

“Faith is Never Without Fight” (1 Tim 5:12-14): A John Calvin Sermon

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INTRODUCTION

Many people know John Calvin only as a systematic theologian and then sometimes only in a caricature. What is too often forgotten is that Calvin was first and foremost a pastor seeking to shepherd the church of God.¹ This misunderstanding has been helped by the general neglect of his sermons in favor of his *Institutes* and his commentaries. Those works are of great value, but in his sermons you get to see the pastor in his day to day labors, pleading with his people, rebuking and consoling. Yet, the sermons have not been as widely available in accessible translations. This is changing with a number of fresh new translations coming particularly from Banner of Truth. I have spent the past couple of years reading Calvin’s sermons on 1 Timothy, deciphering the English translation of 1579 and updating the language to make these powerful sermons more accessible to readers today.²

The series of sermons on 1 Timothy was preached from September 1554 to April 1555, Sunday mornings and afternoons. This was a little more than a decade after Calvin's return to Geneva after being run out of town. These sermons were preached during another difficult time. In the midst of this series Calvin told friends by letter that he anticipated being run out of town. He was engaged with challenges in Geneva and was travelling often on behalf of the city negotiating peace and arrangements with other cities. So, in these sermons we find a very busy pastor—no ivory-tower academician, but a shepherd knee deep in the messy work of caring for sheep.

The sermon below, an exposition of 1 Timothy 5:12-14 is a powerful call to endurance for the sake of and empowered by the gospel.³ It is an example of why T. H. L. Parker said of this series, "Such preaching as this pursued so regularly and applied so stringently to the people, was the central explosive point of the church's work in Geneva."⁴

SERMON

12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast made a good confession before many witnesses.
13. I charge thee in the sight of God who quickens all things, and before Jesus Christ, who witnessed a good confession under Pontius Pilate,
14. that thou keep this commandment, etc.

St. Paul showing us this morning the remedies to flee covetousness and the evils that come from it, exhorted us precisely to patience, and that not without cause. For we are pricked forward to monetary gain because every man wants to live at ease. And when we are so intent on our profit, it is impossible but Satan will have in his foot in among us, and deceive us, and cause us to go far out of the way. And so we shall be often tormented; we shall have many wrongs and injuries done to us; we shall be chased by one and robbed by another, and if we be not armed with patience, how shall we stand? And how can we have such a modesty and moderation in us, so as not to covet unlawful gain, whatsoever comes of it? But because the patience of the faithful stretches very far, and has in it many parts, St. Paul expressed his mind better in flat terms, by adding, *Let us fight*, as if he had said that **faith cannot be without fighting. Whosoever wants God to approve of his**

service, he must dispose himself to battle, for we have an enemy that never gives up. Thus we see what St. Paul aims at, that we should not think it strange when he previously called us to patience. Let every man make his account, since God has called us to his service, that he will also exercise us in fight. For he could easily hold Satan bridled and prevent us from having any temptations, so that we would go on our way undisturbed.

But we see that Satan has many ways to trouble us, and God gives him enough rein and permission to do it. **It follows then that we must be good soldiers, or else we cannot be good believers.** Truly it should be enough for him to have spoken this in one word, but because it is so hard a matter to practice this doctrine, it needs to be examined better, so that everyone may have occasion to think better about it, and commit it often to memory. We say that **faith is never without fight.** And why so? For if a man dispose himself to do well, and to submit himself to God, the devil will cast many difficulties to debauch him. The world is full of deceits, and we cannot take one step without encountering trouble. We walk here among thorns. They who should help us forward draw us back, for the devil uses the malice of those around us to fight against us. And when any man does us hurt, he gives us occasion to answer him with the same. Or we might lose heart, or be angry but we must proceed with simplicity, seeking nothing but to do our duty. And again, even within himself a Christian must fight to stand steadfast in the faith. That is so. There is nothing more contrary to our nature than to forgo these earthly things and not be given to them and to seek with all our heart and with all our soul that which we see not, which is completely hidden from our eyes, and such as our senses can in no way attain to. A faithful Christian man must look higher than himself when there is any question of thinking upon the kingdom of God and everlasting life. And yet we know how our minds are bent to the things we have in our hands. How then is it possible for us to stand fast in the faith, unless we mightily resist and strive stoutly against all our nature? And therefore, when we meet with these temptations and are stirred up to fight, let us make this doctrine of St. Paul our shield, namely, that **faith is never without fight, that we can never serve God without being soldiers.** And why so? For **we have enemies before us, we are compassed about on every side. And therefore it is requisite for us to be used to fighting, or else we must be fain to yield.**

Since it is so that no man can serve God without exercising himself in

patience, and that in the middle of afflictions wherewith the children of God are tormented, let us beware we renounce not our faith, but march on still. I would to God I could employ myself wholly to praise God joyfully and to be at rest and contentment; that I were not troubled by men but all my senses were given to do well. This is to be desired, but yet God will try me and my chief battle must be against my own affections. And then when the devil moves many combats against me, I must beware I am not overcome when temptations come on all sides. I must stand fast. I must be strong and constant. Therefore, I must not be weak in this case lest I renounce my faith. And what a thing were it to forsake my faith whereunto God has called me? Therefore **let us go on and not think it strange that this life is full of many assaults and that we must withstand many enemies and that we must from day to day get more strength to bring ourselves under this condition whereunto God will have us to be subject.**

This is one point. But yet St. Paul sweetens the sorrow that the faithful might conceive when he tells them that they must fight all the days of their lives, he sweetens it I say, by adding that *this combat is good*, as if he said: our war is not doubtful. As he says in another place, we fight not at random (1 Cor. 9:26). We see how Princes will for their ambition hazard all they have. They will endanger themselves to be spoiled of all their might and power. We see soldiers, which to have wages of those who travail in their vineyards and in the fields, will put their lives in danger. And what is it that leads them to it? A doubtful hope, for there is no certainty. Yes, and oftentimes, though they have all, and have overcome their enemies, what profit comes to them from it? But when God calls us to the combat, and wants us to be soldiers as it were under his sign, it is not upon any such condition, but we are assured that the war shall be good. And thus St. Paul comforts the faithful in exhorting them, as God also applies himself to us when he shows us what our duty is, and shows us also that if we do as he commands us, the whole shall redound to our profit and salvation. Truly, if we were wise, it would be sufficient for us to know the will of our God. This is the point we must be resolved in, since God appoints the matter so, we must pass that way. We may not stand disputing upon it. But because we are so hard to be ruled, and on the other side more delicate and dainty than need be—so that a very small thing is enough to kill our hearts, so brittle we are, as is pitiful to behold—so our Lord shows us that he proves our patience, that he lays

a hard law upon us, if he suffers us to be grieved and tormented with many temptations, he does it for our good, and the issue shall always be happy and blessed. Though for a season things are sharp and we disdain them, and if it were possible for us, we would pull back and stand aside, nevertheless God shows in the end that he orders this evil in such sort that he causes it to turn to our profit and advantage.

And therefore we ought to weigh this word well which St. Paul sets down here, *that the war of the children of God is good to those who fight*. For when they fight they do not waste their time, because they do nothing haphazardly. And he adds moreover, for better confirmation of his matter, that the reward which God sets before our eyes is no wage of gold or silver but is everlasting life. And if men through vain ambition are so set on fire that they spare not their very lives, what shall we do? What cowardliness is it and how can it be excused if any may spare himself, when God sets not before us any temporal wages, any piece of silver, and fleeting and brittle possession, but gives us everlasting life, and shows that he seeks nothing but to have us to be his heirs, to be partakers of his glory and immortality, to enjoy all his blessings, yes, and him himself? Where God lifts us up so high, are we not worse than stocks and blocks, if all the sinews we have strive not to follow this fight, the reward whereof is so great and inestimable?

Therefore we must have these three degrees which St. Paul sets down here. The first is, that faith cannot be without many assaults, and that the life of God's children is a warfare in this world. The second is that we must not be grieved if God tries us, for we do not fight at random. We are in no danger to lose our lives without recovery, nor to be spoiled of our goods and honors, but the result of our warfare is blessed because God rules us. It is he who calls us and will not allow us to waste our time. And third, that God contents not himself to recompense us in this world, but sets before us a thing far more excellent, namely, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, because he wants us to pass through this world to come to him and enjoy forever his glory and everlasting bliss, which he purchased so dearly for us by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is it not reasonable that every one of us apply himself wholly to this? And are we then held back in this world, and in those things which we see when we compare the heavenly life with whatsoever can be desired in this world through honors, riches, commodities, pleasures, and whatever else men give themselves unto? Please, are they not,

I ask you, as dung and filth in comparison to God's glory? For the matter stands not only in this, that God shows himself a Father unto us in this world, and makes us feel his grace by giving us some fleeting blessings; but to say that we are of his nature, (as St. Peter says, 2 Peter 1:4) that we are joined to him, that he is one with us. Is not this a privilege which surmounts all?

Now for the fourth St. Paul adds, *whereunto also thou art called*. This imports first of all a confirmation of that which he said, *lay hold upon everlasting life*. For it is not in men to get the kingdom of heaven, nor to conquer it. Are we valiant enough to do it if we should run wholly that way? All our force and counsel would serve to no purpose. But when our God calls us to it we may go on, for we have a good warrant. We are not grounded upon any hope which we have foolishly imagined in our own brains, or upon any promise that any mortal man has made to us, or upon any appearance that we see before our eyes. For all these things may deceive us, and we see what becomes of those who rest upon them. But when our Lord has reached out his hand to us, we may walk on boldly; for we shall know that we have not run in vain. This may fully comfort us so that we in no way turn aside, whatsoever becomes of us. When we see all the world in a hurly burly, let us look to the calling of our God. Thus we see St. Paul's meaning was to confirm this doctrine, when he said that Timothy is called to everlasting life.

Now that which he says to one man pertains generally to all. And again we see hereby that men get not their salvation by their own industry, but from the free goodness of God. And therefore, that no man may take occasion hereby, to magnify himself, and to say, that we can do something, that it is our part to put forward ourselves, to the obtaining of everlasting life, St. Paul sets a bar against all these foolish dreams, saying, that we lay hold upon everlasting life because God has called us to it. Truly we must take pains and strive, yes as much as we can or rather more if it were possible; but yet, it is neither in him who wills, neither in him who runs, as St. Paul says, but in him who shows mercy (Rom 9:16). For it is not for our good will or for our running that we obtain everlasting life. For we are not only slothful and unprofitable to all goodness, but we go completely contrary until God has disposed us to run and set us in the right way. If men follow their nature, what will they do? They are mad to wickedness, and as seething pots, in so much as there is not one thought in them but that thought fights against God. As for any goodness, I warrant you we will never think of it. For we cannot have so much

as one thought to do well, as St. Paul says (2 Cor 3:5). And therefore it is God who sets us in order. He disposes us to run. He shows us the way. Has he done so much? Yet this is not enough, for we shall halt in the midway and fall down often. Indeed, we shall go out of the way. Therefore God must supply all these faults and make his calling sure in us, and strengthen it by the selfsame grace, from whence it sprung and arose.

Therefore as God was not moved to give us hope of our salvation for any goodness that he saw in us, but because it pleased him, and pleased him of his mere mercy, so when he goes on still to guide us until we come to the haven of salvation, he does it because it pleases him. Thus God will not have us idle, nevertheless it must be with fear and trembling. And why so? For it is God who works in us, giving us the will, giving us the effect, and all whatsoever according to his good pleasure (Phil 2:12). Let us do the best we can, but without presumption, without pride. Let us not think here to do well, in order to earn something nor because man is worthy to be exalted against God; for by this means the grace of God should be darkened, yes and made nothing. Therefore let us beware of this dreaming, and let us not do as the Papists, that when there is any speech of doing well, straightway out comes their free will, out comes claims of what they deserve. But when we are commanded to do and to strive, let us know that our strength comes from another way, that is to say, from the Spirit of God. Let us know that there is neither wisdom nor discretion in us, but God must guide us to it, and when he has begun, he must perfect it and supply all our infirmities. If we know this, let us always be in hatred with sin, let us walk warily, let us call upon him who called us once unto pity, that he would continue, for otherwise we will fall every minute of an hour. *When there is such humility, God shall be glorified as he is worthy.* So the faithful shall so work that they shall always know it is the Lord who works in them. They shall do their best, but they shall know that their strength comes from heaven and not from of themselves. And in the end they shall know that in laying hold upon everlasting life they have neither strength nor industry to brag of, but that they hold all the goodness of God which has had a continual course with them.

This is it in few words we have to mark in this place. And now we have to mark moreover that our thanklessness is too shameful if we forsake God's calling. For to say that our Lord has regarded us, us I say, who are miserable worms of the earth, to choose us into the number of his children, that he

has prepared an heavenly inheritance for us, that he has given us hope and assurance and we in the meantime despise it and are held back with the world, and are led away with these fleeting things, and are turned away from and deprived of such a blessing by our brutish blockishness, how can we excuse ourselves? For **we cannot come to where God appoints us without fighting**. And therefore when men shall see that we are held back with these fleeting things, and that the least thing in the world will turn us aside, that there is nothing so brittle as we, that so soon as Satan whispers in our ear, we are carried away very far, and instead of turning back to the right way, the world sees that everyone of us gives himself to these things of naught, what shall a man say? Does not the world see that we make no account of everlasting life, of such a treasure, and of the very immortality of our God itself? Let us see therefore that we awake ourselves and not be so sluggish. Moreover, because men are grieved by succession of time, and though they have had some zeal, yet when they must still begin again, they become slack and cold, therefore St. Paul says flatly, lay hold. In another place he sets himself for an example and says, my brothers though I have taken great pains yet am I not yet come to my mark. I must therefore take more pains, I must still go on and not look at what is behind me (Phil 3:12).

Now if St. Paul had need to stir himself after this sort, what must we do, I ask you? Must not a man, when he has hardly gone on one foot, look to the rest of his way? Seeing that St. Paul, who had dispatched a good piece of his way, and run so valiantly, still has to stir up himself and strive, must not he who has no more but come out of the doors, and has not gone very far, take a great deal more heed to himself and bestow all his labor and pains to obtain that which God has set before him? And he says precisely, *that we must not look on that which is behind*. Why so? For we would always reckon with God. As how? I have done this, I have done that; and is it not enough? Yes, upon what condition has God called us to his service? Is it for one deed or two, and then give us leave every man to rest? No, no; but that we should dedicate ourselves to him, both to live and to die, and to be his, for good and all. And therefore let us beware we take not this excuse upon anything that we have done, to say, "I have fought, I have taken great pains, and is it not enough? And must not others have their turn." We must not think on these things which may make us slack but see what remains and go on to do that which is commanded us. Otherwise let us think we have done

nothing. For it were better for us if we had never begun, than so to faint in the midst of our way.

And moreover, St. Paul adds, going on with his matter, that Timothy had made a good confession before many witnesses. By these words he meant to encourage him the more to stand fast in this combat of faith which he spoke of. For (as he said) it is great shame for a man to begin well and afterwards to fall away, and turn the bridle, and that the world should see him completely changed. For men will not marvel to see one who never gave any hope, to continue in doing evil. They will say, “Ho, the poor man knew not God, nor everlasting life. He never knew either what virtue or honesty meant. He is a miserable beast.” Thus will the world say; thus will they speak. “He is a drunkard. He is a whoremonger. He is a wicked man. He has always been such a one. He is made of nothing but dishonesty.” But when a man has made a show to serve God, and has employed himself faithfully and has been a mirror of honesty, has given good example and edified much people—if afterwards he change his ways, and become wicked and profane himself, and the world see him to be completely another man than he was before, they will take him as a monster. Every man will abhor him.

And for this cause St. Paul says to Timothy, *that he had given a good confession before many witnesses*. Hereby we are warned, when God has been good unto us, to make us walk uprightly as we ought, that is so much a straighter bond and obligation for us, to the end we should know that it is not lawful for us to swerve to the side. There are a great number who think they have bought out their offenses which they commit, when they can allege how valiantly they have been in times past; as we see that even those men who never did anything worthy in their lives, but only put on a show, have had a certain countenance of goodness. And thereupon they give themselves to lewdness, they play the devils, and yet notwithstanding want to be thought of as angels. What? I have done this, I have done that, will they say. To be short, they will make chronicles of their doings which, nevertheless, are worth nothing. But even if they were as angels of paradise, it would be the more shame for them, and so much the less shall they be able to excuse themselves, and so much the greater will their confusion be before God, and before all his children. And why so? For is not that what they did before a witness that they knew they ought to fear God? And if it grieved them to do it, and if they are become lewd, shall they need any

other reason to condemn them? Shall not their former life answer that they sin not anymore by ignorance, that they can have no cloak, but that they have malice, as having become devils, fallen away from God, and cast away his yoke that had called them to obedience? And therefore let us mark well this warning which is given us here, namely, that when God has set us in a good estate and we have led our neighbors to goodness, that we are bound so much the more to stand fast and continue. For if we fall, the offence will be double, and because God has shown himself to us, we may not pretend ignorance, since he has so examined us all kinds of ways. Therefore our fault will be so much the greater if we go not on in our course after that God has once reached us out his hand.

And we must mark here that when St. Paul speaks here of the good confession which Timothy made, he means not only the confession of the mouth, but of the life; for indeed it is the proof and witness that we must give of our faith, and of the hope that we have of everlasting salvation. If we do but speak it will be very slander. But when a man behaves himself so that the world may know it is sure that he serves God, and bears the doctrine, this is a good matter and very sure. Therefore is Timothy praised here by St. Paul, because he behaved himself well in his office and calling that men might see he served God not like a hypocrite, but that he preached the gospel as being sure, that it was the pure and undoubted truth wherein stands men's salvation. And because he made such a confession he is commended, but upon this condition that he must continue still.

And he says precisely, *before many witnesses*, as if he said that God had set him as it were upon a scaffold. For, if a man were not known and his life had been as it were hidden and then it so come to pass that he does amiss, it will not do so much harm as if he had been greatly accounted of among the faithful and had been taken as a pillar of the Church. Therefore if he becomes naught, his fall is great. If a piece of the house falls down, that is of no importance. The house will remain and stand well enough. But if any of the principal members fall, all will come down. Even so fares it with those whom God has set aloft and which are set for all men to look upon. If they play lewd parts, they cause a great number to be naught, and therefore is their condemnation more grievous. Therefore let us join this with the rest, namely, that if God has bestowed upon us the favor to enable us to give others light, let us know also that we shall be enlightened. That is to say, that if we

have done evil by going out of the right way, we shall have more witnesses to cry out to God for vengeance against us. Look how many we have edified before. We shall have so many voices to convince us and condemn us. And therefore since it is so, when any of us has a good beginning, and has walked as became him, let him be so much the more careful to go on his race even to the end. For the end is so far off that, if we have done well for a while and this tends to cool us, our former lives should be as good as a spur to us to prick us forward to acknowledge daily the graces that God has bestowed upon us. And when we have employed them well, this ought to stir us up to well doing, knowing that God framed us for himself, and having framed us so well, we must be an example to others—especially those who are of any name in the Church, and have many eyes upon them. It is to the end that they should not overthrow that which they have built, otherwise they shall have a horrible vengeance of God fall upon them, if they turn away from the goodness that God had done them and make the grace of no effect which they had received. Everyman for his part ought to apply this doctrine to his use, for it pertains generally to us all. For it is said on the one side that the ministers of the word of God are as burning lamps, the light of the world (Matt 5:14). But generally St. Paul says also to all Christians that they bear a burning lamp when they have the knowledge of the Gospel. Therefore we must walk through the darkness of the world, knowing that God has set us upon a scaffold as it were, so that we will be seen afar off. And therefore let us beware we go no out of the way when we have the way beaten before us, and God guides and governs us. Let us, I say, be so much the more aware that we be not a cause to mislead others who by our example might be framed to well doing.

And because men's confession is not sufficient, unless it be better grounded, St. Paul, to conclude the matter, brings Timothy, and in his person all the faithful, to cast their eyes upon our Lord Jesus Christ and upon the confession that he made under Pontius Pilate. The son of God has begun, and we do but follow, and we are partakers of the confession that he made before Pontius Pilate. This is what may give us a great deal better courage. And therefore St. Paul says that he enjoined Timothy before God, who quickens all things, and before Jesus Christ, who made a good confession before Pontius Pilate, that he go on.

But to make this doctrine more profitable to us we must mark that it is

not without cause that St. Paul used this great vehemence, for he knew how hard a matter it was. Truly he speaks here to all the faithful. But howsoever it be, Timothy is also comprehended in it, even he who before God witnessed the zeal and constancy that had done his duty as well as possible might be. Nevertheless he needs still to be exhorted, as St. Paul besides the warning he gives him calls him to appear before God, sets Jesus Christ before his eyes and gives him a straight charge. And why so? It is certain that if it had been an easy matter, and such as needed not much to be stood upon, St. Paul would have been content to have said in one word, look to your office, you know whom you serve, and therefore be of good courage. But when he says to him, God is your judge, you must make an account before his throne and before the seat of his majesty, I summon you to appear before our Lord Jesus Christ who is appointed as our judge, that if you do not do your duty to stand constantly, I may protest that I showed you what was required and you passed not for it. Let us mark well, I say, that **if we will employ ourselves to God's service, we must not do it slightly nor think we have done with it, when we have done our best.**

And therefore we have to pray to God that it would please him to strengthen us and so dispose us to do what we should do, being held and aided by him. Thus are the faithful first of all warned to fly to him who is able to make them capable, since of our own nature we cannot be. And if this is requisite in all Christians without exception, what shall we say of the ministers of the word of God, who have a higher charge by a great deal, and so consequently a great deal more hard? Have they not to take very good heed to themselves? Nevertheless we may not be troubled with the hardness of it. As we see a great number who when they consider what they have to do, their hearts fail them if it be weightier than they are able to perform and go through with. "Is it possible that I can do this? I feel myself weak, I see that this is a great burden, and a burden that I am not able to bear." **No, no, only let us take pains. Although the things be hard for us, God will work for us.** And since we see that St. Paul, naming things that surmount the strength of men, still does not cease to exhort men to do them, we know that it will be no excuse for us to allege that we were astonished and amazed when he saw that we were not able and fit for that charge which God laid upon our shoulders. For he knows what we can do—which is nothing at all. And moreover, he will not be lacking to us, nor ever fail us, so long as we

walk humbly and learn to submit ourselves to him, and commit ourselves wholly into his hands.

And because these things might discourage us if we should look further than the world, let us mark well also the circumstance which St. Paul adds. And let this conclude the matter when he says, *That God quickens all things*, for he shows us hereby, though it seem that we are poor and miserable wretches, that our condition is accursed, that as touching the world we are despised and reviled, that men mock at us, that they put out their tongues at us, that others torment us, that we are taken as castaways, that nevertheless we must not faint, for God gives life. Therefore let us cast our eyes upon that life which God keeps hidden with himself, and which he opened when he revealed it by the Holy Spirit and gave good witness of it in his Gospel. So then, when the world has conspired our death a hundred thousand times, and we are taken for condemned persons, and reviled, let us go on, for our lives stand not here below. It hangs not upon men, neither upon their reputation, nor upon their credit. Let us not think so, but let us surmount all grief that the devil casts in our way to make us faint-hearted, considering that it is God who quickens all things. He holds our life in his hand. He will keep it safely and securely, and it is his pleasure that we should bend to him and content ourselves therewith, knowing that he will not deceive us in that which he has promised us. This is it which St. Paul aimed at here.

Paul will say more on this later, but we must bear this away in few words, so that whenever we shall be tossed up and down with the temptations of this world, and with all the troubles that may befall us, we may know that God has not called us to him in vain, and therefore we must be always his. Yes, and if we feel many infirmities that move us to behave ourselves sinfully, and if we see the thanklessness and malice of men on the one side, and it seems that we profit nothing by doing good, and it is but lost labor on the other side, yet must we strive and endeavor to cast our eyes upon God. And then, are we held fast and stayed here as it were? Let us still climb over such barriers; though there seem to be great mountains. Yet must we have wings as it were to fly when we cannot go. And the faith and hope that we have in God will serve us for that, so that we comprehend the virtue that is in him, and which he reserves as his proper office, which is to make alive. Now God does not quicken anything but that which seems to be dead. Therefore when we walk as we ought, and as we are called, it cannot be but we must be as

it were cast away in the sight of the world, and that death itself threatens us and compasses us about on every side. And why so? Otherwise God would not do that which he challenges to himself in this place, namely, to quicken us; but **in the midst of death we may hope for life, knowing that no man can molest us when the invincible power of God is for us**; and that they who now trouble us shall abide confounded, and God will cause us in the end to triumph with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us fall down before the face of our good God, confessing our faults, and asking him that it would please him to give us a better feeling of them than we have had, that we may displease ourselves in them and draw near to him from day to day. And if there has been any show of good in us, as of his grace he has brought us into the hope, etc.

¹ See further, "John Calvin: Preacher of the Gospel," *Preaching Magazine* 31:6 (Summer 65-63):(2016).

² Ray Van Neste and Brian Denker, eds. *John Calvin's Sermons on 1 Timothy* (Amazon Digital Services, 2016).

³ In the published version, the sermons on 1 Timothy were simply numbered rather than given names. I have taken a name for this sermon from a recurring phrase which I think captures a key point of the sermon.

⁴ T. H. L. Parker, *Portrait of Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 89.