

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

II. INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THEIR AUTHENTICITY.

THESE Letters, which for seventeen hundred years were believed to have been written by the Apostle Paul, have for three-quarters of a century suffered a running fire of criticism. Scholars of varied pretensions have attacked their genuineness and attempted to account in various ways for their existence and peculiarities. J. E. C. Schmidt was the first to suggest doubts about the authenticity of the First Timothy, which in 1807 Schleiermacher expanded in his letters to Gass. These critics accepted the Second Timothy and Titus as Pauline, but imagined that the perplexities of the First Epistle would be overcome by the supposition of its being manufactured out of these previously existing materials. Eichhorn applied to all three Epistles the same principles of destructive criticism, and was followed to some extent by De Wette, who, while he admitted some Pauline elements, endeavoured to reveal the presence of other and later hands. These speculations led Hug, Guericke, Heydenreich, Neander, and Mack to defend the authenticity of all three Epistles, and Baur to fashion and urge the extraordinary and fanciful theory to which I have already referred. Credner was far more subtle in his speculation. He imagined that two Pauline fragments were written during the first and second imprisonments of the Apostle, and that a considerable portion of the Epistle to Titus was also genuine. Out of these documents he supposed that the First Epistle to Timothy was skilfully forged in partial imitation of the fragments

thus improved upon. Speculations akin to these might be easily hazarded with reference to any classical works of antiquity. They reveal much perverse ingenuity, and the extent to which they have been carried by some writers, and the solemnity with which they have been gravely refuted by others, will amuse future generations.

The first of the difficulties around which the others revolve is the chronological puzzle on which we have already commented. If Luke had told us that Paul was beheaded at the close of the imprisonment of which he records the commencement, and if he had thus forced us to intercalate the narrative of the "Acts" with otherwise unrecorded biographical detail, even then, difficult as we have shewn the task to be, we should feel convinced that a forger would have been more careful in his mention of names, persons, places, and seasons, and would not have courted immediate detection by the fabrication of a series of journeys and missionary labours which clashed with universally-accredited documents. But Luke is silent about the conclusion of Paul's life, and the possibility thus granted of the hypothesis of a second imprisonment becomes the salvation of the Epistles from this irreverent handling. Baur is fully aware of this, and endeavours to shew that the statement made by Clement of Rome throws no weight into the balance of probability in favour of a second imprisonment. Clement said (1 *Ep. to Corinthians*, chap. v.): "Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the East and West, he

gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to *the extreme limit of the West*, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects." If Paul suffered martyrdom at the close of his historic imprisonment, it is imperative that the expression *the extreme limit of the West* should not mean further west than Rome—should not, *e.g.*, mean *Spain* or *Britain*; and therefore Clement's phrase is by the opponents of the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles made to refer to Rome, from which place this Apostolic Father wrote his letter to the Corinthians.

Granting, however, that the Epistles to the Philipians and Colossians give no hint of any continued expectation of a visit to Spain, and that Luke's narrative leaves no space for Paul's intended journey from Rome to Spain (Rom. xv. 24), yet the hint given by Clement lends high probability to such a visit having been paid, and so, from the time of Eusebius to our own day, this solution of the difficulties has been thought by a long catena of competent scholars to be satisfactory. Meyer, in his introduction to the Epistle to Romans, argues strongly against this solution on the ground of the absence of traditional notices of Paul's work in Spain. He considers that the phrase of Clement is a rhetorical flourish, and that "the West" was used in the letter to the Corinthians of what was relatively "west" to them. This does not seem to me to exhaust the expression,¹

¹ Professor Lightfoot (*S. Clement of Rome: the two Epistles to the Corinthians, a revised text with introduction and notes*, p. 50) quotes a series of passages from Strabo, which make it extremely probable that by the phrase "the limit of the West" was meant the "Pillars of Hercules." He quotes also Velleius Paterc. i. 2: "In ultimo

and, in company with the great bulk of expositors, I am disposed to believe that Clement's words strongly sustain the abundant hints furnished by the Pastoral Epistles of a series of Paul's ministrations later than can be traced either in other undoubted Epistles or in the "Acts of the Apostles."

(2) A second class of difficulties arises from the use of a number of words and phrases which are peculiar to one or more of these Epistles, and are not found in other portions of the Pauline writings.

This argument appears very convincing to some writers, but investigation into the circumstances under which these letters were written, the persons to whom they were addressed, and the purposes for which they were composed, is more than sufficient to account for the occurrence of these peculiarities. If a group of Bishop Berkeley's letters about his intended college at Bermuda were compared with several chapters of his "New Theory of Vision," very similar phenomena would appear. Each class of composition would have, to some extent, its own vocabulary. Besides, while the verbal peculiarities of the Pastoral Epistles amount to about fifty-two, there are more than fifty which are peculiar to the Epistle to Galatians, and one hundred and forty common to the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. I admit that it is remarkable that none of the peculiarities of the Pastoral Epistles should be

Hispaniæ tractu, in extremo nostri orbis termino." It is not probable that Clement, writing from Rome, "in the metropolis and centre of power and civilization, could speak of it as 'the extreme West,' and this at a time when many eminent Latin authors and statesmen were, or had been, natives of Spain, and when the commercial and passenger traffic with Gades was intimate and constant."

found in that to Philemon ; but the purpose and date of this private letter are sufficient to account for the differences. It is not to be forgotten that more than a score of words used by Paul in this short letter are found in the Pastoral Epistles. Take particularly the frequent use of the word "*technon*" in both. To say that certain expressions, like "doctrines of devils," are not apostolic because not found in the earlier Epistles, is reasoning in a vicious circle. We cannot know that this and other terms and phrases are not Pauline until, on other grounds and by irrefragable evidence, it is shewn that these Epistles were not written by the Apostle.

Many of these expressions, such as "healthy" or "sound doctrine," which in some form occurs six times in the Pastoral Epistles, are perfectly comprehensible if we reflect on the growth of dogmatic ideas and ecclesiastical discipline, on the diffusion of poisonous doctrine, and the prevalence of diseased forms of thought during the course of the four to six years which must have elapsed between writing the Epistle to the Philippians and the Epistles before us.

Take, again, a fresh and beautiful form of expression which repeatedly occurs : "This is a faithful saying." It reveals a new but indubitable characteristic of the early Church. Holy, trustworthy, divine words had begun to pass from lip to lip and land to land. They were sacred coins stamped in the mint of religious experience, and passing current as pledges and symbols of new and supernatural fellowship. Who can wonder if such watchwords as, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ;" or as, "If we die with him we

shall also live with him,"—words expressive of the very centre and scope of the whole gospel,—had already become the recognised bonds of mutual understanding; that the rise of a custom, which developed ultimately into creeds and liturgical forms, should have received Paul's imprimatur? Psalms, hymns, spiritual and responsive songs had, as we may judge from 1 Cor. xiv. 26, Col. iii. 16, been growing into customary use in the early Church. These divine "proverbs," created we know not by whom, polished by deep emotion, tested in the furnace of sorrow, proved in the hour of conflict, were among the sacred possessions of the martyr Church, and we need not suppose that a reference to the habit is post-apostolic. There are many approximations to the same conception in the undoubted Epistles of Paul.

Again, why should Paul not use the word *epiphaneia*, instead of *parousia*, to denote the coming of our Lord? Had not earlier Epistles shewn that the feverish expectation of a visible *parousia* was requiring modification, and that the Apostle himself anticipated a "manifestation" which was even more than the old notion of a "coming," and might prove to be the final revelation and unveiling of the fact that He had already come?

It is true that the verb (*arnoumai*) "deny" is frequently used in these Epistles of those who repudiated the Lord Jesus, and it is also used in Jude, 2 Peter, and 1 John, a circumstance vindicated by the subversive character of the later developments of heretical feeling which came under Paul's observation after his deliverance from his first imprisonment.

One of the most striking peculiarities to which adverse critics call attention is the use, thirteen times, of either *eusebeia*, *eusebein*, or *eusebôs*, for godliness or piety towards God in Christ. Some equivalent form occurs five times in the Acts, but hardly anywhere else in the New Testament. This may have arisen from Paul having contrasted the great Christian "mystery of godliness" with the heathen conception of relation to the gods. Paul, by his long residence in Rome, came upon this grand definition, and then, having once used it, he found the various derivatives of the word embrace for him the whole circumference of Christian experience and conduct.

Another phrase is used in both Epistles to Timothy characteristic of the position and duties of the Evangelist, but borrowed from the style of the Old Testament, and never elsewhere adopted in the New. I refer to the expression, "O man of God" (1 Tim. vi. 11), and "The man of God" (2 Tim. iii. 17). This peculiarity is in harmony with the apostolic idea of the Christian ministry, and it corresponded with the prophetic rather than with the priestly order of the Old Covenant.

If it were necessary to follow these terms and phrases in detail, it would be far more just to the materials before us to imagine a more or less sufficient reason why the Apostle should have adopted them, than, on account of their presence, to perform the rough and sweeping process of handing these Epistles over to a *falsarius*. Surely a writer who was anxious to make his compositions pass for those of the Apostle Paul could easily have kept

scrupulously within the vocabulary of his undoubted Epistles.

(3) A third class of difficulties has arisen from the numerous digressions of the author of these Epistles. It is stated that, without warning, he departs from the matter in hand to introduce broad statements of Christian principle or compendiums of truth; and 1 Tim. i. 15; ii. 4-6; iii. 16, are cited in illustration. This peculiarity is sufficiently marked, but not more so than it is in the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Corinthians. Thus in Galatians i. and ii., Paul digresses to recount portions of his own life; and in stating what he said to "Peter before them all," he unfolds the whole doctrine of justification by faith. In the Epistles to the Corinthians the digressions run into whole Chapters, and it becomes difficult in consequence to follow the argument. Compare also Ephesians iii. 1 and iv. 1 for a similar idiosyncrasy of style. In 2 Cor. i. 20; ii. 14, 15; v. 1-8, these digressions involve large and bold generalizations and fresh definitions of Christian ideas. Dean Altord seems to think that the habit of "going off at a word," indicates advancing age on Paul's part; but compare Ephesians iii. 5 for a similar peculiarity.

(4) De Wette has urged the author's exaggeration of the moral and doctrinal elements in the Epistles in a manner said to be un-Pauline. But though we may admit a more concise and clearly-cut phrase for certain theological conceptions, and discover the use of the word "hairetikos" in Titus iii. 10, in a sense which savours of a later signification of the word "hairesis," yet it is clear that "hairesis" in Paul's undoubted Epistles did mean

a faction or sect, and that "heretick" might mean a person who fomented and agitated for sects and with a party spirit. But since such a spirit always arose from some strongly-held idea, some truth, or half-truth, or untruth pertinaciously maintained, the word probably had always carried with it an anti-thetic reference to the faith of Christ; and now, when opposition had crystallized itself into definite shape, "heresy" was an appropriate term for Paul, at the end of his life, to use, when writing to a Church officer concerning the root principle of dissension and schism.

(5) The most formidable agreement among the impugners of the authenticity of the Epistles turns upon the indications afforded by them of an ecclesiastical constitution which was not developed until after the supposed date of Paul's death. In our opinion, there is nothing more than may be safely gathered from the Epistle to the Philippians i. 1, 2, where the only Church officers referred to are "the bishops and deacons." "The elders" to be appointed in every city in Crete are clearly identical in person with the bishops, whose qualifications are immediately recorded, Titus i. 5, 6, 7. (*Comp.* Acts xx. 17 and 28.) Even in the Epistle to the Romans (xii. 8) there is special advice given to the ruler in the Church, and the same word is used that describes the ruling functions of the elder in the Pastoral Epistles. (See 1 Tim. iii. 4; *comp.* also 1 Thess. v. 12 and 1 Cor. xii. 28, where the *charism* of government is reckoned as one among the many gifts of the Spirit.) A wonderful difference prevails between the simple forms and moral fit-

nesses on which the author insists, and the lofty claims set up for the bishop as distinct from the presbyter in the pseudo-Ignatian epistles, which unquestionably reflect the ecclesiastical organization of a later period. There is no hint whatever of the elevation of the bishop above the presbyter, nor of the presbyter receiving his authority or appointment from the bishop. In fact, the *elder* who excels in teaching power is recommended to double "honour," and there is not even a severance of the ruling from the teaching faculty. If the *Vossian* seven epistles of Ignatius, in their *shorter* form, be ultimately admitted to be genuine (see Professor Lightfoot on the *Ignatian Epistles*, *Contemp. Review*, Feb. 1875), or even if the three Syriac epistles discovered by Cureton be allowed by competent scholarship to represent the original nucleus of the Ignatian Letters, even they reveal a degree of ecclesiastical development at the very commencement of the second century so greatly in advance of the state of things revealed by the Pastoral Epistles as to lend prodigious emphasis to the argument in favour of the genuineness of these Epistles. If the ecclesiastical subordination of the presbyter to the bishop had been fully established at the beginning of the century, no writer who ventured on forging the letters to Timothy and Titus would have deliberately gone out of his way to have represented St. Paul as identifying the two offices with each other. It is, however, probable that during the interval that elapsed after Paul addressed "the elders of the Church of Ephesus," and also reminded them that they were "bishops," anxiety and even ambition to

hold such an important position may have become prevalent and disastrous. Organization has a rapid tendency to create precedent and to stiffen into formal propriety and routine, and probably rendered the explicit advice with reference to bishops and deacons more necessary than at an earlier period. Few contrasts are more striking than that between the simple ecclesiastical status which is suggested in these Epistles and the full-blown officialism and nascent sacerdotalism of the period to which Baur would relegate them. I will not here discuss the ecclesiastical order of *widows*, who are identified by Baur with the virgin deaconesses and ascetic women of the second century. Everything in the passages relating to these "*widows*" shews that they were "widows indeed," not women who were entrusted with duties, but those who were entirely thrown upon the bounty of the Church. In the earliest times we find the Church at Jerusalem thus called upon to reveal its new-born charity. Everywhere the communities of believers found themselves called on at once to put the new spirit of love into very active and self-denying exercise in this direction. Paul clearly sought to repress abuses of this charitable feeling, to indicate the classes who alone had a real claim upon the Church, and to exclude those who from improper motives and imperfect claims had been impoverishing and dishonouring the Community.

The scope and occasion of the First Epistle to Timothy have now been partially, perhaps sufficiently, indicated for my present purpose. Paul and Timothy have been delivered from Roman durance,

and have visited once more the great city of Ephesus ; so that a few words as to the condition of the Church at the time of that visit will be all that is needed to introduce some exposition of the first of these letters.

The number of professed Christians must have been vastly augmented. The Community at length must have been more definitely organized. It would seem that a class of persons had become prominent who were speaking perverse things, boldly repudiating fundamental moral principles, and, while boasting familiarity with the law, were making shipwreck of the faith of Christ. Some were repudiating the Resurrection, others occupying themselves with frivolous disputes, with Alexandrine speculations, with loose views of the person of Christ, and feeble compromises with the flesh and the devil. Even officers of the Church were not so clear or so free from stain as became their high position, and a group of useless women, who had friends and children capable of supporting them, were fattening lazily on the traditional charity of the Church. The worship had become profitless and selfish, and eager disputation about trifles had taken the place of godly edifying. Paul had been pressed in spirit to depart into Macedonia; and though he hoped shortly to return to Ephesus, he gave Timothy, in writing, practical advice with reference to his treatment of these complicated affairs,—directions rich in tender affection, manly counsels, and inspired wisdom.

In the devout solicitude of his mind for the wise activity of Timothy, Paul often opens vistas of exquisite charm into the depths of his own nature.

gives hints of his own past history and of the relation between himself and his "very own son" that are tender and touching. A little imagination,—exercised along the line of confidence, instead of distrust, in these documents,—will help us to picture the religious service in which Timothy was dedicated to the work of an evangelist, and to gather several hints as to his personal character. More than this, Paul reveals almost in every paragraph the grand underlying truths, the mutually-accredited facts, and recognized principles of the gospel. There are ideas of God, of "the mystery of godliness," of the work of Christ, of the hope of glory, of the duties, dangers, orders, and worship of Christian society, which are *implicitly* conveyed, and which demonstrate the extraordinary and supernatural energy which had taken possession of religious men in Asia Minor in less than a quarter of a century after the Lord Jesus had "witnessed his good confession before Pontius Pilate." These Letters of Paul become, in this view of them, miraculous things with which we have to deal, and from the force of which there is no escape. The abuses, errors, gross violations of principle, and vile travesties of the gospel that are also herein suggested, shew how sublime the ideal, how potent the force, how formative and pungent the thoughts that were capable of such prostitution; while all students of the Epistles know that the worker, the slave, the soldier of Christ, the minister and evangelist of the Church, may evermore find counsels of perfection, hints for holy living, for self-education and wise service which are not surpassed in the whole of the New Testament.