



St. Timothy.

“Though far in space and time apart,
One Spirit sways you all:
And we in those blest characters,
Hear now that living call.”

THE blessed Apostle St. Paul had dwelt in the city of Ephesus about three years, and during that time he had converted many of the worshippers of the heathen goddess Diana to the service of the ALMIGHTY. Many were the hoary heads which now bowed down at the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which had long given their homage to Diana; and many were the youths and maidens who, instead of following their forefathers in an idolatrous worship, now dedicated themselves to the God who made the heavens and the earth; to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who had suffered a cruel death upon the cross for them and their salvation; and to the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, on whose assistance they relied amid the dangers and temptations

of a naughty world. But as St. Paul was commissioned to preach the Gospel to other heathen nations, he did not think it right to remain any longer at Ephesus. Before he took his departure, he determined to appoint some one in whom he had confidence to be the head and the guide of the Church at Ephesus when he should be far away. He well knew that whoever was appointed to this sacred office would be in great danger; but he knew also that we ought not to count our life dear when the LORD calls us to His work. He made choice of one whom he knew had been from his youth instructed in all those things which a Christian minister ought to know. This person was St. Timothy, who, although born of parents who were of the Jewish religion, was very soon led by the grace of God a better way. He was led to see that the Mosaic Dispensation was now at an end; that having answered all the purposes of its institution it had given place to that better covenant of grace and truth which came by JESUS CHRIST. His parents dwelt at Lystra, and when St. Paul arrived there a second time, the wonderful cure of the impotent man, which took place during his first

visit, caused him to be received with joy and gladness.* The parents of St. Timothy received the Apostle with hospitality, and delivered up their son to his care and teaching. St. Timothy had indeed been previously instructed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, having from a child known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.† Of his mother Eunice, as well as his grandmother Lois, honourable mention is made by St. Paul in his second epistle to Timothy, both of them being distinguished by the sincerity of their faith. To the early instruction, therefore, of these holy women, and the good example which they set their beloved child, must be attributed the distinguished position which this young disciple attained in the primitive Church. The grace of God still works in the same manner; and good instruction, together with good example, will ever be productive of holiness of life. "Train up a child in the way he should go," said the wise king of Israel, "and when he is old he will not depart from it."‡

* Acts xiv. † 2 Timothy iii. 15. ‡ Proverbs xxii. 6.

St. Paul having found in St. Timothy one who was as deeply interested as himself in the spread of divine truth, and in bringing the outcast Gentile into the fold of CHRIST, took him as the companion of his travels previous to appointing him to preside over the Church at Ephesus. Having passed through Phrygia and Galatia, they came to Troas, from whence they set sail for Samothracia, and so on to Neapolis; from which place they passed to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia. Here they were treated with great severity by the magistrates, and in consequence they departed to Thessalonica, from whence, being persecuted by the Jews, they were obliged to fly to Beræa. At Beræa they found a people of a kinder disposition, and ready to hear the teaching of the Apostles; but they did not admit the truth of all that was taught them, until they had first compared the statements of St. Paul with the prophecies relating to the MESSIAH. But although the people of Beræa were generous and kind, yet the Jews continued to stir up a party against the Apostles, which caused St. Paul to be privately conducted to Athens; while Silas and St. Timothy, being less con-

spicuous objects of jealousy, remained behind, and continued to afford instruction to all who would listen to them. We are not informed whether St. Timothy joined St. Paul at Athens, although we find a short time afterwards they were together at Corinth, from whence St. Paul sent St. Timothy to Thessalonica to inquire into the state of Christianity in that city; and to encourage those who had received the Gospel to continue firm in their new profession. From Thessalonica St. Timothy returned with the welcome intelligence of their firmness and constancy, notwithstanding the many persecutions which took place; and of their sincere affection for St. Paul himself; intelligence which could not fail to gladden the heart of this faithful servant of God.

When St. Paul and his companions had continued about eighteen months at Corinth, he resolved upon a journey to Jerusalem, in which city he did not remain long, but proceeded to Antioch; and having travelled through Galatia and Phrygia with a view of confirming the minds of those who had been converted to Christianity, he came at length to Ephesus, where he continued to reside three years. The great work in which he

was engaged, and to which he had been called in so remarkable a manner, did not permit him to remain altogether in this city, though he was deeply interested in its spiritual welfare. Knowing that the affairs of the Church in Macedonia required his presence, he determined to go there, not, however, until he had commissioned the companion of his travels to exercise the office of a Bishop at Ephesus. He was consecrated to this office, and the whole of that part of Asia Minor was committed to his care. St. Timothy was but young when he was called to this important office; and St. Paul fearing that many might despise his authority on account of his want of years, and knowing how liable the best of men are to fall into error, endeavoured to strengthen his authority, and to guide him by prudent counsels; and for this purpose addressed to him those two Epistles which bear his name.

Although St. Timothy was thus appointed to preside over, and take charge of the Church at Ephesus, yet he afterwards accompanied St. Paul in his journey through Greece, from whence he again returned to discharge those duties which had been committed to

him. Even at this early period crafty teachers and false apostles were beginning to disturb the peace of the Church, and against these St. Paul earnestly urged St. Timothy to be ever on his guard. Alas! that men should be so wicked as to corrupt the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and endeavour to deceive those who are anxiously striving to obey God, and secure eternal happiness to their souls! But so it was in those days, and so it is now; and we may expect that it will continue to be the case as long as the world remains. "There must be heresies," said St. Paul, "that they which are approved may be made manifest."* In these trials, and they were very great to a pure and peaceable mind like that of St. Timothy, he carefully followed the guidance and instruction of St. Paul, and was faithful to the high and holy trust reposed in him. While St. Timothy was wisely and discreetly ruling the Church at Ephesus, St. Paul became a prisoner, and was in captivity at Rome; and being desirous of seeing his dear and faithful friend and fellow servant of the Lord, he wrote to him, and urged him to lose no time in coming to him. St. Timothy could not

* 1 Corinthians xi. 19.

bear to hear of his spiritual father and counsellor being in fetters without endeavouring to minister to his comfort, and accordingly he immediately repaired to Rome. It was during St. Timothy's visit that St. Paul wrote his Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, in which he was joined by his fellow Apostle. St. Timothy's visit at Rome was not unattended by danger, since for some reason or other he was cast into prison, and kept in bonds. How long his imprisonment lasted we are not informed, but he was liberated during the life of St. Paul, and again returned to the scene of his labours at Ephesus, which he never afterwards quitted until he was called by his heavenly Master to receive his exceeding and eternal great reward. It required all the diligence which a Christian bishop could exercise, to keep his people from being seduced by the luxury, profanity, and wickedness which prevailed around them. The Ephesians as a people were remarkable for everything which is opposed to the law of God; and there is always much danger to the Christian when he is surrounded by temptations to which his own heart is but too much inclined to yield. But that which

was most revolting to all good men, was the manner in which some of their heathen festivals were carried on. There was one in particular which called forth the especial condemnation of the Christians, and that was called by the name of *Katagogion*, in which the Ephesians dressed themselves in antic dresses, and covered their faces with masks, in order that they might not be recognised by their acquaintances. Under this concealment, and being armed with clubs, they carried their idols in a wild and frantic manner through the public parts of the city, and accompanied the procession with songs. Whoever was so unfortunate as to meet with them experienced no mercy at their hands. They neither revered age nor compassionated the weakness of the female sex, but falling upon all alike, they unmercifully beat out their brains, and exulted in the cruel murder as an action acceptable to their gods!

Such barbarism naturally called forth the condemnation of all who were not sunk beneath the condition of the beasts of the forest; and, as might be expected, St. Timothy endeavoured to check and suppress atrocities which disgraced the whole city.

At first he expostulated with the misguided wretches, and strove by all gentle means to draw them away from their cruel practices, and to make them ashamed of acting in a manner so unworthy of human nature. "Sirs," said he, "how can ye practise such cruelty one towards another? Are ye not fellow citizens, and under the government of common laws? Why, then, under the concealment of masks, and with a view of pleasing your gods, do ye violate the laws under which ye live? What must be the character of gods, think ye, that can be pleased with such atrocities as these? Call them not gods, but furies; and think not that they can alter the destiny of mankind. No, there is only one God, and He would have you love one another, and not beat out each other's brains. He has made all men of one blood, and is no respecter of persons, but His will is that all men should be saved by turning from their evil ways to serve Him, whose Name is Holy. Cease, then, from this wickedness, and no longer deceive yourselves by such sin and folly." Again and again St. Timothy thus addressed the Ephesians, in order to repress their cruelty, but all to no purpose.

The festival of Katagogion continued to be held with all its wonted cruelty. On one of these fatal occasions, St. Timothy, being unable to restrain his indignation, rushed into the street, and met the mad procession. He strongly reprov'd them for their wickedness, and exposed their folly with much severity. What they had listened to as individuals they could not bear to hear in a body, and encouraging one another, they fell upon their holy bishop with their clubs, and beat him as long as they thought any breath remained in his body; and after dragging him up and down for some time, they left him, thinking that he was dead. His gentle spirit, however, had not yet fled; and some Christians finding their beloved bishop in this sad condition, took him up, and carried him to a quiet house not far from the gate of the city, where he lingered for two days, and on the third day his soul departed, and he was released from all his sufferings. Although the voice was now silent which used to encourage and instruct their weary hearts, and although the countenance which once beamed in holiness upon them was rigid in death, yet the Christians of Ephesus did not relax in their atten-

tion to the mortal remains of their venerated pastor after he had expired, but they continued to watch by them, and to guard them, until a fit time arrived for their burial. Then might be seen a sad and solemn company slowly proceeding from the walls of Ephesus, towards the spot which had been selected by them as a secure resting place for the body of one whom they so greatly loved! No noisy sorrow marked the mournful procession as it moved along, but a deep silence prevailed, which showed far better than words could express the intensity of the grief which filled their hearts. There the body of St. Timothy lay until the piety of Constantine the Great caused his bones to be taken up, and conveyed to Constantinople, where they were again interred with decent pomp in the church which that emperor erected to the memory of the Apostles. Such was the end of this distinguished servant of God, whom St. Paul called by the endearing names of son and brother, which show the high regard which the great Apostle of the Gentiles had for his fellow labourer in the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. His memory is highly revered by all sincere Christians; and will

continue to be so until the consummation of all things, when the faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST shall form one holy fellowship in communion with the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, and dwell together in that happy place to which so many had to travel along a path of blood.

