

*THE PASTORAL EPISTLES, OR THE CLOSING  
LABOURS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.*

I.

As we read the Epistle to the Philippians, we feel that the Apostle in his Roman prison was looking for speedy martyrdom. In many respects therefore he regarded his work as finished. At the same time he felt that his "abiding in the flesh" was a help to the Churches which he had founded, and which he would fain visit once again (Phil. i. 24). In this aspect there seemed still a work for him to do.

We are not told in the book of the Acts which of the two possibilities was realized. In its closing verses it refers to the two years of Paul's captivity in Rome, but does not tell us to what issue they led. This abrupt conclusion of the narrative in the Acts is remarkable and difficult to explain; but it appears to me more easy to account for it on the supposition that these two years of imprisonment were followed by a period of renewed activity, into the details of which the writer did not propose to enter, than on the supposition that they terminated in a violent death, to which he could so easily have referred in a single line.

We are inclined therefore to accept as the more probable, the idea that the Apostle was set free, and was thus enabled to renew his labours for the good of the Church either in the East or West. We know that his plan, when in the year 59 he left Corinth to repair to Jerusalem and thence to Rome, was not to take up his abode in Rome, but simply to pass through it on his way into Spain, that he might fulfil the ministry which he had received of the Lord, to carry to the very end of the earth the testimony of the gospel of His grace. Was it given him to fulfil this purpose? Most modern writers think not. Even those critics who, like Weiss and Farrar, believe in the liberation of the Apostle

after his two years of captivity in Rome, do not suppose him to have ever visited Spain. They cite the words used in the Epistle to the Philippians and in that to Philemon, in which Paul encourages his readers to look for a speedy visit from him in the East, and take them to imply that he had abandoned all thought of a mission to Spain. They note also that no Church in Spain pretends to the honour of having been founded by the Apostle. But none of these reasons are decisive. The Apostle might, during his captivity, have received tidings from the East, making him feel bound to return there as soon as possible, and to defer his visit to Spain till these more pressing claims had been met. And if there is no Church in Spain claiming the honour of having Paul for its founder, it is at least possible that, having reached Spain, his work may have been intercepted by a fresh arrest, before he had time to raise any lasting monument of his visit. Thirty years after the death of St. Paul, Clement, bishop of Rome, writing to the Corinthians, says that "Paul, after preaching the gospel from the rising to the setting sun, and teaching righteousness throughout the whole world, arrived at the extremity of the West; and after suffering martyrdom in the presence of the rulers, he was set free from this earth and reached the holy place prepared for him." Now it does not seem to me possible to suppose, as so many critics do, that by this expression, "the *extremity* of the West," Rome is meant; especially after the words going before, "from the rising to the setting sun," and "throughout the whole world." Rome, so far from being the "extremity" of the world, was rather regarded as its centre. It was not the seven hills of Rome, but the Pillars of Hercules, which Strabo, writing at this period, called, "The Ends of the Earth," *πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης*, and Velleius Paterculus, *Extremus nostri orbis terminus*.<sup>1</sup> That an author writing at Jerusalem or at

<sup>1</sup> See Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 332.

Ephesus might perchance have so designated Rome, would be conceivable, but that any one writing from Rome itself should use such an expression, seems to me an altogether inadmissible supposition.<sup>1</sup> We are confirmed in the idea that this is not Clement's true meaning by another passage also written at Rome, and bearing testimony to the tradition then current in that Church. It occurs in the Fragment of Muratori, where the writer refers to the "passion of Peter and the departure of Paul from Rome for Spain." It is possible, of course, that this tradition, which is handed down also in the writings of the later Fathers, may have been only a conclusion drawn by them from Romans xv. 24. But this explanation does not seem to me probable in view of the two passages we have quoted, in which the circumstance of Paul's departure for Spain is mentioned quite incidentally, as a well-known and positive fact.

We are not so much concerned at present with the question whether Paul went into Spain, as whether, in the event of his liberation, he again visited the Churches of Macedonia, the Church at Philippi, and the Churches in Asia, according to the hope expressed by him in the Epistle to Philemon. This question is inseparable from that of the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles. Some scholars have endeavoured to separate the two, assigning to these epistles, of which they acknowledge the genuineness, some date prior to Paul's imprisonment in Rome and during the course of his active ministry.<sup>2</sup> But these suppositions are

<sup>1</sup> It is objected that in this expression, "having arrived at the extremity of the West, and having suffered martyrdom before the rulers," Clement clearly describes the well-known scene of Paul's martyrdom as "the extremity of the West." But this is not exact. The expression used by Clement will bear the construction that Paul, after reaching Spain, was arrested in that country, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome before the rulers.

<sup>2</sup> Thus an attempt has been made to fix the date of 1st Timothy between the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians, during Paul's sojourn at Ephesus. The same date, or a little later, is given to the Epistle to Titus, it being placed between

more and more untenable. It is impossible to find, during Paul's active ministry in Greece and in Asia Minor, or during the two years of his first captivity in Rome, circumstances corresponding to the biographical details contained in the three Pastoral Epistles. This has been demonstrated so often and so decisively that we need not stay now to adduce proof. Moreover, these three epistles are so closely connected both in thought and in style, and so distinctly marked out from all the other writings of Paul, that it is impossible to intersperse them among the rest. Lastly, the unsound teaching to which reference is made in the Pastoral Epistles is clearly the heresy of the false teachers at Colosse, which only arose during the captivity of the Apostle in Rome. If this false doctrine had already spread through the Churches of Asia before Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, he would certainly have alluded to it in his charge to the pastors of the Churches of Ephesus and Miletus, to watch against the "grievous wolves" which, after his departing, would enter in among them to destroy the flock (Acts xx.).

We find ourselves then shut up to two alternatives. Either the Pastoral Epistles are genuine, and in that case, they date from the time between the liberation of the Apostle and his martyrdom, and are the latest monument we have of his apostolic work; or they are spurious productions. On the latter supposition, criticism must find some explanation of the purpose of such a forgery.

The majority of the critics at the present day incline to the view last given, though the evidence of tradition is as strong in favour of the authenticity of the Pastoral as of any of the other Epistles. There is a correspondence scarcely to be mistaken between certain expressions in the Epistle to Titus and the First Epistle to Timothy, and the Epistle

1st and 2nd Corinthians. The 2nd Timothy is supposed to have been written during Paul's imprisonment in Cæsarea, or very early in the Roman captivity.

of Clement of Rome; while it is impossible to deny the allusions to the Pastoral Epistles in the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. These are indeed recognised even by those who dispute the authenticity of those epistles. The ancient Syriac Bible, as well as the Latin, in the second half of the second century, contained the Pastoral Epistles with all the others, and the Fragment of Muratori expressly records their admission into the canon, notwithstanding their originally private character. The Fathers at the close of the second century quote them as unanimously accepted. The two Gnostics, Basilides and Marcion, seem indeed to have rejected them, but this is not to be wondered at.

If then in modern times the majority of critics coincide in denying the authenticity of all three, or of one or other of them, it must be on account of their contents. Schleiermacher was the first to call in question the First Epistle to Timothy, mainly on the ground of the want of connexion in the thoughts. Eichhorn and de Wette, feeling that the three letters bore too strong a resemblance not to proceed from the same writer, rejected also the two others. Baur endeavoured to explain the purpose of these apocryphal writings, as being to combat the Gnostic heresies of the second century, particularly the heresy of Marcion, and to reconcile the two parties into which the Church was at that time divided. He thought that they were the work of three different writers. At the present day many critics are reverting to a modified view, and are prepared to admit that at least the Epistle to Titus and the Second to Timothy are in part genuine. Their theory is, that these were originally short letters addressed by St. Paul to his two colleagues, and receiving their present form from later hands. These critics endeavour to reproduce the short original letters, by a process of arbitrary selection, in which it is scarcely needful to say each of them is guided by his own particular bias.

One thing is clear: these epistles do differ from all the rest in certain very marked particulars. The Apostle seems in them to be more occupied than was his wont with the future of the Church, and attaches greater importance to the various ecclesiastical offices on which that future might largely depend. He has before him dangerous teaching, which is spreading among the Churches, and which, if it became prevalent, would gravely undermine true piety. This teaching is of an altogether different character from the Pharisaic, Judaizing doctrine, against which he had protested in his earlier epistles. Lastly, there is an evident want of cohesion in the ideas expressed and in the subjects treated, and a frequent repetition of certain forms of speech, which do not occur in the earlier epistles.

What conclusion must we draw from these various indications? Is it true that there never was a period in the life of the Apostle when new considerations, of which there is no trace in his earlier epistles, may have come to occupy his mind? Is it true that there is no reason to suppose that towards the close of his life, his teaching may have taken a new direction, and may have found expression in new modes of speech appropriate to the changed conditions? Is it true that the unsound teaching against which he charges his colleagues to contend earnestly, can be no other than the Gnostic heresies of the second century, which would necessarily imply that these epistles are the work of some forger assuming the name of St. Paul? Is it true, lastly, that the ecclesiastical organisation, to which the writer distinctly refers, belongs to a time long subsequent to the life of St. Paul?

These are the main questions which present themselves at the present stage of the discussion, and which we now propose to examine as briefly as possible. Before doing so however, let us give a short summary of the contents of the three epistles.

## II.

*First Epistle to Timothy.*—The title of *Apostle* which Paul applies to himself in the opening words of this epistle, and which has been regarded as an indication of its spuriousness, only shows that Paul does not consider this a purely private letter, but rather addresses Timothy as a functionary of the Church under his direction.

The epistle consists of two parts. In the first the Apostle treats of three subjects: 1st, The true gospel teaching, which must be preserved from any admixture, and especially from any legal element. It was with a view to this that when Paul was departing into Macedonia he desired Timothy to remain at Ephesus. There he would have to contend with persons who, while calling themselves doctors of the law, have no true comprehension of it, and apply it to the faithful, while it is really only given for evil-doers. The gospel which Paul teaches, and which he has himself been taught by deep experience, excludes any such admixture. It was to be Timothy's task to uphold in its purity this gospel which others were thrusting from them (ch. i.). 2nd, The second subject treated is worship. It is the duty of the Church to pray for the pagan rulers of the land, and for all men without distinction. In the assemblies of the Church the women are to wear modest attire, and to keep silence. Their sphere is home (ch. ii.). 3rd, The third subject is the ministry. Reference is made to the bishopric and the diaconate—two offices indispensable to the life of Church, and in regard to which Timothy is enjoined to use special vigilance. The Apostle describes the moral qualifications required in bishops and deacons, without which they could not command the respect of the Church (iii. 1–13).

In the second part of the epistle (beginning ch. iii. 14), instructions are given to Timothy as to the way in which

he ought to conduct himself towards the Church in general, and to its various classes in particular. And first towards the Church as a whole. He must keep before him its high destiny. It is the pillar on which the mystery of salvation is inscribed that all the world may read. Timothy is charged to use the more watchfulness over it, because the spirit of prophecy foretells a time coming when there shall be a great falling away from the faith ; when a spirit of false asceticism will creep into the Church under the guise of superior sanctity, but based in truth upon the impious idea that the whole material part of the works of God is to be ascribed to the spirit of evil. Timothy is to put the Church specially on its guard against such teaching, and is himself sedulously to avoid any approach to this error. He is to command the respect of the Church in spite of his youth, and is not to allow anything to quench the gift which is in him, and which had been imparted "by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (ch. iii. 14-iv. 16). Then follow counsels as to his behaviour towards the older members of both sexes, and towards the younger sisters and widows. The Apostle here adds some injunctions with regard to widows who may be called to a ministry of practical benevolence in the Church. He then gives rules as to the treatment of presbyters, or elders, who are evidently the same as the bishops spoken of in ch. iii. They were there designated bishops or overseers, with reference to their function in the Church ; here they are spoken of as presbyters or elders, in recognition of their dignity. Paul adds on this subject, a little word of counsel to Timothy himself (ch. v.) ; and concludes with some further admonitions to slaves who have become "believers and beloved" (ch. vi. 1, 2) ; to those who have already been led away from the truth by false teachers ; and to the rich in this world's goods (ch. vi. 17-19). A brief salutation, and one final word of warning (ch. vi. 20-22), bring the epistle to a close.



*The Epistle to Titus.*—The elaborate superscription of this letter shows that this is not in any way a private communication, but an official charge given by Paul to his deputy. The main body of the letter (ch. i. 5–iii. 11) treats of two subjects: 1st, *The presbytery.* Paul had left Titus in Crete for this express purpose—that he should appoint elders in every city to carry on the work commenced. He had there to contend with false Judaising teaching (ch. i.). 2nd, In the second part of the epistle (ch. ii. 1–iii. 11) Paul goes on, as in the Epistle to Timothy, to give counsels to Titus as to his behaviour towards various classes in the Church—the old, the young, slaves, etc. The grace offered to all ought to sanctify all, and Titus is to conduct himself in such a manner as to commend this grace of God to all. Paul then adds directions as to the bearing to be maintained towards pagan magistrates, and pagans generally; lastly towards the Church, as a whole, which must be carefully guarded against profane teaching.

The epistle closes as usual, with commissions and salutations. When Titus is released from his responsibility by the arrival of his successor, he is to rejoin Paul at Nicopolis, where the Apostle will pass the winter.

*Second Epistle to Timothy.*—This letter is of a more private, personal, and intimate character; hence in the superscription Paul omits the title Apostle.

In the body of the letter (ch. i. 6–iv. 8) three subjects are dealt with: 1st, *Timothy's own deportment.* He is to stir up the gift which is in him, and not allow himself to be daunted by fear of the sufferings which the service of Christ may bring upon him. Paul encourages him by four considerations: the grandeur of the gospel, his own example and that of the faithful Onesiphorus, and lastly by the sure hope of the Christian (ch. i. 6–ii. 13). 2nd, *The Church.* This has been invaded by teaching to no profit, and tending only to barren disputations. Nevertheless

there still remains a nucleus of true believers, bearing the Divine seal of holiness. Timothy must not be discouraged therefore, but contend firmly and patiently for the truth. There is even reason to expect that in the last times a moral corruption, like that of the heathen world, may find its way into the Church itself. Already some Christians have become perverted. In order to counteract their influence, the Apostle gives Timothy three counsels. He is to remember the example of constancy which he had witnessed in Paul himself (during his first sojourn in Lycaonia); he is to feed continually upon the Scriptures inspired of God; and to redouble his vigilance and activity in evangelistic work (ii. 14-iv. 5). 3rd, The third subject is the Apostle himself. He speaks first of his approaching martyrdom, then he asks Timothy to come as soon as possible, because all his fellow-workers, except Luke, are absent. He urges that Mark should come with him, and desires him to bring also the cloak and the books which he (Paul) had left in Asia Minor. Lastly, he refers to his first appearance before the imperial judgment seat, which gave him an opportunity of fully proclaiming the gospel message, and yet did not lead to his condemnation.

In the concluding sentences he refers to, or explains incidentally, the absence of two of his fellow-workers (ver. 20). Then come greetings to a few brethren, all of them bearing Roman names.

We must now turn to the main objections to which we have already alluded.

### III.

1. *The teaching of the Apostle*, both as to form and substance.

It is asserted that the conception of the gospel presented in these letters differs notably from the well-known teaching of the Apostle Paul. The great fundamental doctrines

of the Apostle of the Gentiles, justification by faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are scarcely touched upon. The great theme in these epistles is the application of the gospel to outward conduct. Those who have believed in God are to be "careful to maintain good works, for these things are good and profitable to men" (Tit. iii. 8). "The end of the commandment is love" (1 Tim. i. 5). For the most part the practical side of the Christian virtues is alone brought into prominence. We shall see presently what particular reasons the Apostle may have had for insisting on this aspect of Christian truth. But independently of such considerations, it is easy to understand that the gospel teaching having been once clearly formulated, and thoroughly established by the earlier labours of the Apostle in the Churches founded by him, as well as in the minds of his colleagues, he might now feel it opportune to insist rather on the practical application of the truths learned to daily life. Those who have witnessed a great revival, such as took place half a century ago in the Reformed Churches of the Continent, know with what somewhat excessive insistence the doctrines were preached which Paul brought into prominence in his earlier epistles. The almost exclusive theme of the preaching was salvation by grace, in opposition to works. Then when these doctrines had laid hold of the minds of men, and had become, so to speak, a bond of union for the whole religious public, preachers began again, little by little, to insist on the moral aspect of the gospel. M. Vinet's famous sermon, "Faith—a Work," clearly marked this new phase in the life of our Churches. Not that this fresh departure was really in an opposite direction; but it was determined by new needs which had arisen, and was, in a manner, supplementary to that which preceded it. The present writer has personally known preachers, who, after being foremost among their brethren in re-discovering, so to speak, the foundation-truths of the

gospel, took a no less prominent part when the preaching again assumed a decidedly practical character. If such a change as this has been traceable in our own day, why may we not suppose a similar modification in the apostolic teaching of St. Paul, especially if the circumstances of the time seemed to demand it?

Criticism exacts, however, that the mode of speech at any rate should not change, and that the style of the Apostle in these epistles should not differ markedly from that of his other epistles recognised as genuine. But we are told that such a strongly marked difference does exist. It is shown that a number of words are used in these three epistles which do not occur in any of the earlier letters. In the First Epistle to Timothy there are 81 such words; in the Second, 63; in Titus, 44. Several expressions also occur repeatedly, such as "faithful is the saying," "sound doctrine," "a life in all godliness," etc., which are not found in any of the earlier writings, and some entirely new terms descriptive of the unsound teaching leavening the Church at this time: "endless genealogies," "vain talking," "old wives' fables," etc.

To this we reply that diversity of verbiage is a marked feature throughout the literary career of the Apostle. It results partly no doubt from the wealth and creative fullness of his genius, partly from the ever varying experiences through which he passed in his intercourse with the Churches. M. Reuss himself remarks that the two Epistles to the Corinthians contain as many words foreign to those to the Romans and Galatians, as the Pastoral Epistles contain of expressions foreign to all the other letters. In the Epistle to the Galatians there are 57 terms which occur nowhere else; in the Philippians, 54; in the Colossians and Ephesians together, 143. To the causes already assigned for this constant variation, other indirect influences may be added; as for instance, the natural

wealth of the Greek language and the fruitfulness of Christian thought. Hence M. Reuss attaches no weight to the argument derived from style, and in order to show what an unsafe guide such criticism is, he mentions that among those who follow it, Schleiermacher concludes that the Pastoral Epistles are the work of two authors, Baur of three, and de Wette of one writer only. We conclude then that the teaching of these letters furnishes no proof, either in form or in substance, that they are not from the pen of St. Paul. It only shows that they belong to a particular period—the closing period of his apostolic labours. This conclusion is confirmed by the analysis we are about to make of the teaching against which he contends, and which presented itself to his two fellow-labourers in the Churches where they were at work.

2. *The teaching protested against in the Pastoral Epistles.*

It has been said that this heretical teaching cannot be of an earlier date than the second century; that the different Gnostic systems of that advanced period are clearly described, particularly those of Valentinus and Marcion. Other critics dispute this, and suppose the heresies referred to to be those of Cerinthus and the Ophites, at the beginning of the second or the close of the first century. This theory is equally opposed to the authorship of St. Paul.

But two features of the heresies indicated by the Apostle are incompatible with either of these suppositions. The first is that they do not appear to contain elements directly opposed to the gospel, as do the systems of Marcion and Valentinus. The Gnostic system taught that the God who created the world was not the same God whom Jesus Christ called His Father; they maintained that the Jewish law was also the work of this other God, who was inferior to the Father of Jesus Christ. They did not hold that the Saviour appeared in a true human body, etc. Such doctrines as these are wholly subversive of the gospel

preached by Paul. But the errors referred to in the Pastoral Epistles are characterized merely as "profane and old wives' fables," "vain babblings," "oppositions of science falsely so called." Those who formulate them are spoken of as "vain talkers," tickling the fancy of men without real piety, who look upon religion rather as a harmless amusement than as a serious means of sanctification. The danger here is of substituting intellectualism in religion for piety of heart and life. Had the writer been a Christian of the second century trying, under the name of Paul, to stigmatise the Gnostic systems, he would certainly have used much stronger expressions to describe their character and influence. He would have found in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians a model of the Pauline polemics with regard to teachings subversive of the gospel. The second characteristic of the heresies referred to in the Pastoral Epistles is their Jewish origin. The doctors who propagate them are called "teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say nor whereof they confidently affirm." They are Judaising Christians ("they of the circumcision," Tit. i. 10), raising foolish contentions about the law (ch. iii. 9), and teaching "Jewish fables" (ch. i. 14), to which they add "endless genealogies," evidently also Jewish, for they are classed by the writer with "fightings about the law" (Tit. iii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 4), and form part of the teaching of those who call themselves "teachers of the law" (ver. 7). It has sometimes been asserted that this term "genealogies" refers to the successive emanations of æons, taught by Valentinus. But this Gnostic was the sworn foe of everything Jewish. A much more natural reference is to the genealogies in Genesis, which these teachers were in the habit of allegorising, and in which they contrived to discover all sorts of mysteries, with which they entertained their followers. But the epithet "*endless*" which the Apostle gives to these genealogies excludes this reference, for each

of the genealogies in Genesis is composed of a fixed and easily calculable number of terms—the number *ten*. It seems therefore more probable that the reference here is to a sphere in which imagination might have full play, namely, the genealogies of angels. We know to what an extent the Judaism of later times delighted to amplify the sober references to the angels made in Scripture. The book of Enoch, which was widely circulated at this time, even in the Church (as is evident from the use made of it in Jude), is an illustration in point. The Essenes had in their teaching a special chapter on the *names of angels*, which the initiate swore not to divulge. There were then probably teachers who traded in these so-called revelations, and who, as we read in Titus i. 11, “taught them for filthy lucre’s sake.” The First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus teach us, further, that these doctors made legal distinctions between meats pure and impure, which is obviously Jewish, and contrary to the Gnostic systems of the second century. Cerinthus, who lived at the close of the first century, was indeed a Jew, and introduced Judaising elements into his teaching. For example, he recognised circumcision. But there is not a word in the epistles before us, pointing to this error. In fact, two men of such different schools of thought as Weiss and Holzmann, agree in the acknowledgment that no recognised heresy corresponds to the picture drawn in the Pastoral Epistles. This would be indeed strange if the writer had intended to combat forms of error so well known as those of the close of the first, and of the second century.

The natural solution presents itself, if we accept the Pastoral Epistles as closely connected with the Epistle to the Colossians. There we read of teachers who were trying to bring the Church into legal bondage, advocating the law as a higher means of sanctification and illumination; making distinctions between days and meats, like the weak

Christians spoken of in Romans xiv., and taking up the worship of angels, in order to obtain from them revelations as to the celestial world (Col. ii. 16-18). One step further in the same direction will put us in touch with the false teachers of the Pastoral Epistles, who only represent a further stage of degeneracy in the direction of Judaism. They are the precursors of the Cabbala, which is a natural outgrowth of their doctrine.

De Wette lays much stress on this difficulty—that the heretics referred to in the Pastoral Epistles are sometimes spoken of as actually present in the Church, while in other passages (such as 1 Tim. iv. 1 *et seq.*; 2 Tim. iii. 1 *et seq.*) they are referred to as threatening the Church of the future. By this, we are told, the forger betrays himself. In the former passages, he forgets himself and makes the mistake of representing as actually existing forms of error which in the times of the Apostle were still in the future. But in that case, as Weiss justly observes, these moments of forgetfulness, in which heresy is spoken of as a present fact, ought to be the exception, not the rule. But the very opposite is the case. And if we look into it more closely, we find that all this supposed confusion of present and future vanishes away. The adversaries to be combated—those foolish and profane teachers who lead away superficial believers by their vain imaginings—are actually present in the Churches under the care of Titus and Timothy. But in one passage (1 Tim. iv. 1 *et seq.*) the reference is to an entirely different form of error—a doctrine of asceticism, based upon a dualist theory, by which certain meats and natural acts are forbidden as immoral. The history of the Church contains many fulfilments of this prophecy. In another passage (2 Tim. iii. 1 *et seq.*) the reference is to a growing corruption of the Church itself, of which there are already indications. There is no allusion to any of the great heresies. It is a prophecy of that general corruption



which Christ Himself predicted as coming at the end of the age. Paul has already referred to this prophetic picture in one of his earlier letters (2 Thess. ii. 7), adding: "For the mystery of lawlessness does already work."

There is then no confusion in this respect in the epistles before us, and we are afresh led to this result: That the false teachings referred to by Paul are for the most part those of his own lifetime, but that they belong to a period rather more advanced than the Epistles written from his Roman prison, especially that to the Colossians.

#### IV.

*Church Organisation.*—Several modern critics, following Baur, have assumed that the ecclesiastical offices referred to in the Pastoral Epistles indicate a much later date than the apostolic age. The functions of presbyter and deacon seem much more strictly defined than is likely to have been the case in the first century. The position of Titus and of Timothy in relation to the elders or presbyters, seems suggestive rather of the monarchical episcopate of the second century. The ministry of widows, as described (1 Tim. v.), can hardly be anything else than the office of deaconesses, spoken of in ecclesiastical writings of a later date; as, for instance, when Ignatius says to the Christians at Smyrna, "I salute the virgins, called widows."

But there are two insuperable difficulties in the way of this theory: (1) the plurality of presbyters in each Church (Tit. i. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 14), and (2) their complete equality of position. These are the distinctive marks of the presbytery or episcopate of apostolic times, in opposition to that of a later period, when the bishopric was entrusted to one man, who was set over the college of presbyters.<sup>1</sup> Un-

<sup>1</sup> I do not propose to enter here in detail into the question so much under discussion at the present time, of the relation between the presbyters and the bishop in the apostolic Church. It seems to me, from the latest evidence, that

doubtedly reference is made in 1 Timothy iv. 14 to a council of presbyters as an organised body, which had concurred with Paul in setting Timothy apart for his office, by the laying on of hands. But, in the first place, that which was thus conferred on Timothy was not the office of bishop, but simply a call to evangelistic work (2 Tim. iv. 5). And this rite of the laying on of hands to set apart to some work of ministry was practised in the Church from the earliest times, as for example, at Antioch, where the prophets and teachers laid hands on Barnabas and Saul to designate them for their missionary journey among the Gentiles. Even earlier than this the same practice is referred to in the Church at Jerusalem, when the apostles laid hands on the "seven men of good report" chosen to administer the alms of the Church to the poor. It is, indeed, an Old Testament usage, for Moses laid his hands on Joshua to transmit to him his office; and the same practice was observed when the heads of an Israelite household transferred to the Levites the duty properly devolving on their eldest sons, to serve in the sanctuary. It is then perfectly natural, that when Timothy departed from Lycaonia with Paul and Silas for a new mission among the Gentiles, the elders of the Church should have united with Paul in imploring for him the unction of the Holy One to qualify him for his evangelistic work, to which he was thus set apart.

It is no matter of surprise then if, in 1 Timothy iii.,

the *bishop* referred to in Titus i. 7 must be the same person with regard to whom Paul has just said (ver. 5) that Titus should "appoint *elders* in every city." It is clear also that the *bishop* of whom Paul speaks (1 Tim. iii. 1) is one of those presbyters or elders referred to in ch. v. 17-22. For, as Paul passes directly in ch. iii. from the bishop to the deacon, no place is left for the presbyters, as holding a separate office from the bishop. Compare again Acts xx. 17 and 28, where Paul says to the presbyters of the Ephesian Church, "That the Holy Ghost has made them bishops to feed the Church of God." Perhaps I may find another opportunity to take up this question with reference to recent discussions on the subject.

Paul speaks of the diaconate as a recognised office, especially in a large Church like that of Ephesus. The opening words of the Epistle to the Philippians show that in another and probably much smaller Church, this office was already existing side by side with that of the bishop. If the epistles before us had been written in the second century, by some one assuming the name of Paul, why should he have omitted the deacons in the Epistle to Titus? On the other hand, it is quite natural that if the Church of Crete had been only recently founded, this second office should not yet have been required.

In the passage referring to *widows* in 1 Timothy v., careful attention should be paid to the transition in ver. 9 from those who are widows in the ordinary sense to those who may be enrolled as such for the service of the Church, in the care of orphans and strangers and the poor. Whatever Weizsäcker may say on this point, it seems to us perfectly clear that it is in this sense of a recognised servant of the Church, that the title of deaconess is given to Phœbe, in Romans xii. 1, 2.

All the references then in the Pastoral Epistles to offices in the Church seem to be closely connected with the elements of Church organisation which we find mentioned in the earlier Epistles. The Apostle is indeed more occupied than formerly with the duties and responsibilities of these servants of the Church. This arises no doubt partly from the ever-increasing gravity of the danger to the Churches from these unsound doctrines, and from the yet more deadly errors which he forecasts in the future. Then the Apostle has a prevision of his own approaching end; and to these two causes of anxiety on the Church's account, a third is to be added, of which we must now speak more at length.

In the early days of the Church at Jerusalem, reference is made to presbyters or elders, in whose hands Barnabas and

Paul placed the moneys collected at Antioch for the poor of the flock at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30). These same elders are spoken of again as taking part in the assembly which decided the conditions of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church (Acts xv. 2, 6, 22). But it does not appear that these elders, as such, were preachers. Their office seems rather to have been administrative. Paul and Barnabas, in their first mission into Asia Minor, before leaving the Churches which they had founded there, appointed elders whom they set apart with fasting and prayer. It is probable that the ministry of these elders was of a spiritual as well as administrative character. For the apostles, not being themselves present in the Churches, the oversight and spiritual guidance of them would naturally devolve on these elders. This could not be the case to the same degree in Jerusalem, where the apostles themselves still resided.

Somewhat later, at Thessalonica, there were in the Church leaders or overseers, who carried on the work among the faithful. The reference here is clearly to a ministry of a spiritual nature, but only under the form of the cure of souls (ch. v. 12-14), not under that of preaching. This is spoken of as the gift of prophecy, and was doubtless bestowed on those who filled the post of teachers in the Church (ch. v. 19, 20).

At Corinth, the spontaneous manifestation of the Spirit under the three forms of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and teaching, seems exceptionally abundant. Yet the regular offices could not be dispensed with. Why should not Paul have instituted them here as well as in Lycaonia and at Thessalonica? They are indeed mentioned in the long enumeration of the various gifts, under the name of "helps" and "governments," *ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις* (1 Cor. xii. 28). Both are spoken of in the plural, because these two functions had their various spheres of duty; but both offices were certainly recognised. For if they had no existence,

why does the Apostle say at the commencement of this passage, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord" (xii. 4, 5)? Certain gifts then were to be freely exercised: those, namely, which the Apostle describes by the special name of "*gifts*" (*χαρίσματα*). But there were others which were to be exercised by regular functionaries appointed by the Church itself, as in the case of the gifts of "helps and governments," which belonged to the presbyters and deacons.

In the Epistle to the Romans, instead of the twelve gifts which flourished at Corinth, we find only seven (Rom. xii. 8); prophecy, ministry (*διακονία*)—which includes no doubt the two offices of which we have just spoken—teaching, and a series of other gifts appertaining to the individual life. We feel that the extraordinary outpouring of gifts at Corinth was a local and temporary fact. The tongues disappeared, and teaching took their place; the gift of prophecy was directly perpetuated in the offices of the Church. Everything tends to settle down into a calmer and more settled state.

Strong confirmation is given to this view by the Epistle to the Ephesians. Here Paul embraces the ministry in all its breadth, as concerning not only the particular Church, but the Church universal. He sees the gifts bestowed by the risen and glorified Lord, and the functions arising out of them taking three forms. First, there is the *foundation* ministry, represented by the apostles and prophets. Secondly, a ministry of *extension* carried on by the evangelists or missionaries. Thirdly, a ministry of *edification* entrusted to the pastors and teachers (iv. 11).

And this is all. The rich abundance of gifts enumerated in the Epistle to the Corinthians, seems to have vanished; or at any rate their place in the Church is a subordinate one. Of all the gifts and offices belonging to the Corinthian

Church, there remain only two—those of pastors and teachers—the pastorate as an office, the teaching as a free gift. The first of these terms clearly includes presbyters and deacons; the second refers to public teaching. But it must be observed that the way in which the Apostle expresses himself (using a singular article for the two names) implies a very close connexion between the functions of pastor and teacher.

Very much the same state of things is suggested by the superscription of the Epistle to the Philippians, “To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” Doubtless it is natural, that in addressing a letter, only the offices should be mentioned, the gifts being too uncertain an element to be enumerated. But the absence of any allusion to these gifts in the course of the epistle, shows how far we are receding from the early Corinthian phase of Church life.

If now we turn again to the Pastoral Epistles, we shall naturally expect to find a continuance of the same tendency to blend the gift of teaching with the office of elder. And so it is. According to Titus i. 9, the choice of a presbyter or bishop must only fall on a man who “is able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers.” According to 1 Timothy iii. 2, the bishop must be a man “apt to teach” (see also 2 Tim. ii. 24). Lastly, according to 1 Timothy v. 17, there are two classes of elders—those who confine themselves to administering the affairs of the Church, and those who in addition to this “labour in word and in teaching.” The latter are to be “counted worthy of double honour.” We see that in proportion as the extraordinary gifts of primitive times cease, the offices in the Church increase in importance and in influence, and that the principal gift—that of teaching—which survived all the rest, came to be more and more closely identified with the office of the regular ministry.

The monarchical episcopate of later times is the natural result in part of this progressive fusion of teaching with the primitive episcopate, and in part of the natural tendency of all administrative work to become concentrated in one hand. This change has been realised, at least in Asia Minor, at the time brought before us in the Revelation. The free exercise of the gifts, especially that of prophecy, even by women, still exists, only it is placed under the control of a personage called the Angel of the particular Church, who is charged with the oversight of the flock.<sup>1</sup>

This personage can neither be a celestial being nor a purely ideal and poetic personification of the Church. He is a living, responsible, human being, whose mission it is to watch over the progress of the Church, and who is worthy of praise or blame, reward or punishment. This personage can be no other than the head of the presbyterial council, and therefore the representative of the flock, seated, as Ignatius says, surrounded by the circle of elders as by a spiritual crown, with the deacons as helpers.<sup>2</sup> This development of Church organisation, which was realised in Asia Minor towards the close of the first century, was adopted more gradually in other countries. Just as the current in the middle of a stream is more rapid than that near the banks, so as Dr. Lightfoot has beautifully demonstrated, Asia Minor appears in this respect to have been in advance of the West on the one side (see Clement and Hermes), and of the East on the other, at least with regard to the Judæo-Christian Churches of those countries (see the *Didaché*). Both in Hermes and the *Didaché*, the free gifts

<sup>1</sup> It will one day be seen that it is an utter mistake to place the date of the Apocalypse before the fall of Jerusalem. M. Harnack himself, who holds that the book is in substance Jewish with Christian interpolations, now places the date of the Christian interpolator under Domitian, that is, at the close of the first century. Now the idea of the Angel of the Church belongs to the Christian portion. The German professor is therefore completely in accord with my view of the composition of the whole book.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Magnes.* c. 13.

are still in exercise, but it is easy to see that they are already degenerating, and that among them also there is a tendency to unite the teaching with the episcopate (*Didaché* c. 11 and 15). In the time of Justin, the union appears to have been consummated in Rome itself.

The Pastoral Epistles represent one particular point in this movement, the intermediate stage between the Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians on the one hand, and the Revelation on the other. They do not go beyond the horizon of the life of Paul, but they mark its extreme limit. The Apostle, like a dying father, provides with anxious care, in these the last documents from his pen, for the right guidance of the family he leaves behind. He does, with regard to the Church, but on a lower plane, what Jesus did when He instituted the apostolate.

These then are the main questions throwing doubt on the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, and we have seen that impartially investigated, they resolve themselves rather into proofs of their genuineness. Objections have been also drawn from some details in the letters. It has been asked whether, after the year 64, Paul could have spoken of the youth of Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 12). But if Timothy was eighteen years old when Paul took him with him in the year 52, he would have been rather more than thirty in 65, which from the standpoint of the ancients was still young. We may add that the expression used is called forth by the contrast between the comparative youth of Timothy and the gravity of the charge entrusted to him. Again, it is said that in 1 Timothy v. 18, the term *Scripture* is applied to the Gospel of Luke, which would clearly imply a time subsequent to the life of Paul. Undoubtedly, but then it would also imply a date later than that which the same critics assign to the Pastoral Epistles. This objection also falls to the ground, if the term *Scripture* be referred only to the first of the two books quoted—the Book of Deuteronomy.



(See also 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10, 14.) A much more weighty objection is raised by M. Reuss. Why does the Apostle give himself the trouble to write to his colleagues of things which he might have said to them a hundred times while he was with them, or which he could talk over with them when they met again? We reply: with regard to the question of doctrine, it is possible that the errors against which Paul urges them both to contend may have been of quite recent growth; and as to the establishment of the proper offices in the Church, it was natural that he should be greatly concerned about it, as he saw his end drawing near.

In the critical position of the Church, he might feel very keenly the need of giving his colleagues, who were, in a measure, to bear the burden after him, the most precise and urgent and weighty counsels. Events have shown how great was the need for such instructions; for upon these two offices—the episcopate and the diaconate—which Paul, in a manner, institutes in these letters, has depended, and will depend to the end, the normal progress of the Church. The Pastoral Epistles are, in this respect, the Apostle's testament. It is in this sense that the Church has carefully preserved them in the Canon.<sup>1</sup>

In return for these difficulties of detail, advanced by those who argue against the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, we may mention others, which we submit to those who attribute these letters to a forger, writing half or three-quarters of a century after the death of St. Paul. Would the supposed forger put into the mouth of Paul the advice he gives to Timothy to take "a little wine for his stomach's sake"? or again the entreaty that he would come to see him in Rome before winter, and bring him from Troas the cloak and the parchments which he had left with Carpus? Would he mention a sojourn of Paul and Titus in Crete,

<sup>1</sup> See the Fragment of Muratori.

of which not a word is said in the Acts of the Apostles? Would he ask him to join him in Nicopolis—a town which has no connexion with any known journey of St. Paul? Would he speak of the speedy coming of Artemas and Tychicus, as his representatives? Would he remind Timothy of the prophecies which accompanied his calling to the work of an evangelist? Would he speak to him of his mother and grandmother by name? If all this is not natural and real, then it is the very height of charlatanism. But such an idea is in manifest moral contradiction with the deeply serious tone of the whole Epistles. The most incongruous thing of all is that Paul, wishing, as we are told, to make Titus and Timothy the representatives of the episcopate of the second century, should have represented Timothy first as a simple evangelist, then as in danger of neglecting his gift and of being ashamed of the gospel testimony, as shrinking back from suffering and scorn, and of allowing himself to be hindered in this way from coming back to his master and friend. Lastly, instead of speaking of them as fixed at their post, as were the bishops, Timothy and Titus are only sojourning for a while with their Churches, and very shortly to rejoin Paul.

#### V.

It remains for us to inquire whether the historical allusions which occur repeatedly in these letters can be brought together in one period, with any semblance of probability or even possibility. Here we are clearly in the domain of hypothesis. The following explanation seems to me best to reconcile all the data.

Set free from his captivity in the spring of the year 64, Paul departed for the East, as he had said to Philemon and to the Philippian Church. Embarking at Brindisi, the most frequented port of Italy on the eastern side, he arrived at Crete. There he found Titus, who had already

preached the gospel there and founded Churches. Here Paul remained some time with Titus. Then, desiring to fulfil his promise to the Philippians, he left there his faithful servant, who was still to carry on the work, and departed into Macedonia. Trophimus, who accompanied him, fell sick as the ship coasted along the shores of Asia Minor, and was left at Miletus. Paul had only a glimpse in passing of Timothy, who was at this time stationed at Ephesus. Paul exhorted him to remain at his difficult post, instead of becoming his companion, as Timothy would doubtless have preferred. As it was Paul's intention in any case to visit Asia Minor before leaving for the West, he promised Timothy to come back shortly, and continued his voyage. He disembarked at Troas, where he left his cloak and books with Carpus, meaning to take them up again on his return. Arrived in Macedonia, his mind full of anxious thoughts about the grave duties devolving on his two young companions in labour, he wrote to them both—to Timothy with a view to encourage him, to give him fresh counsel, and assure him again of his speedy return; and to Titus to tell him that some one was being sent to take his place, and to beg him to come without delay to join Paul at Nicopolis, probably the town in Thrace, where he proposed to pass the winter, before starting again in the spring for Asia Minor. As far as we can gather, St. Paul seems to have been prevented by some unforeseen circumstance from carrying out this plan. He was not able either to go back to Troas to fetch the things he had left there, or to rejoin Timothy at Ephesus, or to avail himself of Philemon's hospitality at Colosse. He was compelled suddenly to return west. Either he was carried there as a prisoner, having been arrested in Macedonia, or he went of his own accord into Italy in response to some urgent demand upon him. This sudden call may have been the dispersion and comparative

destruction of the Church of Rome under the persecution by Nero. It needed a hand like Paul's to raise again the building from its ruins. It is possible that after performing this duty, he may, at length, in the course of the year 65, have left for Spain, as says the Fragment of Muratori (*perfectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis*). There he must soon have been again taken prisoner and brought back to Rome. From his prison he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he describes his almost utter loneliness, and begs him to come to him before the winter of 65-66. Notwithstanding the favourable issue of his first appearance at the imperial tribunal, when he was enabled to bear his full testimony before the heads of the State, he was soon condemned and executed (probably beheaded) on the Appian Way, near which his tomb was still shown in the second century.

We do not see what valid objection there can be to this hypothetical explanation, which bears out all the allusions contained in the three epistles before us. Even the prophetic words spoken to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts xx. 25) thus find their fulfilment: "Behold, I know that ye also, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more"; for he was never able to carry out his purpose of again visiting Asia Minor. His presentiment of his coming end (to which, as we see from his words to Philemon, he did not attach the certainty of prophecy) proved truer than at one time he himself supposed.

F. GODET.

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