

8. Explain "shamefastness and sobriety".
9. Paul did, and did not, permit women to teach—explain when, where, and why.
10. Explain the two reasons for the subjection of woman to man.
11. Explain Vs. 15.

III. CHURCH OFFICERS 3:1-16

A. Office of the Overseer (3:1-7)

1. THE ELDER. 1-7

Text 3:1-7

1 Faithful is the saying, if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; 4 one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Thought Questions 3:1-7

63. Why use the prefatory words: "Faithful is the saying"?
64. Why would this be such a desirable work? Is this a work, or an office?
65. Is the bishop the same man as the elder? Prove your answer.
66. No man can be completely "without reproach"; how shall we understand this phrase?
67. Does the text say an elder *must* be a married man? Explain.
68. Explain in your own words the meaning of the term "temperate."
69. In what particulars must a bishop be "sober-minded"?
70. Are we discussing ideals, or actual essential qualifications?
71. In what sense must a bishop be "orderly"?
72. How would it be known that a man was "given to hospitality"?
73. Some elders are "apt not to teach"; explain the phrase "apt to teach".
74. How would one serving as an elder, ever be involved in an accusation of being "quarrelsome over wine"?
75. How are we to define and apply the term "striker" as here used?
76. Show the contrast between "a striker" and one who is "gentle".

77. Almost every leader in the church has been accused of being "contentious" at one time or another; how shall we decide who is and who is not?
78. What are the symptoms of one who is sick with "love for money"?
79. In what sense is a man to rule his own house? Cf. 5:14.
80. Does Paul mean by the qualifications that a man *must* be married and have a family to be an elder?
81. Who determines whether children are "in subjection"?
82. What is "the condemnation of the Devil"? Why would a novice be particularly susceptible?
83. How does, "the reproach of the Devil" differ from, the "condemnation of the Devil"?

Paraphrase 3:1-7

1 When about to elect bishops, thou shouldst remember that this saying is true, if one earnestly seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a work, which, though very laborious, is both honourable and beneficial, as it promotes the glory of God and the good of mankind.

2 Therefore a bishop ought to be free from blame; the husband of one wife, at a time; attentive to this duty and to his people; prudent in his conduct; of comely behaviour; hospitable to strangers; fit to teach, by having good knowledge of the things he is to teach, a clear manner of expressing his thoughts, and an earnest desire to instruct the ignorant.

3 He must not be addicted to wine, nor of such a hasty temper as to be a striker of those who provoke him, or one who gains money by sinful, or even dishonourable occupations, but equitable in judging of the offences which any of his flock may commit; not a noisy, abusive, quarrelsome talker, nor covetous in his dealings.

4 He must be one who possesseth such wisdom and firmness as to govern properly his own family. In particular, he must have his children in subjection to him; as becometh the gravity of his character, and his reputation for prudence.

5 For if one be not capable of governing so small a society as his own family, but suffers his children to be disobedient and vicious, how shall he govern in a proper manner that greater and more important society, the church of God?

6 A bishop must not be one newly converted, lest being puffed up with pride on account of his promotion, he fall into the punishment inflicted on the devil.

7 Moreover, before his conversion, he must have behaved in such a manner as even to have a good testimony from the heathens; that he may not be liable to reproach for the sins he committed before his conversion, and fall into the snare of the devil, who by these reproaches may tempt him to renounce the gospel.

Comment 3:1-7

Vs. 1. There is some little disagreement as to whether we should relate the expression, "Faithful is the saying . . ." with "but she shall be saved through her child bearing"—or "if a man seeketh the office of a bishop he desireth a good work." We prefer to associate the expression with 3:1 rather than 2:15, although we offer nothing but opinion for the preference. There are three other times when the expression "Faithful is the saying" is used: I Tim. 1:15; II Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8. They offer no help, for the expression: "faithful saying" both follows and precedes in these examples. Whatever else we can say, it is certain that the office of overseer is one to be greatly desired.

It should not be necessary to say that there is but one office for "elder" and "overseer". Here are two names for the same office—Cf. Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5 for interchangeable use of the terms.

Paul writes of a strong desire for this office and work. This desire should be in the candidate, it should arise as he contemplates the work he is to do. The glory of service and work for the Lord should ever be before possible candidates for the office of elder. In most places neither the office nor the work are well enough known to create any desire for the overseership. When elders are doing their God-given work among the congregation, men will want to be like them. We read of elders visiting the sick, (James 1:27; 5:12, 14) feeding the flock on the word and protecting the flock from enemies—(Acts 20:29-31). When such work is being done or pointed out as being necessary, men will be attracted to the office. Let us mark carefully *both* words: it is *worthy*, and it is *work*.

Vs. 2. We offer no special outline of arrangement for the qualifications (although we have read a good number of arbitrary

groupings). Let us simply proceed in the order Paul gives:

"without reproach"—We ought to say that it is our firm persuasion that Paul expected the congregations in Ephesus to be able to clearly see and approve every one of these qualifications in the lives of every one of their elders. Indeed with only two exceptions ("apt to teach" and "not a novice") *all* the qualifications are to be found in all Christians.

"Without reproach" means "not to be taken hold upon"—if one is to be taken hold of there must be a handle, i.e. some obvious flaw in his character upon which men seize to bring upon him blame and reproach. The candidate for this office should be without a handle.

"the husband of one wife"—There is so much controversy and contention on some points of Scripture that one hesitates to advance any opinion. It has been my careful conclusion that Paul is discussing the moral quality of the candidate for the eldership. He is saying such a man must be the husband of only ONE wife—not more than one. The elder must be a "one woman" type man, both in thought and practice. A most thorough-going study of this subject can be found in *Scriptural Elders and Deacons* by H. E. Phillips, pp. 97ff, published by Phillips Publications, Gainesville, Florida. This is the most complete review of the subject I have found—although I do not concur in his conclusion.

"temperate"—The word here translated "temperate" is translated "sober" later in the qualifications. Originally the word meant a complete abstinence from wine. Here it is used metaphorically of our attitude of life. It is translated "vigilant" in the King James Version. Perhaps the English meaning associated with the words "sober" and "vigilant", carries a complete definition of this qualification.

II Timothy 4:5 compares very well with I Timothy 3:2. The thought of being "temperate" refers to an attitude of mind which is reflected in the life. This attitude is not of "just taking a little", but of sober, careful judgment in all matters.

"sober-minded"—balanced judgment; not carried away by every "wind of doctrine". Men are needed in the church today who hold such deep-seated convictions that no amount of difficulty will move them from their faith and work.

"orderly"—this has more than reference to appearance, although we believe it relates to that. An unordered, slovenly appearance is usually indicative of an unordered, slovenly mind.

The elder should be a true gentleman in the best use of the word.

"hospitable"—Lenski has wisely observed that *"hospitable"* and *"apt to teach"* belong together as something the elder is to impart to others. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; I Pet. 2:9 should be read concerning hospitality. The social and political circumstances of Paul's day, to say nothing of the economic status of the Christians, would make hospitality especially welcome. The genuine desire to make our house the home of needy, Christian strangers, rich or poor, is so very sadly lacking and sorely needed in the church today.

"apt to teach"—This does not refer to a willingness to teach, but to the ability to do so. As to whether a man has such ability can best be decided by those with whom he labors and whom he tries to teach. Each and every elder should have such ability. Read I Tim. 5:17 as to the teaching responsibility.

Vs. 3. *"no brawler or quarrelsome over wine"*—This is to say no *"winebibber"*; we would refer to him today as a *"wino"*. What conditions prevailed in the church that such a prohibition needed to be included?

"No striker; but gentle"—These two qualifications should be considered together. A striker is one who is ready with the fists at the slightest provocation. Some have learned to use their tongues instead of their fists but they are still a *"striker"*. In contrast is the one who is *"gentle toward all."* Here is the thought of yielding but not compromising.

"Not contentious"—Not one who likes to fight, but one who does not like to fight—not the fighting kind.

"No lover of money"—Of course this refers to loving what money can do. It is this quality of heart that makes a man covetous. The idolatry of money-worship is ever near us.

Vs. 4. *"one that ruleth well his own household"*—The thought of overseeing in the household or family situation in the same manner as in the church situation is the point here. Go home with the prospective elder and observe the conduct of his wife and children. Do they respect him? Is he regarded as competent by those who know him best? The obedience of the children should be held as a serious responsibility by the Christian father.

Vs. 5. If a man fails at home he will surely fail in public. The care of the church is of a much more complicated nature than that of the home, and yet it compares favorably in several particulars. The inescapable conclusion is: to be deficient in one is to be deficient in both.

Vs. 6. *Just who is a novice?* When is a man to be considered a "new convert"? This is surely a relative matter. The appointment of elders on the first missionary journey in the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Cf. Acts 14:23), is a point in question. How long had such men been Christians? We could assume that some of them were elders in the synagogue before they became Christians, but that would only be an assumption. The power of pride must here be considered. How large a part does ego have in a man's character? Some men are far more vain than others. How long will it be before the power of Christ in the heart will overcome the power of pride? Such questions must be answered before we can refer to such a man as a novice, or not a novice.

"the condemnation of the devil"—Is this referring to the particular punishment God will give the devil? Or does this mean the condemnation brought on by the devil? The third possibility refers to the judgment or punishment meted out by the devil on those who fell under his power. We prefer the first of these—i.e., the particular judgment God has reserved for Satan. This was brought about through the pride of Satan: he thought of himself much more highly than he ought to have thought; he assumed an office to which God had not appointed him; and in which he was not prepared to serve; for this cause God removed him from heaven. The new convert who is "wrapped in his own pride", as if wrapped in fog, cannot be a proper candidate for the office of elder, and is about to repeat Satan's sin, and if so would receive Satan's condemnation. How much better to anticipate and prevent, than not to anticipate and regret.

Vs. 7. Prior to his conversion, and subsequent to it, the candidate for the eldership must have conducted himself in such a manner, that those non-Christian friends and neighbors who knew him best, would be able to tell how uprightly and unblameably he conducted himself. We are not referring to his Christian friends or neighbors, but rather to those on the "outside". Can those who work with him or near him say of him that he does his work well and treats his fellow workmen in a fair and unselfish manner? The reproach and snare of the devil is not at all the same as "the condemnation of the devil".

If a man were appointed to the office of elder, and yet he was the butt of ridicule and jokes by those "on the outside" because of his inconsistent conduct, then indeed he has fallen into the devil's trap, and justly deserves to be reproached or accused by Satan. The

devil sets the trap and then reproaches those who fall into it. This snare or trap is prepared each time we profess one thing and live another. What a pit in which to fall!

Fact Questions 3:1-7

51. What is the "faithful saying", and why so called?
52. Is an elder and a bishop the same man? Prove your answer.
53. How does one obtain a strong desire for the office?
54. Give the meaning of the expression, "without reproach"?
55. Could any single man be an elder? Explain.
56. Meaning of the expression, "temperate"?
57. If a man was "temperate" wouldn't he already be "sober-minded"?
58. Aren't some "unorderly" men doing more for God than some "orderly" ones? How does this relate to the qualifications?
59. Is there some way in which we can tell when a man is "given to hospitality"? If so, how?
60. Who shall decide if a man is "apt to teach"? How?
61. Explain how a "brawler" could even be considered for the eldership—to say nothing of being qualified for the office.
62. What type of gentleness must be manifest in the character of the elder?
63. When is a man contentious and not just constructively critical?
64. Is it possible to "love money", and still not have much of it? What is the deeper difficulty?
65. Who would venture to say when any man "ruled well his own household"? How could this knowledge be obtained? What about invading the privacy of the home?
66. What are the symptoms of "being puffed up"?
67. Satan has set a very deadly snare—it is discussed in the 7th verse. Explain how to avoid it.

BALLOT

ELDER

NAME _____

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER

(Check on line where candidate qualifies)

Positive qualifications

1. _____ *He must desire the office and seek it.* I Tim. 3:1. This would suggest that a man should consider the office one

of privilege, and he should constantly be preparing his life so as to be a fit candidate for it.

- 2.——*The bishop must be without reproach or blameless.* I Tim. 3:2a; Titus 1:6a; 7a. He would hold this position before man and not God, for no one is blameless or without reproach before God. As the persons of the congregation, where he is contemplating the office of elder, view his life, they should be able to find nothing blameworthy about it.
- 3.——*The husband of one wife.* I Tim. 3:2a; Titus 1:6b.
- 4.——*The elder must be temperate.* I Tim. 3:2c; Titus 1:8f. Three thoughts are expressed in the Greek: "Having power over one's self, abstaining from wine, curbing one's desires or impulses."
- 5.——*Sober-minded.* I Tim. 3:2c; Titus 1:8c. The thought in the Greek is, "of sound mind, sane in one's senses." (Cf. Eph. 5:4).
- 6.——*Orderly.* I Tim. 3:2c. "Of good behavior, modest."
- 7.——*"Given to hospitality."* I Tim. 3:2f; Titus 1:8a. (Cf. I Tim. 5:10).
- 8.——*He must be a sound, capable, and willing teacher of the Word.* I Tim. 3:2g; Titus 1:9.
- 9.——*Not given to wine (K.J.V.); no brawler (R.V.)* I Tim. 3:3a; Titus 1:7d. A brawler is one who quarrels noisily, creates an uproar or starts a row.
- 10.——*He must not be a striker.* I Tim. 3:3b; Titus 1:7c. The word in the Greek means, "smiter, pugnacious, quarrelsome."
- 11.——*Gentle.* I Tim. 3:3c. "Equitable, fair, mild." The bishop must be willing to be taught; willing to admit error and to change his mind; not weak but approachable.
- 12.——*He must rule his own house.* I Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:6c.
- 13.——*He must have a good testimony from without.* I Tim. 3:7. He must be one who practices what he preaches.
- 14.——*A lover of good.* Titus 1:8b.
- 15.——*He must be holy.* Titus 1:8e. (Cf. Heb. 12:14)
- 16.——*He must be just.* Titus 1:8d. "Righteous, observing divine and human laws, upright, passing just judgment on others." (Cf. John 7:24).

Negative qualifications

1. *Not contentious.* I Tim. 3:3d. "Given to angry debate, quarrelsome." One who loves strife and wrangles over non-essentials, could not qualify as a bishop.
2. *No lover of money.* I Tim. 3:3c; Titus 1:7f; I Peter 5:2.
3. *Not a novice.* I Tim. 3:6. "A new convert, a beginner" would be considered a novice.
4. *Not self-willed.* Titus 1:7b. "Self-pleasing, arrogant."
5. *Not soon angry.* Titus 1:7c. "Easily provoked, irritable."
6. *His wife must not be a slanderer, but grave, temperate, and faithful in all things.* I Tim. 3:11.

2. THE DEACONS 8-13

Text 3:8-13

8 Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. 11 Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Thought Questions 3:8-13

84. Deacons should be like the elders; in what particular?
85. Is there a better word for "grave"?
86. In what way would deacons be tempted to be "double-tongued"? Explain.
87. Is there any possibility that "a little wine" would be permissible? Explain.
88. Is "filthy lucre" confined solely to money? Why so called?
89. How does Paul use the word "mystery" as related to "the faith"?
90. If the deacons serve only in the material area, how is it that they are to hold the "mystery of the faith"?
91. What would stain the conscience of the deacon? Why so important to have a good conscience?
92. Does verse ten suggest a period of probation for the deacons? Explain.
93. Who could ever be "without blame"? Discuss this in connection with deacons.

94. Does verse eleven make provision for female deacons? Discuss. Cf. Rom. 16:1,2.
95. In what respect is the qualification "not slanderers" particularly appropriate?
96. Why the general qualification "faithful in all things"?
97. Is it here suggested that deacons must be married? Why?
98. If a deacon "must" be married then it follows that he "must" have more than one child, and that such children must be old enough to be "ruled"—is this so? Discuss.
99. What is "the good standing" obtained by deacons? Is this a step toward becoming an elder?
100. How could service in our present office of deacon, produce any boldness in the faith? How did it do it in the days of Paul?

Paraphrase 3:8-13

8 The deacons, in like manner, must be of a grave character, not double-tongued, speaking one thing to this person, and another to that, on the same subject; not giving themselves to much wine; not persons who earn money by base methods.

9 He must hold fast the doctrines of the gospel with a pure conscience; He must not, from fear or self-interest, either conceal or disguise these doctrines.

10 However, let these also be tried first, by publishing their names to the church, that if anyone hath aught to lay to their charge, he may show it; and after such a publication of their names, let them exercise the deacons office, if no person accuses them.

11 The women, in like manner, who are employed in teaching the young, must be stayed in their deportment; not slanderers and tale-bearers, but vigilant and faithful in all the duties belonging to their office.

12 Let the deacons be husbands of one wife only at a time, having showed their temperance by avoiding polygamy and causeless divorce. They must likewise rule with prudence and firmness their children, and every one in their families.

13 For they who have performed the office of a deacon with ability and assiduity, secure to themselves an honourable rank in the church, and great courage in teaching the Christian faith. For even the wicked must respect persons who show so much benevolence and activity, in relieving the poor, the afflicted and the persecuted.

Comment 3:8-13

Vs. 8. We should have little hesitancy in accepting the office of deacon; let us not stumble over the general use of the word; surely we will agree that many persons are called "servants" (the same word here used to refer to deacons), but this does not mean that all such persons are "deacons" in the sense here used. Philippians 1:1 should settle the matter: "Paul and Timothy, servants (bond servants) of Christ Jesus, to all the *saints* in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the *bishops* and *deacons*." All Christians are not deacons anymore than all older men are elders.

The "Like manner" of verse eight refers to the necessity of being qualified for the office. Once again let us say that such qualifications are not given as ideals alone, but as definite qualities of character to be found in the men who serve.

Lack of dignity (not pompousness) is seen on every side. This is true because the service of deacon is not held in a serious or "grave" light. It is only when we are serious about the task that such seriousness will be reflected in our life. But whose responsibility is it to present a clear picture of the privileges and opportunities of the office of deacon? We need far more good evangelists like Timothy.

Why would a deacon be most especially tempted to be "double-tongued"? Would it be because of his oft visiting on behalf of Christ? How sorely tempted we are at times to say one thing to one person and something else to another, and on the very same subject. This must not be. We must fear the displeasure of God far more than that of man. Let the deacon consistently tell the truth at all times, with all people.

A reference has already been made to excessive use of wine. This must have been a problem in the church. It is a problem in our present society to an extent that we do not like to admit. There is no provision here for use of wine in any form. The text simply states that a candidate for the office of deacon must not be a drunkard. (Please see our special study on Bible and Wine in the last pages of this book.)

"Greedy of filthy lucre" goes much deeper than "love of money"—"lucre" means "base gain" of any kind. The thought of using the office for such gain is always present. The advantage of the Lord and not of self, is the uppermost thought of the truly qualified deacon.

Vs. 9. To compare the present day qualifications for deacons with the expression "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" is a glaring example of how far short we are of having men who meet such qualifications. Today the thought that a deacon should be a genuine student of the Bible seldom enters the mind. "The mystery of the faith" does not refer to some secret truths, but rather to that which was once concealed but is now revealed. The deacon is to have a grasp of the gospel in such a manner that he will be able to share it with others. This requires study and preparation on his part. Such a wonderful treasure must be kept in a clean vessel—"a pure conscience". The deacon must not suffer from the accusations of his own conscience, because of the inconsistencies in his daily conduct with "the faith" he understands and professes.

Vs. 10. How shall we carry out the injunction of Vs. 10? Shall we place certain men "on probation" as deacons and then if they prove themselves capable, appoint them to the office? This is strongly urged by some commentaries. However, the thought in the word "prove" does not suggest such a formal testing.

The lives of the candidates for the office should be carefully observed over a period of time by the congregation. Those qualities of character necessary to carry out the worthy work of the deacon will be observed by the Christians. This has to do with a testing of character and work in the ordinary course of the church life. What a responsibility this places upon the minister to make the congregation aware of what a deacon should be and do. After a careful informal examination such men who are to serve as deacons should be found "blameless".

Vs. 11. A good deal of discussion is always in order just here as to whether we have a provision made for the office of "deaconess." A reference is also always made to Rom. 16:1, 2. We must say Paul is not referring to women in general, for this would hardly be in place in the midst of a discussion of church officers. It must then refer either to female deacons or to the wives of the male deacons. The latter conclusion is our preference. We say this because of the absence to any other reference to deaconess. The term deacon is a masculine one. All the deacons mentioned are men(unless we are to understand Phebe was a deaconess in an official sense). The words of Guthrie are very much to the point just here: "The reference is too general to postulate with

certainly a distinct order of deaconesses, but some feminine ministrations were necessary in visitation and in attending to women candidates for baptism. For such work certain moral qualities would be essential whether for deacon's wives or for deaconesses in their own right."

The expression "faithful in all things" is a very general one, but it has none-the-less strong implications: such women should live a life of complete consistency. The other qualifications have been discussed in connection with the elders and deacons.

Vs. 12. What we have said of the elders as to this qualification can be here applied to deacons.

Vs. 13. Perhaps the present day application of the text should not be our first thought in our comment upon it, but one cannot help but relate the service and standing of deacons here described with some men now serving as deacons. What type of service would be necessary to obtain a good standing in the sight of God and man? to say nothing of "great boldness in the faith"? Surely the responsibilities would entail far more than we usually relate to the deacons work. The New Testament deacon will be so conspicuous in his work among the flock that they will notice it. They will mark him in their own mind as a true servant of Christ. He will so teach and evangelize in his personal attentions to the saints as to gain by experience "great boldness in the faith." These are but a few obvious applications of the text.

Fact Questions 3:8-13

68. We should not hesitate to accept the office of deacon as a part of the present day church organization;—why?
69. How does the responsibility of the evangelist relate to the office of deacon?
70. Why would a deacon be especially tempted to be "double-tongued"?
71. Is any use of wine permissible? Explain.
72. What is "filthy lucre"? Explain.
73. How shall a deacon acquire the ability to "hold the mystery of the faith"?
74. Are deacons to be placed "on probation"? Explain.
75. Is provision made for female deacons? You are under no obligation to accept our opinion.
76. True deacons will develop a "good standing" before men and God, and "great boldness in the faith". Explain how this is done.

BALLOT

DEACON

NAME _____

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

(Check on line where candidate qualifies)

1. _____ *Grave.* Serious about his important work.
2. _____ *Blameless.* After a careful informal examination, such men who are to serve as deacons should be found "blameless".
3. _____ *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.* The deacon must not suffer from the accusations of his own conscience because of his inconsistencies in his daily conduct with "the faith" he understands and professes.
4. _____ *Proved.* The lives of the candidates for the office should be carefully observed over a period of time by the congregation.
5. _____ *Not double-tongued.* How sorely tempted we are at times to say one thing to one person and something else to another, and on the very same subject. This must not be. Let the deacon consistently tell the truth at all times with all people.
6. _____ *Not given to much wine.* There is no provision here for use of wine in any form. The text simply states that a candidate for the office of deacon must not be a drunkard.
7. _____ *Not greedy of filthy lucre.* This goes much deeper than love of money. "Lucre" means base gain of any kind. Do not use the office for self promotion.
8. _____ *Husband of one wife.* The deacon must be a "one woman type" man.
9. _____ *Ruling his children and his own house well.* Ideal family relationships help to qualify a man for service in the household of the faith.

3. IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTIONS 14-16

Text 3:14-16

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; **15** but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. **16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Thought Questions 3:14-16

101. Why didn't Paul instruct Timothy before leaving him at Ephesus?
102. What "things" are referred to in Vs. 14?
103. In what way is the church "the house of God"?
104. In what sense is the church the "pillar and ground of the truth"? What truth?
105. Explain the use of the term "mystery" as used by Paul.
106. When was Christ "manifest in the flesh"?
107. Give the meaning of the expression, "justified in the spirit."
108. Give occasions when Christ was "seen of angels".
109. Why mention that He was, "preached among the nations"?
110. Is the term "world" different from "nations" as used here?
111. Was Christ received up "into glory" or "in glory" according to Vs. 16?

Paraphrase 3:14-16

14 These things I write thee, although I hope to come to thee soon, to give thee more complete instruction concerning thy behavior.

15 Or if by any accident I am obligated to tarry long, I have written these things, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is neither the temple at Jerusalem, nor the temple of Diana at Ephesus, but the church of the living God, consisting of all believers, and which is the pillar and support of the truth.

16 Thou oughtest to behave properly in the church; for confessedly most important is the doctrine of the gospel which is kept therein; namely, that to save sinners by his death, the Son of God was manifested in the flesh; was justified through the Spirit, who raised him from the dead; was, after his resurrection,

seen of the apostles his messengers; was preached to the Gentiles as their Saviour; was believed on in many parts of the world; was taken up into heaven in a glorious manner.

Comment 3:14-16

Vs. 14. Wherever Paul was when he wrote this letter he anticipated a visit to Timothy. We like to believe he had been in prison at Rome, then was released, and went into Macedonia from whence he wrote this letter. This letter seems to take on an official tone here. The words here written, i.e. from 1:1-3:16 are to be used in the place of the personal presence of the apostle.

Vs. 15. In my absence, be it short or long, these instructions are to be read and followed. The student should note that the American Standard Version refers to the behavior of "men", and King James Version to "Timothy". The absence of the pronoun in the original makes either one of them correct. In either case the meaning turns out the same. Timothy's behavior was to be a pattern for others. The household of God is alluded to in 3:5, and is here specified. It should not be necessary to say the expression "house of God" has no reference to a church building. In the New Testament "the house of God".. consistently refers to the people. We are "a habitation of God in the Spirit." In contrast to the dumb, dead idols worshipped in Ephesus and Asia, this is the "called out" of the "living God."

The difficulty in understanding the church as "the pillar and ground of truth" can be explained as: *pillar*, supporting the truth by defending it against its enemies; and the *ground of the truth*, in the sense of preserving it through the centuries.

Vs. 16. Shall we connect this verse up with "the truth" of verse 15 b, i.e. "pillar and ground of *the truth*"? If so then verse 16 will be an enlargement of "the truth". Or, shall we associate this with the work of the deacons and elders? If we do this, then what we shall say here in Vs. 16 is the motivation for the work of these officers. We prefer the latter emphasis. Some have thought this verse to contain the words of an early Christian hymn. The words of the hymn by common consent were accepted as expressing in few words the heart of the Christian faith. Here is more or less "a statement of faith". The words "mystery of godliness" can be understood as meaning—"revealed mystery of living like God wants us to". We explained "mystery" in Vs. 9. It is used in the same sense here.

"*Manifest in the flesh*": Note please, the different phases of Christ's life and work emphasized in these expressions: First the

incarnation: "Manifested" carries the thought of *unveiling*, He who existed in the form of God chose to empty himself and be clothed with flesh. He was both concealed and revealed. God was seen in human flesh. "Emmanuel" was His name, "God with us". It was the flesh He chose as a medium of manifestation. It was in the flesh He unveiled deity. We like to think of Bethlehem as associated with this expression; but we could not appreciate Bethlehem without a knowledge of the rest of the truth in this verse.

"Justified in the Spirit": We take the word "spirit" to refer to the inward man, and not to the Holy Spirit. As to His flesh He was veiled and *unveiled*. It was a humble garment that scarcely concealed the glorious person. As to His spirit: He made claims of divinity that need vindication. He was not "a liar". This vindication was provided by His miracles; but most of all He was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Thus all that the inward man claimed was upheld or justified.

"Seen of angels": We can not resist the desire to share with you the words of Simpson on this phrase: "If Sheol was strangely moved at the arrival thither of the once resplendent son of the morning, little wonder that heaven was stirred by the descent to our sphere in voluntary self-abnegation of the only-begotten of the Father. With what tremulous interest must these legions of His have followed the steps of His humiliation from the throne of awful majesty to the cross of agonizing shame! And how, as the infernal plot against Him thickened, must they have witnessed with amazement the non-intervention of Omnipotence on His behalf! Far more than twelve legions of angels must have waited breathlessly for that signal to flash across the upper skies which should snatch heaven's Darling from the 'power of the dog'. Surely the resurrection daybreak dawned on them as well as on the dazed disciples 'like some sweet summer morning after a night of pain' and the triumph of His reascension, escorted by their bright squadrons homeward, had been to them its meridian glow. But imagination must fold her fluttering wing, lest we incur the Colossians' rebuke (2:18) for prying into angelology! Enough to know that these unseen spectators from another world have drunk in the vision of the 'Word made flesh' and can be summoned to bear record to its supreme reality." (Ibid.)

"Preached among the nations or Gentiles": If we attempt to

follow the life of our Lord in these expressions, we will now say we are discussing the results of His mission on earth. He was born in Bethlehem or "manifested in the flesh". He was active in a miraculous, model ministry, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection, thus "justified in the spirit". All through His earthly advent He was "seen by angels"; The answer is: So He could be "preached among the nations". How important then that we preach the gospel to all the nations. The Christians of Timothy's day fulfilled our Lord's purpose. We now are as provincial as the Jews of Paul's time. The Jews were accused of believing the Messiah was sent but for one people, and we deserve the same condemnation! We do not say it, but we do practice it!

"Believed on in the world": We take the former phrase to refer to the cause, and this phrase to the result. We have read the learned discussions of these phrases, as divided up into couplets and formed into interrelating arrangements; we have felt that such discussions were rather arbitrary in their conclusions.

The exaltation of our Lord is surely seen in the response of men from every nation.

"Received up in glory." Please note that this does *not* say He was received up *into* glory. This has reference to His home, not His home-coming. From the Mount of ascension Jesus returned to share "the glory He had with the Father before the world was made".

Fact Questions

77. Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?
78. What indication of "an official tone" is here observed?
79. What instructions are to be read and followed?
80. Who is to know how to "behave himself" in the house of God?
81. In what sense is the church "the pillar and ground of the truth"?
82. How shall we relate Vs. 16 with Vs. 15? Show also its connection with Vs. 14.
83. How shall we fit together the six phrases of Vs. 16; or should we attempt to see any order in this verse?
84. Explain in your own words the meaning and relation of each of the six expressions.

EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OVER I TIMOTHY CHAPTER THREE

1. In what way and for what reason is verse one "a faithful saying"?

2. Discuss the meaning of the phrase: "husband of one wife," with special reference to the thought of the necessity of being married.
3. Discuss the three following qualifications: "temperate, sober-minded, orderly".
4. Discuss: "not contentious, no lover of money".
5. What is "the condemnation of the devil" in vs. 6?
6. What is "the reproach of the devil"?
7. Discuss: "not given to much wine," and "not greedy of filthy lucre".
8. What intimations of the deacons work can be seen in the qualifications?
9. Discuss "let them first be proved."
10. Are we to understand women can fill the office of deacon? Discuss: "women in like manner."
11. How would a deacon gain "great boldness in the faith"?
12. Give the meaning of the expression: "that men may know how to behave themselves in the house of God"?
13. In what way is the church "the pillar and ground of the truth"?
14. Discuss: "Manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels".
15. Discuss: "Preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory".

IV. FALSE TEACHERS 4:1-16

1. THEIR COMING 1:5

Text 4:1-5

1 But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; **3** forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. **4** For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: **5** for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer.

Thought Questions 4:1-5

112. To whom did the Spirit address the words of 4:1?
113. Define the limits of "later times".
114. Are we to understand that some evil forces are at work in a direct manner with the spirit of man?