

A VETERAN'S ADVICE TO A YOUNG WARRIOR

BIBLE TEXT : II Timothy 3:14-17; 4:1-8; I Timothy 6:11, 12.

LESSON 416 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Timothy 6:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

¹⁵ And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

¹ I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

⁶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Inspiration of the Scriptures

1. Timothy is encouraged to continue in the things that he had learned, II Timothy 3:14.
2. The Holy Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith, II Timothy 3:15.
3. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, II Timothy 3:16, 17.

II Solemn Charge

1. Timothy is charged before God and Jesus Christ to preach the Word, II Timothy 4:1, 2.
2. The time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, II Timothy 4:3, 4.
3. Encouragement is given for Timothy to make full proof of his ministry, II Timothy 4:5; I Timothy 6:11, 12.

III The Waiting Crown

1. "The time of my departure is at hand," II Timothy 4:6.
2. "I have fought a good fight," II Timothy 4:7.
3. "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," and not for "me only," II Timothy 4:8.

NOTES:

What stirring words are these of our text! The veteran Apostle Paul gave his parting advice to the young minister, Timothy, who had the future lying before him. The Apostle, too, had started his Christian service at a comparatively young age, giving all the remaining years of his life in preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dangers, hardships, persecutions, afflictions were his lot through his entire ministry, and finally he was imprisoned, and there he awaited his martyrdom. Paul presented no prospects of Christian soldiery being any easier for Timothy. This was not a very bright outlook from the temporal standpoint for one of Paul's successors, but the whole outlook for one starting out to serve the Lord must be spiritual. He must look Heavenward, not earthward.

The Christian is entering a warfare, not a profession; he is to be a soldier, not a tradesman; he is to endure hardships, not enjoy ease; his life is to be one of self-denial, not a life of self-gratification. The veteran Apostle could sum up his life with these words: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He could look forward to a sure and shining reward in Heaven, and thus every word he had for Timothy (and applicable to us as well) was an encouragement and an inspiration from the spiritual standpoint.

Inspiration

The young man Timothy had been fortunate in that he was taught from an early age the value and truth of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Authorised King James Version, the Bible, which we use and recommend, says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The American Standard Version, a Bible that we cannot

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

1 Timothy 6:11

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

1 Timothy 6:12

¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

recommend, says, "Every scripture inspired of God, . . ." leaving out the word "is." This leaves a doubt that some Scripture may not be inspired of God. Many would have us believe that not all Scripture is inspired; but if there were a question about some of the Scripture not being inspired, who is to determine which is inspired and which is not? We can safely take the King James Version of the Bible at its full face value and take our stand on its being the inspired Word of God. In that we are safe and sure. It is our duty to take God at His Word.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Those words ring true. There is no apology there. Positive assurance marks the pen of divine inspiration. The Word of God is supreme to us. It is the final authority, the only court of appeal. If we have troubles within or troubles without, we can go to the Word of God and get a solution for them, regardless of the nature of that trouble. All Scripture is needed to thoroughly furnish us into all good works.

Continuing in the Gospel

The admonition to Timothy said, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of." Does not that apply to us today? Certainly it does. What does the Word of God teach, and what are the lessons learned in the Gospel? We have learned the purity and power of God's eternal truth. We have learned the importance of making no compromise with the sin of the world, or of deviating from God's truth. We have learned to have spiritual integrity and spiritual loyalty. We have learned to be true to the cause and to the purpose that we espoused when we surrendered our heart and life to God. It is not enough merely to learn and know the Scriptures; but to receive the ultimate reward, one must continue in and practice the things that he has learned and proved.

The Last Mile

Paul was coming to the end of his journey. The verses of our lesson are among his last recorded words. He had no regrets for his loyalty and faithfulness to the truth that had been revealed to his heart when on the way to Damascus he met Christ. At that time he was a young man. Now he is Paul the aged. He has fought many a battle, has endured many an affliction. He could well say to Timothy, "Endure afflictions." Timothy could expect to meet hardships; afflictions would come his way; and he was bound to have enemies. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Much of Paul's persecution was from the people who professed godliness. He suffered at the hands of false brethren. But he said, "I am now ready to be offered, . . . I have fought a good fight." He was literally going to be offered up. He sealed his testimony with his own blood. He has won the crown of which he spoke, that the Lord will give to those who love Him.

"I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." That is the secret of Christian success in this world, regardless of what it costs. Heaven is cheap at any cost. If we are going to enter Heaven, we will have to keep the faith. We will have to continue to walk in the light. We will have to continue to press towards the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is a fight from start to finish, and Paul said it is a "good fight." It was a good fight for Paul because he kept near and dear to his heart the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

Fight of Faith

A real Christian is a real soldier. The very fact that the Word

QUESTIONS

1. What was Timothy to do with the things of Scripture that he had learned?
2. When had Timothy learned the Holy Scriptures?
3. What Scripture is given by inspiration of God?
4. Name at least four things for which Scripture is profitable.
5. What happens to the people who will not endure sound doctrine?
6. Was Timothy's Christian life expected to be easy, or difficult?
7. How did the Apostle Paul sum up his life?
8. What was laid up for Paul? Who gives this reward?
9. Who will receive a similar reward?

says, "Fight," implies that there is resistance; there is opposition to go up against, and there is an adversary. Our adversary is not flesh and blood, but, as the Word of God tells us, it is the prince of the power of the air — the devil.

"Lay hold on eternal life." What is eternal life? "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Do you know God? There is only one way to know God: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (I John 2:3). Then nobody can know God if he does not keep God's commandments. That does not mean just one commandment — that means to keep **all** of them. Some may wonder how it is possible to keep all of God's commandments. The Bible says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-40). "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," Jesus said.

This is a good fight! You have to be a good soldier, or you will not fight a good fight. And He says, "Endure hardness." If you think you are going to be carried to Heaven on flowery beds of ease, you are mistaken. It takes all you have, and on top of that the grace of God, to be a Christian! God says that the race is not to the swift, neither is the battle to the strong. You do not have to be strong — physically strong — to be a good soldier of Christ. You do not have to be able to run fast physically to win this race.

A Minister's Duty

All true ministers of the Gospel preach the doctrine in its purity and power and in its fullness. Paul's sacred charge to Timothy, "Preach the word," was not confined to Timothy alone. That solemn charge is to every minister of the Gospel.

One may not be a minister in the sense that he preaches the Word from a pulpit, but each true Christian is a minister in the sense that he is a follower of the lowly Nazarene. The life lived will preach either for or against Christianity. One's life and doctrine should be consistent with the standards of truth the Bible holds forth.

In II Timothy 4:2, we read what the duties of the preacher are. He is to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. He is to preach the part of the Word that encourages and uplifts and inspires; and he is also to preach the part that uncovers the sin, the false pretence, and the sham in the lives of men. Then the Apostle adds, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Was there ever a time when that particular portion of Scripture was more fulfilled than it is today?

Right Season

"Be instant in season, out of season." The Apostle Paul used the opportunities and occasions that opened to him to preach the Gospel and give the testimony of his faith in Christ Jesus. No doubt, tact and wisdom are as needful as zeal, but a time that seems "out of season" to some may be "in season," so far as God is concerned. Felix heard Paul concerning the faith in Christ. Felix trembled and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). God's "convenient season" is now: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). It would do much good if Christian people would proclaim more often the good news of their salvation.