the saying is perfectly general, grounding  
their duties on an axiomatic truth.

**provide not for,** viz. in the way noted above,  
—of support and sustenance.

**his own** seem to be, generally any connexions,**—those of his own house,** those more immediately included in one’s own family as  
dwelling in the same *house.*

**he hath denied the faith**] “For,” says Bengel,  
“the faith does not abolish natural duties,  
but perfects and confirms them.’—The  
Roman-Catholic commentator Mack has  
some good remarks here, on the faith of  
which the Apostle speaks: “Faith, in the  
sense of the Apostle, cannot exist, without,  
including love: for the subject-matter of  
faith is not mere opinion, but the grace and  
truth of God, to which he that believes  
gives up his spirit, as he that loves gives  
up his heart: the subject-matter of faith is  
also the object of love. Where therefore  
love is not nor works, there is not, nor  
works, faith either: so that he who fulfils  
not the offices of love towards his relatives,  
is virtually an unbeliever.”

**worse than an unbeliever**] For even among heathens the common duties of family piety are recognized : if therefore a Christian repudiates them, he lowers himself beneath the heathen. Compare Matt. v. 46, 47.  
Also, as Calvin suggests in addition, the  
Christian who lives in the light of the  
Gospel, has less excuse for breaking those  
laws of nature which even without the  
Gospel are recognized by men.—According  
to hypothesis (1) or (2) above, this general  
statement applies to the widows or to their  
children and grandchildren. But surely it  
would be very harsh to understand it of the  
widows: and this forms an additional argument for hypothesis (2).

**9—16.**] *Further regulations respecting  
widows.*

**9.**] **Let a woman be inserted in the catalogue as a widow.** But  
now, for what purpose? What *catalogue*  
are we to understand? Hardly, (1) that  
of those who are to receive relief from the  
Church (so Chrysostom and many others) :  
for thus the rule, that she is to he *sixty  
years of age,* would seem a harsh one, as  
many widows might be destitute at a far  
earlier age: as also the rule that she must.  
not have been *twice married,* especially as  
the Apostle himself below commands second.  
marriage for the younger widows. Again,  
the duties enjoined in ver. 10 presuppose  
some degree of competence, and thus, on  
this hypothesis, the widows of the poorer  
classes would be excluded from sustenance  
by charity,—who most of all others would  
require it. Also, for the reason alleged in  
ver. 11, *sustenance* can hardly be in question  
—for then the re-marrying would simply  
take them off the roll, and thus be rather  
a benefit, than a detriment to the Church.  
Nor again (2) can we understand the roll  
to be that of the *deaconesses,* as some do:  
although the Theodosian code, founded on  
this interpretation, ordained “that none  
should be taken into the number of the  
deaconesses under sixty years old, according  
to the precept of the Apostle.” For, a)  
the age mentioned is unfit for the work of  
the deaconesses’ office, and in the council  
of Chalcedon the age of the deaconesses  
was fixed at forty: b) not only widows  
but virgins were elected deaconesses: (3)  
it is implied in ver. 12, that these widows  
were bound not to marry again, which was  
not the ease with the deaconesses. It  
seems therefore better to understand here  
*some especial band of widows,* sustained  
perhaps at the expense of the church, but not  
the only ones who were thus supported :—  
set apart for ecclesiastical duties, and bound  
to the service of God. Such are understood here by Chrysostom himself in his homily on the passage. They are also mentioned as *the band of widows, as presbytresses, as having precedence of rank:* i.e.  
such widows as corresponded in office for  
their own sex in some measure to the presbyters,—sat unveiled in the assemblies in a separate place, by the presbyters,  
and had a kind of supervision over their  
own sex, especially over the widows and  
orphans: were vowed to perpetual widowhood, clad with ‘widow’s vestments,’ and ordained by laying on of hands. This institution of the early church, which was abolished by the eleventh canon of the council of Laodicea, is sufficiently affirmed by  
many of the Fathers. De Wette makes  
the allusion to this ‘institute of widows’  
one proof of the post-apostolic date of the  
Epistle: but on this see Introd. ch, vi. § i.