

## **“Guard That Which Is Committed ...”**

*“O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Tim. 6:20f).*

As Paul closes this letter to Timothy, he charges him to *“guard that which is committed unto thee.”* Paul gives Timothy many serious charges in this letter, sometimes phrasing them as *“I exhort thee”* or *“I command thee”* and these cover a wide spectrum of matters; charges to the rich, family matters, qualifications of elders and deacons, and this last one: *“Guard that which is committed to thee.”* What was Timothy to guard? Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, expressed confidence that God was able *“to guard that which I have committed unto him”* (2 Tim. 1:12). However, that which Paul committed to God was not the same thing Timothy had committed to him. We commit our souls, in well doing, unto a Faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4:19). God committed His truth to Timothy which truth Timothy was to guard.

Timothy was to guard that committed to him from the opposition of *“the knowledge”* falsely so called. There were many errors rampant in Timothy’s day. Some *“knowingly”* laughed at the thought of a resurrection, read 1 Corinthians 15. The *“knowledge”* of some led them to excessive *“liberties”*: liberties they asserted were *“theirs”* through the freedom of the gospel. Some were swelled with pride thinking their *“mysteries and knowledge”* into which they had been initiated made them vastly superior to the *“common crowd.”*

Those who were adversely affected by *“the knowledge”* were led astray from *“the faith.”* While sometimes *“faith”* without the definite article describes the system or teaching of Christ, it does not always do so. On the other hand, almost invariable when *“faith”* is preceded by *“the,”* (thus *“the faith”*), the reference is to the doctrine of Jesus. Paul does not mince words in his description of those opponents of the faith. It is *“profane babblings.”* Profane (common, unholy, unclean), tells us the teaching was not sanctioned (sanctified, if you please) by God. It originated in the minds of those who opposed what is true and holy. That teaching was *“babblings”* -- senseless, unintelligible verbiage. It had neither *“rhyme nor reason ‘in its corner.’”* And, while those who opposed truth committed to Timothy’s care, it was falsely called *“knowledge.”*

How did Paul expect Timothy to guard the truth committed to him? Timothy was to *“guard”* truth by preaching it with no additions, subtractions, or

substitutions. The truth of Jesus makes us free, but freedom is something which must be guarded in every generation. "Eternal vigilance" is the price of liberty and vigilance demands that truth be defended against the encroaching errors that erode it and vigilance requires that truth be constantly heralded. Israel maintained her knowledge by orally reading the law each year. When she failed to keep truth in her peoples' minds, apostasy invariably resulted. Timothy was charged, "*Preach the word. Be urgent in season, out of season ... the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*" (2 Tim. 4:2f). Timothy was to "*guard*" truth by defending -- warding off those attacks against it. Jude wrote, "*Contend earnest for the faith once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Sometimes this needed work is unpleasant for confrontation with proponents of error can get "nasty." Christians must learn to be "contenders" but not "contentious." Timothy was to guard by "*turning away*" from "*knowledge, falsely so called.*" There can be no compromise with error. Remember, one cannot take a "*fire into his bosom without being burned*" (Pro. 6:27). One cannot put his hand into a viper's den without fatal results.

Let us remember Paul's charge to Timothy. We, too, have had truth committed to us. Let us never be ashamed of it, nor be derelict in our duty to guard the precious word of God.

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