1 Tim. i. 20) **and Philetus** (of him nothing further is known); **men who concerning the truth went astray** (compare  
1 ‘Tim. vi, 21), **saying that the resurrection  
has already taken place** (Tertullian tells  
us, that they did this by *spiritualizing* both  
death and the resurrection, making the  
one mean the state of sinful nature, the  
other that of grace. This error, which belonged to the Gnostics subsequently, may  
well have been already sown and springing  
up in the apostolic age. If the form of it  
was that described by Tertullian, it would  
be one of those instances of wresting the  
words of St. Paul himself [compare Col.  
ii. 12: Rom. vi. 4], of which St. Peter  
speaks 2 Pet. iii. 16); **and are overturning  
the faith of some**.

19.] *Firm endurance*, notwithstanding this overturning  
of the faith of some, of *the church of God:  
its signs and seals*.—**Nevertheless God’s  
firm foundation standeth** (not, as A. V.  
ungrammatically, ‘**the foundation of God  
standeth sure.**” But what is *God’s firm  
foundation*? Very various interpretations  
have been given. Some explain it the  
*fundamental doctrine of the Resurrec-  
tion*: others, *the promises of God*: others,  
the *immovable faith of God*: others,  
*Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 11: some, *the Christian  
religion*: others, again, *God’s election.*  
Rather is it the congregation of the faithful, considered as a foundation of a building placed by God,—the *house* spoken of  
in the next verse. Against the tottering  
faith of those just mentioned, he sets the  
*firm foundation* which *stands*. It cannot  
be moved: Heb, xii. 28), **having** (‘seeing  
it hath? with a very faint causal force,  
illustrating the previous declaration) **this  
seal** (probably in allusion to the practice of engraving inscriptions over doors [Deut.  
vi. 9; xi. 20] and on pillars and foundation stones [Rey. xxi. 14]. The seal [inscription] would indicate *ownership* and  
*destination* : both of which are pointed at  
in the two texts following) (1) **The Lord  
knoweth** (see 1 Cor. viii. 3, note) **them  
that are His**: and (2), **Let every one that  
nameth the name of the Lord** (viz. as his  
Lord: not exactly equivalent to ‘calleth  
on the name of the Lord’) **stand aloof**  
**from iniquity** (the passage in Isa. stands,  
“*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from  
thence, touch not the unclean thing : go out  
of the midst of her: be ye clean that bear  
the vessels of the Lord.*” It is clearly no  
reason against this passage being here  
*alluded to*, that it is *expressly cited* 2 Cor.  
vi. 17. Ellicott remarks, that it is possibly in continued allusion to Num. xvi. 26,  
“*Separate yourselves from the tents of  
these wicked men*”).

20.] Those  
who are truly the Lord’s are known to  
Him and depart from iniquity: but in the  
visible church there are many unworthy  
members. This is illustrated by the following similitude.—**But** (contrast to the  
preceding definition of the Lord’s people)  
**in a great house** (Chrysostom and others  
understand by this *great house*, the world:  
but it is far better understood of the  
church, for the reason given by Calvin:  
“that the context here teaches *us to un-  
derstand* it of the church: for Paul is not  
treating of those without, but of God’s  
own family.” The idea then is much the  
same as that in the parable of the dragnet, Matt. xiii. 47—49: not in the parable  
of the tares of the field: for there it is  
expressly said, “*The field is the world*”)  
there are not only vessels of gold and