

raised to such an office be in good repute even among them, so that no occasion may be given them by his appointment to think lightly of the Christian church, or to encourage them in the hope of marring the success of his ministry. Where the minister of the gospel does not enjoy the esteem of the world, it becomes comparatively easy for the instruments of the wicked one to stir up prejudices against him, and involve him in trouble. This seems to be what is meant in the reason assigned by the apostle for the requirement—*lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil*. It is disputed whether only *snare* here should be coupled with the devil, or *reproach* also should be included. The question is scarcely worth raising. The devil, as the general head and representative of all evil agencies, may well enough be associated with any mischief or disaster befalling a servant of God—reproach as well as anything else. But in the usual style of Scripture, it is with crafty wiles and moral embroilments that his agency is more commonly connected, rather than outward obloquy or shame; and the related passage in 2 Tim. ii. 26, where snare alone is mentioned, still further favours this view. The most natural explanation, then, of the apostle's fear regarding the appointment of pastors who were not in good repute with the world, is that they would in such a case be exposed to the taunts of ungodly men, disparaged as unworthy of their position, and, conscious of this, would probably be tempted to do things which would entangle them in Satan's net of unseemly wranglings or dangerous relationships. No one who has much experience in life can be at a loss for examples of this nature.

Thus ends the apostle's list of qualifications, which he desired to see meeting in every one who might be placed in the responsible position of an overseer of Christ's flock. They are, as already stated, predominantly moral, and consist of attributes of character rather than of gifts and en-

dowments of mind. The latter also to some extent are included, in so far especially as they might be required to form clear perceptions of truth and duty, to distinguish between things that differ, and in difficult or perplexing circumstances to discern the right, and know how to maintain and vindicate it. Yet, withal, it is the characteristics which go to constitute the living, practical Christian, which together make the man of God, that in this delineation of pastoral equipments are alone brought prominently into view. And whatever else the church may, in the changeful circumstances of her position and history, find it necessary to add to the number, in order to render her responsible heads fit for the varied work and service to which they are called, the grand moral characteristics here specified must still be regarded as the primary and more essential elements in the qualifications of a true spiritual overseer.

Vers. 8, 9. *In like manner that the deacons be grave.*—The likeness indicated here has respect to the qualifications being substantially of the same kind as those connected with the higher office of the pastorate: it is necessary that the deacons, too, have a measure of such characteristics. Two things specially call for notice in this transition to the deacons. One is, that the apostle plainly knew nothing of an intermediate class of officers between those he had designated *episcopoi*, and those he now calls *deacons*. Chrysostom's reason for the omission—namely, of the presbyters as a distinct order—can satisfy no unbiassed interpreter. He thinks it was done because “there is no great difference between them and bishops; for presbyters also have received the right of teaching and the presidency of the church; and the things which he had said of the bishops are applicable also to the presbyters. For in ordination alone are they superior, and in this only do they appear to surpass the presbyters.” Jerome, on the corresponding passage in Titus, gives the only tenable explanation:

Fairbairn, Patrick. *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2002.