

Sinners, of whom I am chief. 1 Tim. 1: 15

If the elephant can go safely over the swaying bridge, the horse and mule can; and the apostle seems to glory that in the very beginning of the progress of the Gospel through the world it had laid hold of and converted himself, because if he had been saved, anyone might be. As men have been brought under conviction, in successive ages, it has been a profound consolation to learn that the chief of sinners has been in heaven for eighteen hundred years. In him first Jesus Christ showed forth "all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe."

Without doubt Paul never forgot the excess of his hatred and persecutions towards the infant Church. But probably he alludes here also to the deepening consciousness of unworthiness and sinfulness which accompanies all progress towards the knowledge and love of God. This phase of experience may be accounted for thus. The true saint of God, though certain of forgiveness, reviews his past sins in the light of that purity of which he is ever obtaining truer perceptions, and thus recognizes shades of evil in them which a slighter knowledge of God had failed to reveal. He also feels himself a greater sinner than others, because he supposes that God cannot have treated another with the same forbearance and mercy as have been extended to himself; and the greater the love the more heinous the transgression. And in addition, as subtler forms of temptation are suggested to him, and to everyone, he knows that there are kindred susceptibilities within him, even though they are abhorred and resisted. It is beneath the pressure of such thoughts that he recognizes his uttermost indebtedness to the grace of God.

在罪人中我是個罪魁。 提前一15

如果大象能夠安然走過一座搖晃的橋，馬和驢子也一定能走過。使徒保羅好像覺得很榮幸，在福音初傳之際，就被得著而歸信；因為如果他得救，任何人就都可以得救。雖然歷世歷代人們不斷被折服相信，但得知罪魁保羅竟已在天上一千八百年[註]，真是極深的安慰。在保羅身上，耶穌基督首先顯明「祂一切的忍耐，給後來信祂得永生的人作榜樣。(16節)」

毫無疑問，保羅絕不會忘記他曾經極度仇視並迫害初期的教會。但很可能他在這裡也暗示他那不配和罪惡深重的感覺，隨著他更加認識神與祂的愛，而日漸加深。這方面的經歷可以這樣解釋。作為一個真的聖徒，雖然他確知已蒙赦免，當他對純潔有更真實的認知，在這樣的光中來檢視過去的罪惡時，就在這些過去的罪中認出罪惡的陰暗，這是他對神認識較淺時所沒有發現的。他認為自己比起他人是更大罪人的原因是，他覺得神對別人的容忍和憐憫，與施予他的忍耐和憐憫不同；神愛愈大，就顯明過犯更可憎。此外，他也深知他與別人一樣，容易遭到各類陰險的試探，雖然最後這些試探要被恨惡並抵擋。基於以上這些思想，保羅知道他深深感謝神的恩典。

[註] 保羅是第一世紀的人，本文作者是十九世紀的人，兩者之間約有一千八百年。

That supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. 1 Tim. 2: 1

A life is revealed here of which many of us know practically nothing. We do not feel the absolute necessity of being much alone in the presence of God, not so much for ourselves, as for others; and this sad neglect of intercessory prayer, which we all deplore, really points to a lack of the divine life, since if that were mightily within us we should inevitably feel its throb and pulse in this direction. This comes out clearly in the words that follow.

Intercession is necessary that we may know the secrets of a quiet, peaceable, and godly life (ver. 2).

Such intercession for others is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (ver. 3). And the word translated good might be rendered beautiful.

IT IS CONSONANT WITH THE DIVINE PURPOSE, for God wishes to have all men saved (ver. 4). If, then, his Spirit is within us, we, too, shall long that men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Our hearts will be filled with a divine tenderness of yearning which will find vent in strong cryings and tears. It is only thus we can live in harmony with the divine purpose. One writes: "When I think of this, I feel I must pray. Oh, how near it brings to God to pray in the Spirit, and leads me to see that no pressure of duty among men can free us from the absolute need of much prayer."

Such intercession is in profound union with the mediation of our Lord (vers. 5, 6). As the great High Priest, He ever liveth to intercede; and in our little measure we, too, as members of a holy priesthood, must blend our supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks with his (1 Peter 2: 5).

要為萬人懇求、禱告、代求、祝謝。 提前二1

這節經文所顯示的生命，我們多數人實際上是不知道的。我們不覺得有這樣的必要，單獨在主面前，不為自己，卻為別人禱告。雖然我們都哀歎這種代禱上的怠慢，這種可悲的怠慢恰恰指出我們靈命的缺欠。因為如果我們心中有強烈代禱的感覺，我們必定覺察朝著這個方向的催促。這情形很清楚地顯示於下面的經文裡：

代禱是必須的，因代禱使我們得知「過敬虔端正、平安無事的日子」的祕訣(2節)。

為別人代禱「是好的，在神我們救主面前可蒙悅納。(3節)」這裡的「好的」，也可譯作「美的」。

這也符合神的旨意，因為神願意萬人得救(4節)。如果聖靈住在我們裡面，我們也會渴望萬人得救，認識真道。我們的心必充滿神慈愛的渴望，而發出帶著眼淚的呼求。只有這樣，我們才能活得合乎神的旨意。有人寫道：「每思及此，我不得不禱告。在靈裡的禱告，使我何等靠近神，也令我了解到，人間責任的壓力並不能免除我們多多禱告的確實需要。」

這種為別人代禱，乃是與「主使人與神和好的工作」深深契合(5-6節)。祂作大祭司，長遠活著，替我們代求(來七25)。而我們，作為聖潔祭司的一分子，也要盡一己棉薄之力，把我們的懇求、禱告、代求、祝謝和主的代求一同獻上(彼前二5)。

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. 1 Tim. 3: 16

It is more than likely that this is a fragment of one of the earliest hymns of the Church. In her hymns, and maintenance of the ordinances, she thus becomes the pillar and ground of the truth. The words "mystery of godliness" are probably a general heading which is further unfolded and expanded in the six following sentences, which may have been sung antiphonally:

*God was manifest in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit.
Seen of angels,
Preached unto the Gentiles.
Believed on in the world,
Received up into glory.*

THE EXTREMES OF MANIFESTATION. The Eternal Word was manifested in the flesh. But it was not simply a physical manifestation; we cannot forget the descent of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, or the authentication of his words which the Spirit gave in signs and wonders, and convinced hearts, and converted lives.

THE EXTREMES OF CREATED INTELLIGENCE. Angels worship Him; and Gentiles, sunk in heathen darkness, hear the story of his wondrous love. Jesus is the centre of all worlds: from heaven's bright spaces they come to Him on the one hand; from earth's dark sins they come on the other. In Him meet angels and men.

THE EXTREMES OF SPACE, Glory is above: "He was received up into glory." The world is but a speck, a mote in the beam of eternity. How great the space between the two! But the feet of our Emmanuel have trodden its low pavement, and He has now taken to Himself his former glory. Like Jacob's ladder, He links earth with the throne of God.

大哉，敬虔的奧祕，無人不以為然。 提前三16

這句話很可能是教會最早期詩歌裡的一小段。教會詩歌以及聖禮 [聖餐、洗禮等] 的維護，使教會成了真理的柱石和根基。「敬虔的奧祕」可能是一個大標題，進一步發展為輪唱的六個句子：

神在肉身顯現，
被聖靈稱義，
被天使看見，
被傳於外邦，
被世人信服，
被接在榮耀裡。

顯現的極致。永遠的道曾在肉身顯現。這絕不止於肉身的顯現。我們不能忘記主耶穌受洗時，聖靈降在祂身上；也不能忘記聖靈用神蹟奇事證明祂所說的話，並使人心信服而改變生命。

受造物智慧的極致。天使敬拜祂，深陷異教黑暗的外邦人，也聽到祂奇妙的愛。耶穌乃是諸世界的中心：一面是從天上光明之處來歸向祂；另一面是從地上黑暗罪惡之處來歸向祂。在主裡，天使與世人交會。

空間的極致。天上的榮耀：祂「被接在榮耀裡」。在永恆的光中，這世界僅是微不足道的塵埃。兩者間的距離何其遙遠！以馬內利的腳踪，踏過卑微的世路後，回歸到祂原有的榮耀裡。恰似雅各的天梯一般，主把地和神的寶座連接起來。

Every creature of God is good . . . if it be received with thanksgiving. 1 Tim. 4: 4

We must be very careful in applying these words. Intoxicating liquor, for instance, is sometimes described as "a good creature of God." But surely that term is not legitimate. Whatever grounds there may be for defending its use, can this text be alleged as one? For there is a great deal of human manipulation in its preparation. Before it reaches our lips, it is greatly altered by the process of fermentation. It can hardly be called God's good creature.

When we are quite sure that we are dealing with one of God's pure and unadulterated gifts, such as human love, friendship, the beauties of nature, wholesome food, fresh young spirits, the innocent mirth of the Christmas home-gathering; we must distinguish between God's gifts and our abuse of them; between his creation and our distortion of it. There are things in our lives which are not his creation or gift, and which we must resolutely refuse and put away. There are others which come to us clearly and absolutely from his hand.

REJOICE IN EVERY GOOD THING WHICH THE LORD GIVES. Rejoice! Do not enjoy things as though under the sword of Damocles, suspended by a thread.

BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER. What you can thank God for or use in his name and for his glory; what lifts you from the gift to the Giver, or is capable of being prayed over, with no shadow of misgiving, is innocent and healthy.

WATCH ONLY AGAINST THE INTRUSION OF SELF. Whatever you place between yourself and God, or rest on apart from God, or make the aim and centre of your life, is hurtful and must pass through the fire. The way to rid yourself of its poison is to insist on making it a subject of thanksgiving.

凡神所造的物都是好的，若感謝著領受，就沒有一樣可棄的。 提前四4

在應用這些話時，務必特別小心。比如「烈酒」，有時候也被說成「神造的美物」。這樣的說法並不合理。無論有多少理由被用來為喝烈酒作辯護，可以用這節經文來辯護嗎？烈酒是經過許多人工巧妙處理調製的，在人品嚐之先，早已藉著發酵的過程大大地被改造，而不可被稱為神造的美物了。

人間的愛與友誼，大自然之美，有助健康的食物，年輕活潑的心，聖誕節家庭團聚的天真歡笑等等，雖然我們十分確定是來自神的恩賜，純淨無邪，但我們必須分辨神的恩賜與我們對神恩賜的濫用；分辨祂的造物與人對神造物的扭曲。在我們的生命裡，有許多東西不是神的造物或神的禮物。我們務必果斷地拒絕並揚棄。但另有一些，清楚絕對是神親手所賜的。

歡喜享受神所賜的各樣美物。歡喜享受！不要在享受時好像達摩克利斯(Damocles)處於懸掛在細線一端的劍下[註]。

小心保持感謝與禱告的心。你可以向神感恩的事，或是你可以在祂的名下並為著祂榮耀運用的事；使你從禮物提升到賜禮物的神的事，或使你可以祈禱的事，而無所顧慮；這一切都是純真、健全的。

務必儆醒，不受「己」干擾。無論你在自己與神之間放置了什麼；或是你在神以外倚靠什麼；或是你為自己生命設定什麼目標與中心，這些是有害的，必須經過烈火的試驗。使你不受其毒害之路，就是堅持使這件事能成為你向神感恩的題目。

[註] Damocles(達摩克利斯)是公元前四世紀 Syracuse(塞拉古斯)的暴君 Dionysius(戴歐尼修斯)的臣子。他極覬覦君王的威榮與財富。暴君就讓他享受一下這樣的威榮富貴，但在他座位上方以馬尾絲懸著一把利劍，劍尖直指他的頭頂。

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God. 1 Tim. 5:5

Art thou desolate indeed, because the light of thine eyes has passed from view, leaving thee immeasurably lonely? Dear soul, do not look down into the grave which has received the precious mortal frame, but up into the face of God.

He lent thee thy beloved. From the time of the first knitting of soul with soul he was but a loan for a specified time; and wouldst thou not rather have had him for so short a time than not at all? Wouldst thou not have said, had God asked thee, "I would rather have a year or a month of such love as his than none?" Do not be angry because God has done as He always intended.

Besides, that beloved one is still thine. Thy love so entered into his heart that it could not be eradicated, though ages should pass. Do not suppose that death is so mighty a magician as to alter the very nature of those who pass for a moment beneath his wand.

And God will care for thee. Trust Him for society, that thou be not lonely; for the provision of what is necessary to thy support; and for the protecting love which thy shrinking nature calls for. Thy Maker will be thy husband.

Wouldst thou be comforted, continue in prayers and supplications for others night and day. Cease to shut thyself up with thy sorrow, and go out to minister comfort to those who sorrow as without hope. A Hindoo story tells of a bereaved mother, who was advised to obtain a handful of corn from a house where there was no trouble, and was so occupied in seeking it, and in comforting the inmates of the various homes she visited, that her own grief was assuaged.

那獨居無靠真為寡婦的，是仰賴神。 提前五5

妳真的孤單寂寞嗎？因為妳眼睛的亮光已經不見，妳陷入無限的寂寞。親愛的，別往墳墓裡看，雖然那兒躺著妳所寶愛之人的軀殼。妳要向上仰望神的面容！

妳所愛的人，是神借給妳的。從心靈交會的時刻起，他只是定了期限借給妳的；與其未曾相識，妳豈不是情願短暫擁有他嗎？如果神問妳，妳豈不是會說：「我寧願有一年、一月，這樣相愛，勝過從來沒有」嗎？妳不要生氣，因為神這樣做原是照著祂的定意。

況且，妳所愛的仍舊屬於妳！妳對他的愛，已深入他的心，雖然年日過去，卻不能磨滅。不要以為「死亡」是個身懷奇術的魔術師，讓經過他魔杖的人改變本性。

神必顧念妳。要相信祂會給妳帶來朋友，你就不會寂寞；相信祂會為妳預備一切生活上的所需；相信祂會在妳畏縮之際，提供必要的關愛。造妳的，必作妳的丈夫(賽五十四5)。

妳得安慰之後，要日夜不斷為他人祈求禱告。不再用憂傷將自己封閉。走出去，安慰心中絕望憂傷的人。在一個印度的故事中，有個喪子的母親，人勸她可以走到一個沒有愁煩的人家去要一把穀子，她就忙著尋找這個沒有愁煩的人家，結果因為忙著安慰她所拜訪各種不同家庭的人，自己的悲痛反倒平息了。

Nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. 1 Tim. 6: 17

The contrast here is very beautiful. Men, for the most part, look to riches to supply them with all they need richly to enjoy; but the apostle says that it is beyond all comparison better to look away from dead coin to a living Person, who takes pleasure in giving liberally without upbraiding.

HERE IS A REBUKE. Suppose you had your cellars filled with gold coin, would you not think yourself secure against all possible need and care? Almost certainly you would. But you ought to be even more at rest, since you have neither silver nor gold, and only your Heavenly Father's hand.

HERE IS A CONTRAST. Riches are uncertain at the best. A man in these difficult days finds it easier to gain money than to hold it. He who is rich to-day may awake to-morrow to find that some sudden turn of the market has made him poor. But God is not uncertain. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His covenants are certainties.

HERE IS AN APPEAL. Trust in the living God with as much restfulness as others in their lands and revenues, and be almost glad if God takes away from you what you have clung to so tenaciously, that you may drop securely into his everlasting arms. You smile at the story of the lady who was told by the captain that he had done all he could for the vessel, and they must now look to the Almighty; and who replied, "O captain, has it come to that?" But you may be nearer akin to her spirit than you suppose!

HERE IS AN ASSURED DESTINY. Those who trust in riches are pierced through with many sorrows, and are caught in the maelstrom, which drowns souls in perdition; they who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed.

也不要倚靠無定的錢財，只要倚靠 ... 活的神。 提前六17（依Majority Text翻譯, 見NKJV版本）

這節經文裡的對比非常美麗！大體上人都倚靠財富供給他們充分的享受，可是使徒保羅卻說，轉眼離開死的金錢，而仰望一位樂於厚賜與眾人不斥責人的活的神(雅一5)，是無與倫比的美好。

一個斥責。如果你的地窖裡滿了金幣，你不會覺得有保障，而不必為一切可能發生的需要擔心嗎？你差不多會這樣覺得！而今，你既沒有銀子也沒有金子，你只有天父的手，你應該更安心。

一個對比。財富充其量也是無定的(17節)。在這艱難的時期，人發現賺錢比保住錢財容易。今天的富人，明天醒來可能發現市場突然轉變，使他成為窮人了。但神卻不是無定的，祂昨日、今日、一直到永遠，是一樣的(來十三8)。祂的約是確定的。

一個呼籲。你要信靠活的神，如同他人倚靠房產、收入。如果神拿走你緊握不放的東西，你要歡喜，這使你穩當落入神永久的膀臂中。有一個故事，說到有個婦人聽見船長已竭盡所能挽救這艘船之後準備棄船，現在他們必須仰賴全能的神了。婦人說：「船長，真變成這樣了嗎？」這故事如果讓你覺得好笑，你的念頭可能就比你想像的更接近那個婦人的念頭了！

一個確定的結局。凡倚靠財富的，要被許多愁苦刺透，陷入漩渦，使人沉溺而滅亡(9-10節)；但信靠耶和華的，好像錫安山，永不動搖(詩一二五1)。