Philippians 2:20 (Henry Edward Hayhoe) 170320

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, Thoughts on Timothy (2:20)

“I have no one like-minded who will care with genuine feeling how ye get on” (Phil. 2:20 JND).

This is God’s record of dear Timothy. Would to God there were more Timothys in the church of God! Remember, “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” The thought here is not redemption but the extent of His love; it is put into language that could not be expressed more deeply and richly.

Paul in glory had been the recipient of that wonderful revelation that Christ and we are one. When this epistle was written, he is in prison. He cannot reach those beloved saints. He looks abroad and says, “I wonder who will minister to them according to their need?” Then he is able to say of Timotheus, “I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.”

If you have read church history, you will notice when the apostles were taken out of this scene, all the early “church fathers” had lost Paul’s doctrine. So we hear Paul telling dear Timothy, “All they which are in Asia be turned away from me” (2 Tim. 1:15), and two leaders of this turning away Phygellus and Hermogenes are specially marked out.

We read in 1 Timothy 1:3, “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” Why did the Apostle not beseech Barnabas? He “was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.” Blessed man he was, but he turned aside. Why did Paul not beseech Silas? He was in prison with him at Philippi and sang those praises. But even Silas had dropped out! Paul now had “no man like-minded” except dear Timothy.

Why did he beseech Timothy to abide still at Ephesus? So that he might preach the gospel? No, it does not say that. Blessed gospel! May our hearts ever rejoice in it and encourage the gospel preacher. It is a sad thing when a saint of God does not enjoy the gospel. But here we find, “That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” No other doctrine than that which was committed to the Ephesian church. Read that epistle. Were some preaching another doctrine? Undoubtedly they were. What was the result? All that were in Asia were turned away from the Apostle.

Paul goes on expressing the deep feelings of his heart as he thought of how dear the body of Christ was to His heart. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18).

Then he says, “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck” (vs. 19). Dear believer, not only hold faith, but hold a good conscience. Have you anything on your conscience right now? Is the Word of God speaking to your conscience? Own it to Him and have done with that thing, for the first step in a saint’s departure is giving up a good conscience. How solemn to give up a good conscience! Anything in your life that robs you of that is the first step in spiritual declension a road which no one can tell the sorrows to which it may lead.

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). We need power to go on. Where do we get it? I have not any power to “press toward the mark for the prize of the [calling on high] of God in Christ Jesus.” It is only as we walk in communion by the Spirit of God that we will be able to press on amid the difficulties and trials of the way.

“Of love” we need those divine affections. Without them you will not be able to preach the gospel well or serve the brethren well. Always remember to judge anything that would desire a prominent place among your brethren. Love seeks their edification, and when divine love leads us into service, self is kept in the place of death and we ought to rejoice before God if the work is done, no matter what instrument God may use.

“Wise discretion” (JND) this is not exactly a “sound mind.” One has often said, “Faith does not reason, and reason is not faith.” Sometimes one will say, “What else could I do in the circumstances?” Why, act in obedience to the Word of God and leave circumstances or results with Him. Never can there be a difficulty or problem to confront the Christian that there is not the wisdom of God to direct him. Under any circumstances it is never right to turn aside from obedience to the Word of God. We get the wisdom of God in the Word of God, and it will never be right to disobey the Word of God under any circumstances. We must be obedient if we are going to please Him.

H. E. Hayhoe (adapted from an address, 1948)