20. From the context we gather such a person was chronically quarrelsome, opinionative, and speculative, and that this affected not only teaching but also practice. Teaching is always related to practice.

after admonishing him once or twice: the word **admonishing** (Greek noun is *nouthesia*), is a much used word in the New Testament (see Acts 20:31; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28; 3:16; etc.). For the most part it is helpful, and only here, final.

have nothing more to do with him: this does not mean excommunication or even official excluding of him, but refusal to tangle with his wrangle.

11 knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

such a person is perverted and sinful: here is an explanation for the avoiding of such a person. He is shown to be evil, and stubborn. His teaching is related to his practice, and his practice condemns him, **he is self-condemned**. Had his practice been good then there would have been some sense in his questions and teaching.]

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

When I send Artemas and Tychicus to you: it seems they would be substitutes for Titus whilst he would be away with Paul. **Artemas** is unknown but **Tychicus** seems to have been a close associate of Paul. See II Timothy 4: 12, where Paul sent him to Ephesus, probably to relieve Timothy.

do your best to come to me: Paul wanted Titus to come to him. See 1:4, 'Titus my true child in a common faith'. The desire was personal, but the object may have been more teaching, tutoring, and discussion over the matter of Crete.

come to me at Nicopolis: probably the city of that name in Epirus. This city, then, would be a good one for Paul, having as it did a harbour, a large population, and so commerce and some comfort for the ageing apostle, and at the same time in close enough proximity to the churches in Achaia, with which Paul could have communication and fellowship.

for I have decided to spend the winter there: this indicates that Paul was not in prison and was free to move about.

13 Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.

Zenas the lawyer: possibly a converted Jew who had been a man at law', or a Gentile who had been converted, being a lawyer prior to that conversion.

Apollos: we know well, especially when we read Acts 18:24–28; I Corinthians 16:12; 1:12; 3:22–23; 4:6. He was regarded as an apostle, was a close friend of Paul, a great orator, and a man who opposed any 'party spirit'.

speed... on their way: these two men were at Crete, either visiting or assisting Titus.

see that they lack nothing: i.e. either in hospitality for staying in Crete, or material help for their journey.

14 And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.

learn to apply themselves to good deeds: this is the principle of Galatians 6: 10, i.e. doing 'good to all men and especially to those of the household of faith'. Paul may be repeating the thoughts of Titus 2:14 and 3:8, yet probably he is speaking of cases of need such as those who were pastors and teachers, and who relied on the gifts of the people. Practical usefulness is the real thrust. 'Hospitality' is a word that is used a lot in the Epistles, yet it is not mere

socialising, but rather the meeting of **urgent needs**. It could refer to travelling ministry or those in poverty. It was not a parting shot at the Cretans, but a closing reiteration of the truth that out of grace proceeds true deeds.

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

All **who are with me**: Paul was never a loner. He always ministered with a team, and related well to people. His present 'team' send their greetings.

those who love us in the faith: makes the greeting both intimate and to the point, instead of being too general.

Grace be with you all: Paul never fails to end his letters (as also he begins them) with the greeting of grace. This he sees as the prime need, yet not only for the Cretans, but for all.

THE MESSAGE OF PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS — AS IT RELATES TO US TODAY

God's Word is for us Today

There are many ways of studying Scripture. There are also a number of reasons for doing so. One can be curious about the past, i.e. have an antiquarian curiosity which wants to know how people lived then, and what things were relevant to them. An antiquarian interest probably supposes that what happened then would not be greatly relevant to us today.

We could study Paul's Letters with this mind-set, and were we to do so, would lose much of their value. Some scholars insist that many of the biblical writers were so much the children of their day, and so strongly conditioned by their cultural background that there can be small relevancy for us, in our day, in their writings and pronouncements.

For example, Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea and even today has little influence on what we think and the way we go about life. What value, then, could a Letter written some nineteen hundred years ago have for us now? Even on Crete itself, such a Letter would figure little in its present ways of faith and practice.

Well, this is one way of thinking, one way of examining

the document known as ‘Paul’s Letter to Titus’. Another way would be to deculturise the Letter, and sift out principles which ostensibly might have value for us, since Christianity is an historic religion, and has a certain continuity of ethical and moral values.

In fact there may be many more ways of studying an old document such as the one before us. When, however, we think of it not simply as the word of Paul to Titus, and consider that it may well be the word of God to us, now, and in any age, then the document takes on another shape and meaning altogether. God is always contemporary with His word. By that we mean, that because His word is recorded it does not mean that it is not as dynamic at this point in time as in the moment when it was uttered.

The truth is that the word of God is never present to us without Him, the Speaker. Paul had no doubt that the word he wrote to Titus was the word of God. We only have to read the Book of the Acts to see that each apostolic proclaimer believed that what he was saying was the word of God. As Jesus could say, ‘Thy word is truth,’ so the apostles believed they were uttering the truth, however much of their humanity was also present in the modes and manners of uttering that truth.

The apostles call it, ‘the word of God’, ‘the word of truth’, ‘the word of this salvation’, and so on. They also talked of it ‘growing’, ‘spreading’, ‘increasing’, and they were glad to commend people to it, calling it ‘the word of grace’, and as such seeing it as ‘the grace of God’. They would never have dreamed that a time or situation might arise where—and when—that word could be called ‘irrelevant’. For them—as we have said—there was no ‘word’ without the ‘Speaker’. God, for them, is not caught in a time web.

Another simple way of saying all that we have considered above is: ‘Man has not changed in 1900 years. His cultural situations have always been many and varied and will continue to be so. In all of these racial, cultural, generational and human differences the Gospel is wholly relevant to the human situation, and to man’s dilemma as a sinful creature alienated from his Holy Creator. The Gospel never varies in its power to redeem man, and to build him up in spiritual living and maturity, and finally give him an eternity of freedom and responsibility.’

Titus, Crete, and us Today

Paul called Titus, ‘My true child in the faith’. Titus had not only come into the faith through Paul, but he reflected, even more than Timothy, the strengths that were Paul’s. He had been well trained and taught, and he was always able to appeal to Paul for the wisdom he needed in proclaiming the Gospel and building up the churches. In this sense he was not fatherless.

We have the same Gospel, the same humanity, the same frail flesh, and the same great grace to aid us. Paul, for us, has not passed from our ken. Some of us feel ourselves as close to the man as when he lived. His writings are still powerful to grip us and hold us. What is more, as he received the Gospel not from men, nor through men, so—in reality—that has been our experience. We have not had the spectacular ‘Damascus Road’ experience, but regeneration needs to be as total in every—and any—human being as it was in Paul.

When we read Paul we *recognise* what he is saying, for we have already known this. It is just that we marvel that

one man could so contain the counsel of God, that he could unveil and verify it for succeeding generations. We need not trace his history but we can say that nothing Paul said could have been stronger than his own experience of it. He was not a theorist. He knew all the power of God, and knew it to be in the Gospel. He only told what he had seen and heard.

That is why Crete and its church—or churches—did not dismay him. Whenever we meet a culture, or a missionary writes back and complains about the basic crudeness of the people, the quarrelsome temperament of the race, and the constant fragmenting of relationships, we can hear patient Paul saying—and even can see his warm grin—'One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ' What situation could be worse?

When Titus writes and is perhaps a bit disappointed at the slow progress of ethical and moral growth, Paul can look at what these people had been as Gentiles, and know how far they had come. When he calls for warnings, rebukes, admonitions, and exhortations he does it on one basis—grace! It is foolish to read his Epistle unless you see the heart of it is 2:11–14, with the parallel of 3:4–7.

Paul was never ashamed of the Gospel, not simply because he had seen it change human beings, but because he knew it was tailored by God to meet the depravity of man and regenerate him. He believed that out of these transformed people such elders and leaders could be created who were not fated to be bound by their Cretan culture and beginnings. He believed the Gospel produced mature men and women: men who could shepherd the flock, and women who could teach the younger women the ways of true wifeness, motherhood and sisterhood. He

believed young men could be brought to sane, and sober, and useful states of mind. He believed that family life could be changed from what it had been to what was now the true Christian way of living.

So, then, nothing has changed *essentially*. This is encouraging. The Letter to Titus tells us that we can go into any culture and proclaim Christ and some will respond to the Gospel, will come to him, be redeemed from their past, and be given a new future, and that they will worship the God of heaven in Spirit and in truth. They will grow in the faith. They will develop pastoral hearts and learn to exercise pastoral care.

Now that is all heartening. Today we have our Pauls and our Tituses, our Cretes, as well as our Corinthians and our Ephesuses. Yet, at the same time, we have the ones Paul called *hairesis*—the quarrellers and the questioners, the legalists and the antinomians. We have people who breed division and who seek to bring fragmentation. We have those who are caught up in the esoteric and occult. These seek to change the shape of the Gospel, and yet this wrongness and evil is seen in their lives. They may be clever, but they are morally wrong. They are, as Paul said, 'self-condemned', because they do not bring forth good fruit.

If we did not have the New Testament Epistles, and if we lacked the three Pastoral Letters, we would be in a quandary. Paul shows that churches do not grow apart from the mainstream of life, and are not free from interference by those who seek to spread dissension and strife. He shows us that the Gospel is powerful to attend to these matters. He speaks of the greatness of God. He is 'our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ', 'God our Saviour', and 'Jesus Christ our Saviour'.

He also says, ‘the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men’, and says it is this grace which is ‘training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright and godly lives/n *this world...*’ This is ‘the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour’, and it ‘has appeared’ and brings with it, ‘the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit’.

These powers, Paul reasons, can and do transform human beings. He has seen it happen, but then he knew it could not be otherwise—given in the grace and love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We conclude that the Gospel Paul preached, the ministry of Titus, the church situation in Crete, and the pastoral teaching that Paul gave are all relevant for us today. The reading of this Epistle—nay, a fine and close study of it—will greatly reward us.