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Epistles







INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

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# INTRODUCTION

TO

## THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

BY

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EDINBURGH:

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## PREFACE.

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THIS work is intended as an Introduction to the Epistles of St. Paul. It does not profess to treat of these Epistles exegetically, or to deal with them in detail, but only to discuss those points which properly form the topics of an Introduction, as their authenticity, design, date, the circumstances under which each was written; the adequate comprehension of which is a necessary preliminary to the intelligent study of the Epistles themselves. It has been found convenient to discuss certain special difficulties of importance and points of peculiar interest in separate dissertations, appended to the Epistle out of which they arise. The only work in the English language of a somewhat similar character with which the author is acquainted, is the earlier Introduction to the New Testament by Dr. Davidson,—a work of great excellence and erudition, to which he has been under considerable obligations, but which has been in some degree superseded by the later Introduction of the same learned author, in which the opinions expressed in the earlier edition have been materially modified. The author has had specially in view to combat the opinions expressed in the *Apostel Paulus* (a translation of which is now in the course of being published) of Dr. F. C. Baur of Tübingen, a theologian who has exercised greater influence on modern theological thought than any recent writer, not excepting Strauss or Renan.

In composing the present work, the author has derived great assistance from the Introductions to the Commentaries

of Meyer. It is a matter of congratulation that these unrivalled Commentaries are now in the course of being translated, and made accessible to theological students who are not sufficiently masters of the German language to study them in the original. But it is hardly to the credit of our theologians, that the greatest modern exegete should have recently passed away with such slight notice, at least in our English periodicals, of his literary works and vast erudition.

It is proper to add, that, by the kind permission of the learned editor of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, the substance of two articles—the one on “the Lost Epistles of St. Paul,” and the other on “the Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles”—which appeared in that Review has been introduced in the present work, but in a somewhat altered form.

MANSE OF GALASHIELS, *January 1874.*

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# THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

### I. PAUL, THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLES.

THE Epistles treated of in the present work are, by the general consent of the Christian Church, attributed to the Apostle Paul. The sources of our knowledge of his life are twofold—the Acts of the Apostles composed by Luke, one of his fellow-travellers, and these Pauline Epistles. The traditions of the Church concerning him are surprisingly few, when we consider his missionary labours and apostolic influence, and are so mixed with obvious fable as to be quite unavailing for biographical purposes. Neither do the Acts profess to be a biography of Paul, but a history of the growth of Christianity, and, therefore, only those events in the life of the apostle are mentioned which were of a public character; whilst in the Epistles there are only incidental allusions to his history. The biography of the apostle, then, is derived from the Acts, supplemented by the incidental notices which occur in the Epistles. The one source of information not only corroborates, but completes the other. Were it not for the Acts, we would know little of the public life of the apostle; and were it not for the Epistles, we would have a very imperfect idea of his private life and character. It is chiefly from the Acts that we learn Paul's external history—his miraculous conversion, his missionary labours, his imprisonments; while it is chiefly from the Epistles that we obtain an insight into his inner life. In the one, the life of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, is described; in the other, the character of Paul, whose life is hid with Christ in God, is portrayed.

It does not belong to the plan of this work to narrate in detail the life of Paul, a task which has been repeatedly so well performed:<sup>1</sup> it will be necessary merely to advert to some particulars in his life, education, and character which serve to illustrate his Epistles.

Paul was the son of Jewish parents, of the tribe of Benjamin, and was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia (Acts xxi. 39, xxii. 3). Jerome, indeed, informs us that he was born in Gischalis, a town in Judea; and that his parents emigrated from it on its being captured by the Romans.<sup>2</sup> But this is merely an erroneous tradition, based on what happened during the Jewish war, which occurred many years after the birth of the apostle. Paul, indeed, calls himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. iii. 5); but he does not in that passage employ the term "Hebrew" to denote a Palestinian Jew in distinction from a Hellenist, but merely to assert his purely Jewish descent.<sup>3</sup> He was a Hellenistic Jew, his native language being Greek. By birth he possessed the rare and valuable privilege of Roman citizenship, then conferred on few Jews<sup>4</sup> (Acts xxii. 28). This privilege certainly did not belong to him, as some suppose, because he was a native of Tarsus;<sup>5</sup> for that city, although highly favoured both by Julius Cæsar and Augustus, was not, like Philippi, a Roman colony. There were several ways in which Roman citizenship could be acquired. It might be purchased at considerable cost (Acts xxii. 28); it was sometimes bestowed as a reward for service

<sup>1</sup> On Paul's life the following books are worthy of mention: Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*; Lewin's *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, 1851; Schrader's *der Apostel Paulus*, 1830-1836; Hemsen's *der Apostel Paulus*, 1830; Oertel's *Paulus in der Apostelgeschichte*, 1868; Lechler's *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, 1857; Renan's *Saint Paul*, 1869; Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, 1866; Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, 1848; Hausrath's *der Apostel Paulus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Paulus de tribu Benjamin et oppido Judææ Gischalis fuit, quo a Romanis capto cum parentibus suis Tarsum Ciliciæ commigravit* (Catal. illust. vir. c. 5). Gischalis, according to Josephus, was a small town in Galilee, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 20. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Nothing more seems to be meant by the phrase "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," than that he was a Jew both on the side of his father and of his mother.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 10. 13; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 11. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Bengel on Acts xvi. 37.



done to the Emperor; and it was the result of the emancipation of a slave, effected according to certain forms. In one of these ways Paul's family acquired this privilege. It would also appear that Paul possessed a good social position, not only because he was by birth a Roman citizen, but from his being sent to Jerusalem to complete his education, and from the fact that he was employed by the Sanhedrim in the important commission to Damascus.

The apostle is known to us by two names—Saul and Paul. In the first part of the Acts he is called Saul, and in the latter part he is almost exclusively called Paul. For this, various reasons have been assigned;<sup>1</sup> but the most probable opinion is, that Saul was his Jewish and Paul his Roman name.<sup>2</sup> It was then customary, especially among the Hellenists or Greek Jews, to have two names, the one Hebrew and the other Greek or Latin. We have other instances of this in the New Testament: thus John bore also the Latin name Marcus (Acts xii. 12), Joseph Barsabas was surnamed Justus (Acts i. 23), Simeon was called Niger (Acts xiii. 1), and Jesus Justus (Col. iv. 11); and of the apostles, Simon was called Peter, and Thomas Didymus. Sometimes these Greek or Latin names were translations of the Hebrew; and in other cases there seems to have been merely a vocal similarity between them, as in the case of "Saul, who also is called Paul" (Acts xiii. 9). It is by his Latin name, Paul, that he designates himself in all his Epistles; and as his mission was chiefly to the Gentiles, he seems to have dropped his Jewish name entirely.

It would seem that Paul was educated to a particular trade; for we are informed that he joined Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth because he was of the same craft with them, for by occupation they were tent-makers (Acts xviii. 3).<sup>3</sup> From the

<sup>1</sup> One reason very generally adopted is that given by Jerome (in *Ep. Philem.*), that the change of name is connected with the conversion of Sergius Paulus. This opinion is adopted with some variations by Bengel, Olshausen, Baumgarten, Meyer, Ewald, Baur, and Stier.

<sup>2</sup> So Schrader, Winer, De Wette, Wieseler, Lechler, Neander, Davidson, and Alford.

<sup>3</sup> It is disputed what is the precise meaning of the term *σκηνοποιός*, here rendered a tent-maker. The most probable interpretation is a maker of tent-

fact that Paul followed a particular trade there is no inference to be drawn as to his social position; because it was then the custom of the Jews, even of the richest families among them, to teach their children some useful trade, so that amid the insecurity of the times they might have something to fall back upon if deprived of their wealth. "He," says Rabbi Judah, "that teaches not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief." There is little mention of Paul's relatives in Scripture. His father belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. He had a sister, and mention is made of her son as resident in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 16).<sup>1</sup> His kinsmen are adverted to in the salutations contained in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xvi. 7, 11); but the word *συγγενεῖς* so rendered most probably denotes fellow-countrymen. He himself was never married (1 Cor. vii. 7, 8).<sup>2</sup>

At an early age Paul repaired to Jerusalem to complete his education. He speaks of himself as *ἀνατεθραμμένος ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ*, "brought up in this city" (Acts xxii. 3); and appeals to the Jews as being cognisant of his manner of life, because it was *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, from the beginning, among his own nation in Jerusalem (Acts xxvi. 4); expressions which imply that he must have been comparatively young when he first came to Jerusalem, possibly not older than eighteen. If this were the case, then Paul was in Jerusalem during the lifetime of our Saviour; and it is an interesting question, whether he ever saw Christ during any of His visits to Jerusalem—whether he was even present at the crucifixion? There is nothing improbable in the supposition; indeed, we can hardly imagine a young man of Paul's inquiring disposition failing to come in contact with Christ, and even to be an occasional listener to

cloth; a trade which was much practised in Paul's native country Cilicia, where tent-cloth was manufactured from the hair of the Cilician goats and called *κιλικία*. See Michaelis, *Introduction N.T.*, vol. vi. pp. 183–186: "Of St. Paul's profession or trade;" Kuinoel's *Libri Historici*, vol. iii. p. 276.

<sup>1</sup> Rückert infers from 2 Cor. viii. 22 that Paul had a brother. Ewald supposes that the whole family settled in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, from a false interpretation of 1 Cor. ix. 5, asserts that Paul was married.—Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 30. Renan makes the extravagant supposition that Paul might have been married to Lydia.—Renan's *Saint Paul*, pp. 148 ff.

His discourses.<sup>1</sup> But, on the other hand, if Paul had actually seen Christ, we would have expected several allusions to it in his Epistles; whereas the only possible reference to it is when he speaks of having once known Christ after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16), an expression which from the connection need not necessarily imply an acquaintance with our Lord when He was in this world. At Jerusalem he studied under the celebrated Gamaliel, who is described as "a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people" (Acts v. 34), and who was distinguished for his learning and liberal spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The first time Paul is mentioned in Scripture is in connection with the death of Stephen. "The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts vii. 58). He does not appear to have taken any active part in the martyrdom; though his presence showed that he evidently approved of it. Paul entered upon public life as a persecutor of the Christians. Armed with authority and a commission from the Sanhedrim, he proceeded to Damascus to persecute the disciples of the Lord, when the great crisis of his life took place—that event which revolutionized his whole character and destinies, and transformed him from Saul, the persecutor of the Christians, to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. The exalted Redeemer Himself appeared to him; the light of truth shone into his soul; and from that crisis Paul came forth for ever altered.

It would appear from the Epistles, that Paul, after remaining a few days in Damascus, withdrew into Arabia (Gal. i. 15–18). His retirement was not for the purpose of preaching the gospel, but for reflection and prayer.<sup>3</sup> The great change which had come over him would urge him to retirement to meditate upon this great crisis of his life; and no place appeared more suitable for this purpose than the solitudes of Arabia in the neighbourhood of Damascus.<sup>4</sup> It was here, in

<sup>1</sup> See this point discussed by Ewald in his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Sechster Band, p. 339. Ewald even supposes that Paul might be that young man mentioned in Mark's Gospel who, at the arrest of Christ, followed at night with a linen cloth cast about his naked body.

<sup>2</sup> On Gamaliel, see author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 190–192.

<sup>3</sup> This against the view of Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> There is nothing to determine the duration of Paul's residence in Arabia.

all probability, that he received those revelations of gospel truth which qualified him for being the independent apostle of the Gentiles. "I neither," says he, "received the gospel of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 11, 12). Not that the mere external facts of the life of Christ were revealed to him independently of the truths connected with them, and which facts might be learned by the ordinary methods of communication; but that those truths were revealed which were beyond human knowledge, and which could be learned only by divine revelation.<sup>1</sup>

From Arabia, Paul returned to Damascus; and, driven from that city by the persecution of the Jews, he repaired to Jerusalem. Here he remained only a few days, and then withdrew to his native city Tarsus. From Tarsus he was brought by Barnabas to Antioch, and after labouring about a year in that city, he, along with Barnabas, was solemnly consecrated by the Holy Ghost to be the apostle of the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 2). Then commenced his great missionary career, when, as a preacher of the cross of Christ, he visited distant nations, and planted Christianity in the most renowned cities of the Roman empire. We have in the Acts an account of three missionary journeys of the apostle. In his first missionary journey he was accompanied by Barnabas. Crossing over to Cyprus, they preached the gospel in Salamis and Paphos, its two chief cities, and converted the Roman governor of the island. From Cyprus they re-crossed to Perga in Pamphylia, and planted Christianity in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; and returned to Syrian Antioch, from which they had set out. The second missionary journey was much more extensive than the first, and was conducted on a larger scale. Paul was accompanied by several fellow-labourers, among whom were Silas, Timothy, and Luke. He first revisited the cities where he had preached the gospel on his former journey;

The apostle merely states that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem, but he does not tell the portions of that period which he spent in Arabia and in Damascus. See on St. Paul's sojourn in Arabia, Lightfoot *On Galatians*, pp. 87-90; and Jowett's note on Gal. i. 18.

<sup>1</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 75-80. He supposes that Paul had then a full revelation of the gospel, which did not admit of further development.

then planted Christianity in the districts of Phrygia and Galatia; and then crossed over to Europe, and founded the church in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, cities of Macedonia, in Athens, and in Corinth, where he remained a year and a half (Acts xviii. 11). From Corinth he returned to Antioch by way of Ephesus. In his third missionary journey he revisited Phrygia and Galatia, and came to Ephesus, where he abode for nearly three years. From Ephesus he went through Macedonia to Corinth, where he spent a winter. From Corinth he returned by land through Macedonia, abode for some time in Philippi, sailed to Alexandria Troas, and then, partly by sea and partly by land, made his last journey to Jerusalem. In these three missionary journeys, by his preaching and efforts, he contributed more to the diffusion of Christianity than any of the other apostles. He planted Christianity in the great cities of Proconsular Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Through his preaching, Pisidian Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus—cities then renowned for their wealth, commerce, or learning—received the gospel. We may form some idea of the extent of his missionary journeys from an incidental expression in one of his early Epistles: "From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 19).

But the question occurs, What was Paul's mode of evangelizing? What method did he employ in preaching the gospel, and what was the nature of the gospel which he preached? The New Testament was not in existence; there was no written revelation: to what, then, could he appeal? To understand this, it is necessary to endeavour to restore the circumstances and conditions of those early ages. In order to have a more vivid representation, let us take the instance of Paul's labours in Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 1-9). Thessalonica was a large commercial maritime city, and the capital of Macedonia. It was inhabited by a numerous colony of Jews, who came thither for the sake of commerce. The principal synagogue of the district (ἡ συναγωγή) was there.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish synagogue was then as now open to all, and was frequented by several Greeks, the

<sup>1</sup> The article denotes that it was the chief, if not the only, synagogue in the district.

so-called proselytes of the gate, who, dissatisfied with idolatry, were attracted to the purer religion of Judaism. The report of the new religion, which would then be regarded as a Jewish sect, must have reached Thessalonica; rumours would be prevalent about the doings of those strange teachers who had been accused in Philippi of turning the world upside down. Paul and his two companions, Silas and Timothy, arrived at Thessalonica. As Jews they repaired on the Sabbath-day to the synagogue; and, being known to be the teachers of the new religion, they were asked to preach. For three successive Sabbaths, Paul taught in the synagogue. The gospel which he preached, we are informed, was that the Messiah of the Jews must suffer and rise from the dead; and that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews in Jerusalem crucified, did rise from the dead, and was the Messiah (Acts xvii. 3). In developing this argument, he would necessarily dwell on the incidents of the life of Jesus, His sufferings and resurrection, and would show the correspondence between the life of Jesus and the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament. The result of these discourses, we are informed, was that only a few of the Jews believed and consorted with Paul and Silas; but that his success was much greater among the devout Greeks who frequented the synagogue, and who, being less bigoted and more religiously inclined, were more susceptible of impression (Acts xvii. 4). After this, Paul and his companions were expelled the synagogue by the unbelieving Jews; but the nucleus of a Gentile congregation had been formed. From the Acts we might at first be led to infer that, owing to the disturbances created by the Jews, Paul was compelled soon after to quit Thessalonica, but that he left the infant church under the care of Timothy. But when we supplement the account in the Acts by what we read in the Epistles, we are led to the conclusion that Paul remained at Thessalonica for a longer period, and that, finding the Jews obdurate and the synagogue closed against him, he addressed himself to the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> The result of his labours in Thessalonica was that a considerable church was formed, composed chiefly of Gentile converts. We

<sup>1</sup> For the duration of Paul's residence at Thessalonica, see special introduction to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians.

can form from what took place at Thessalonica no inaccurate idea of the mode in which the Christian Church was founded among the cities of Greece and Asia.

It is, however, to be observed that Paul would suit his mode of preaching to his audience, and that in particular the topics of his discourse would vary greatly, according as it was addressed to Jews or Gentiles. To the Jews he would insist chiefly on the Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus. The Old Testament revelation was a common ground of argument. With them, Paul's mode of reasoning was after some such form as this : There are various prophecies in the Old Testament, whose divine authority you admit, which declare that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead ; all these prophecies are fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth : therefore this Jesus whom I preach to you is the Messiah (Acts xvii. 3, xviii. 5). We have an example of the apostle's method of reasoning with the Jews, in his address in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. With the Gentiles, on the other hand, the ground which the apostle took was necessarily different. They knew little, and cared less, about the Jewish Messianic prophecies ; but still on the principles of natural religion there was common ground. Paul could appeal to that God who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things therein, who never left Himself without a witness of His existence and benevolence ; whose offspring we feel ourselves to be ; who cannot possibly be like to gold, or silver, or stone, to an image of art or of man's device ; and who has now made a revelation of Himself by Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> We have examples of his method of preaching to the Gentiles, in his address to the rude inhabitants of Lystra and the polished audience of the Athenians. His preaching would at first be very simple, —Jesus, the Messiah of the Jews,—Jesus, appointed by God to be the Judge of the world. The more special doctrines of Christianity would be taught, not so much to the unconverted

<sup>1</sup> To the Jews, Paul's chief appeal was to prophecy ; to the Gentiles, to miracles. Thus, when reasoning with the Jews, he mentions the resurrection of Christ as the fulfilment of prophecy ; whilst, in reasoning with the Gentiles, he mentions it as the assurance that God has given to all men that He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts xvii. 31).

Jews and Gentiles, as to those who were already Christians, for the edifying of the Church of Christ. Paul appears first to have simply preached the gospel and brought men to Christ, and made their further instruction a matter of after consideration.

The apostle's missionary journeys, so far as they are recorded in the Acts, terminate on his arrival at Jerusalem, at the close of his third missionary journey. There he was arrested by his enemies, the unbelieving Jews, rescued from them by the Romans, and delivered to Felix, the procurator of Judea, by whom he was unjustly detained as a prisoner at Cæsarea for two years (Acts xxiv. 27). These two years are a complete blank in the life of the apostle; we know not how he was engaged; and no epistles written by him during that period have come down to us.<sup>1</sup> Probably, after the stir and excitement of his busy life, a period of retirement was necessary, that he might turn his thoughts inward, and develope the divine life within him; and thus, by deeper experience of the internal power of the gospel, be the better qualified for writing those spiritual epistles which he afterwards composed. "Divine grace, while it uses its instruments for the advancement of the truth among others, sometimes takes those instruments themselves to school for their own personal improvement."<sup>2</sup>

From Cæsarea, Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome. Here, we are informed, "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). With these words the Acts of the Apostles close, and that source of information fails us. We know from the Epistles that several, at least four, were written during this Roman imprisonment. Whether Paul was released, and again for a time laboured as a preacher and missionary of the gospel, is a point disputed among commentators, and is

<sup>1</sup> Some (Beza, Böttger, Thiersch, Meyer, Reuss, Schenkel) affirm that the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written from Cæsarea, —a point which will be discussed when we come to consider the Epistles of the first imprisonment.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen *On the Gospels and the Acts*, vol. iv. p. 491, Clark's translation. See Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 354.



reserved as a subject for future consideration.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, it is generally agreed by all writers that Paul closed his life by martyrdom at Rome. This may be clearly inferred from the Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 6, 7), and is sufficiently attested by the traditions of the Church, though the circumstances of his martyrdom are obscured by fables.<sup>2</sup>

It is to be observed that the account which we have of the life of Paul, taken from these sources, the Acts and the Pauline Epistles, is extremely imperfect. There are great gaps not filled up; there are long periods passed over in a few words; there are numerous incidents unrecorded. This imperfection of the record is evident from an enumeration which the apostle makes of his trials in one of his early Epistles: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep" (2 Cor. xi. 24, 25). Of these hardships only two are alluded to in the Acts. Not one of the five times when he was scourged by the Jews is mentioned; only one scourging with rods at Philippi is recorded; the stoning at Lystra is related; but history is entirely silent about his three shipwrecks,<sup>3</sup>—a proof how very small a portion of the sufferings and labours of the apostle is related to us.

With regard to the chronology of Paul's life, there are two dates on which we may with some degree of certainty rely—the death of Herod Agrippa, and the accession of Festus to the procuratorship of Judea. Herod Agrippa died, as we learn from Josephus, A.D. 44;<sup>4</sup> and the ablest chronologists state the accession of Festus at A.D. 60. Now a chronology of the life of Paul may be formed by going backwards from the year A.D. 60. Paul was two years imprisoned in Caesarea before Festus came to the province, which brings us to Pentecost of A.D. 58. He left Ephesus at the Pentecost of the preceding year, A.D.

<sup>1</sup> See special introduction to the Epistle to the Philippians.

<sup>2</sup> The traditions concerning the martyrdom of Paul are afterwards considered in the special introduction to the Second Epistle to Timothy.

<sup>3</sup> We need hardly observe that his shipwreck on his voyage to Rome occurred after the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xix. 8. 2. This date, however, does not give us much assistance in determining the chronology of Paul's life.

57. He remained three years at Ephesus, so that he must have come there in A.D. 54. Before this he spent a year and a half at Corinth, and made a hasty visit to Jerusalem, which will bring us back to A.D. 52. The previous part of his second missionary journey would extend about a year, and directly before that journey he went up to attend the celebrated Council of Jerusalem, which accordingly occurred A.D. 51; and he himself dates his conversion fourteen years before this (Gal. ii. 1), A.D. 37.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the probable age of Paul we have little information. At the martyrdom of Stephen he is called a young man (*νεανίας*, Acts vii. 58), whereas thirty years afterwards he speaks of himself as being such a one as Paul the aged (*πρεσβύτης*, Philem. 9). Both terms are somewhat indefinite. Varro says that a man is young (*juvenis*) till forty-five, and aged at sixty. Paul must have been about thirty at the death of Stephen, as, if he were under that age, the Sanhedrim would hardly have entrusted him with a duty so important as the commission to Damascus, nor would he thirty years afterwards have called himself aged. Chrysostom supposes that at the time of Stephen's death Paul was thirty-five.<sup>2</sup>

The nature and extent of Paul's education has been much disputed among the learned. Extreme views on both sides have been adopted. Still, it is almost universally admitted that he was superior to all the other apostles both in birth and in education. They were the tax-gatherers, fishermen, and peasants of the remote province of Galilee, and in the estimation of their enemies unlearned and ignorant men (Acts iv. 13); he was the Roman citizen, educated under the most celebrated rabbinical teacher of the day, and learned in Jewish customs and questions. Nor does he appear to have been deficient in Greek learning. Greek was his native language, and as an educated man he would read the classics. His letters and speeches prove that he was acquainted with Greek literature. He quotes three, if not four times, from the Greek poets. In his address to the

<sup>1</sup> The ablest work on the chronology of Paul's life is Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*. Chronological tables are given by Meyer, Wieseler, Olshausen, Davidson, Alford, Wordsworth, Conybeare and Howson, and in the author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup> On this supposition, Paul would be born about the commencement of the Christian era.

Athenians, the words *τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν* (Acts xvii. 28) are an exact quotation from the Cilician poet Aratus (*Phænomena*, 5); and also a probable allusion to the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, *ἐκ σοῦ γένος ἐσμέν* (*Hymn. in Jovem*. 5). He also quotes from Menander in 1 Cor. xv. 33, and Epimenides in Tit. i. 12.<sup>1</sup> Tarsus, Paul's native city, was then one of the most celebrated universities in the world, inferior only to Athens and Alexandria; and the schools of that city might not be without their influence on the apostle's early training.<sup>2</sup> Gamaliel, his teacher, was liberal in his views, and addicted to the study of Greek philosophy, and it may be supposed that he would inspire his scholars with a similar taste. On the whole, it is probable that Paul, though not in the strict sense of the term a Greek scholar, yet was by no means ignorant of the literature of his native tongue. *Paulum seisse, licet non ad perfectum, sæculares litteras* (Jerome, *ad Galat.* iv. 24).

Still, however, the apostle's early education was more Jewish than Greek. His father, as a Pharisee, would be jealous of the influence of profane literature on his son. He quitted Tarsus at an early age, and pursued his studies under Gamaliel, and, as he himself expresses it, was taught according to the strictness of the ancestral law (Acts xxii. 3). We see the traces of this learning in his Epistles, in his apt quotations from the Old Testament, in his mode of reasoning on the difference between the promise made to Abraham and the law given to Moses (Gal. iii. 17–21), in the stress which he places upon the word seed (Gal. iii. 16), and in the allegory which he makes from the fact that Ishmael was the son of a bond woman, and Isaac the son of a free woman (Gal. iv. 22–31). This rabbinical learning was consecrated to the service of Christianity, and through the influences of the Spirit was an important means of deriving rich gospel truths from the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

<sup>1</sup> See Lewin's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 12, 13. Other supposed references to Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are, however, far-fetched. Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*, vol. iv. pp. 502, 507, tenth edition.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is not in itself probable that Paul studied in the Greek schools of Tarsus, owing to the pharisaical views of his father; their influence on his culture must have been rather indirect than direct. Besides, he quitted Tarsus at an early age.

The character of the apostle, however much it may be depreciated by Renan, and others of the school which he represents,<sup>1</sup> cannot be too highly estimated. He was in every respect a great man—great in mental endowments, but greater still in moral qualities. We know none of the apostles so completely as Paul: his character is impressed upon his writings. Its most prominent feature was entire devotedness to the cause of Christ; everything was sacrificed for the gospel; sufferings were cheerfully endured, and life itself was not valued: he could truly say, “To me to live is Christ.” Self seemed to be entirely abolished; he had no private interests to promote, no private wishes to gratify. He had only one thing to do, and that was to promote the spread of the gospel. Hence the extreme seriousness of his character; his mind was so preoccupied with heavenly and spiritual realities, that the concerns of the world had little interest for him.<sup>2</sup> The works of genius at Athens excited within him no feelings of admiration, but called forth his moral indignation at the idolatrous worship which they fostered. He could not detach the intellectual from the moral. He could not view men otherwise than as the moral subjects of God, and destined for immortality.

Another distinguishing feature in Paul's character was his sincerity. He was sincere in all his beliefs and attachments; he admitted of no half measures; lukewarmness was entirely foreign to his nature. Before his conversion as well as after it, he was the same earnest, high-minded man. In persecuting the disciples of Christ, as well as in preaching the gospel,

<sup>1</sup> Jowett's remarkable essay on the character of Paul must also be regarded as in some respects a depreciatory view of the apostle. Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 351–372. Since these pages were written, my attention has been directed to Dean Howson's work *On the Character of St. Paul*, which contains an excellent delineation of the character of the great apostle, though I must dissent from the remarks made on the weaknesses of Paul, especially on his liability to fear, and undue sensitiveness to public opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Jowett perhaps puts it too strongly, when he observes: “There is no reason to suppose that the apostle took any interest in the daily life of men, in the great events which were befalling the Roman Empire, or in the temporal fortunes of the Jewish people. But when they came before him as sinners, lying in darkness and the shadow of God's wrath, then his love was quickened for them . . . he was willing to die with Christ, yea, even to be accursed from Him, that he might save some of them.”

he was actuated by the same spirit of truth; he ever acted up to his convictions: "I verily," says he, "thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>1</sup>

Paul's character was also marked by strong determination of will. He possessed decision in an eminent degree. His zeal was perfectly unconquerable; no temptation whatever could cause him to desist from what he conceived his duty; he was equally indifferent to flattery and threatening; and when once he had decided on the proper course of action, entreaties could not induce him to alter his determinations, and no dangers could deter him (Acts xxi. 13). "We see him," observes Paley, "in the prosecution of his purpose, travelling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead; expecting, wherever he came, a renewal of the same treatment and the same dangers, yet, when driven from one city, preaching in the next; spending his whole time in the employment, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety; persisting in this course to old age, unaltered by the experience of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions; unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death."<sup>2</sup>

Yet Paul, although one of the most decided and zealous of men, was no fanatic. He did not run unnecessarily into danger; he never courted martyrdom. His zeal was kept thoroughly under the subjection of his reason, and was tempered by prudence. He used all lawful means to escape danger. He often put into practice our Lord's advice, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." Thus he fled from Damascus, from Thessalonica, and from Berea. On two occasions he appealed to his privilege of a Roman citizen. When the Jews formed a conspiracy to take away his life by violence, he threw himself upon the protection of the Roman captain. And when he found that Festus was inclined to

<sup>1</sup> Sincerity formed a marked line of demarcation between Paul in his unconverted state, and the ordinary Pharisees.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulineæ*.

comply with the solicitations of the Jews, and to deliver him up to them, he appealed to Cæsar.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Paul, although uncompromising where duty or truth was concerned, was remarkable for almost womanly tenderness. He wept over the defections of his disciples; he cherished them even as a nursing mother cherisheth her children; he could wish himself accursed from Christ, for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh; he felt keenly the sufferings and the sicknesses of his friends; and in describing the qualities of charity, he evidently wrote from the fulness of love in his own heart. So far from being stern, severe, and forbidding, like some of the reformers, he was sympathizing, kind, and loving. We have only to read his Epistles to the Corinthians to see how prominent was this feature in his character; with what tenderness he seeks to win them back to the truth, and with what reluctance he censures and warns them.<sup>2</sup>

Paul is the apostle of freedom; he was possessed of great liberality of mind. Although brought up in the straitest sect of the Jewish religion, and at one period of his life a most bigoted Pharisee, yet, when he embraced Christianity, he carried with him nothing of the intolerance and narrowness of that Jewish sect; he was at once transformed from a Jewish bigot into a Christian philanthropist, the apostle of the Gentiles. He, among all the apostles, was the great advocate of Christian liberty; he would not permit the Gentiles to be trammelled with Jewish ordinances; he supported their cause at the Council of Jerusalem; and withstood Peter to his face, when that apostle appeared to lend his sanction to Jewish exclusiveness.

Humility was also a distinguishing characteristic of the apostle. Though superior to the other apostles in acquirements and natural abilities, though more blessed than they

<sup>1</sup> See this feature in Paul's character well stated by Lewin in his *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 985.

<sup>2</sup> Dean Howson directs attention to the care which Paul took for the health of others, Acts xxvii. 33, 34; Phil. ii. 27, 28; 1 Tim. v. 23. His disinterestedness in sacrificing his own comfort, his susceptibility of friendship, his gratitude for favours received, and his regard for the feelings of others, are also other features of Paul's tenderness of character.

in spiritual gifts and successful achievements, yet he was clothed with humility. As self was entirely lost sight of, pride was foreign to his character. He styles himself "the least of the apostles, and not meet to be called an apostle," and "less than the least of all saints." He exercised no lordship over his converts, and indignantly repudiates the idea of being exalted by them as the head of a party. And when, in his own defence, and in vindication of his ministry, he is obliged to allude to his labours, he does so with extreme reluctance, as if he were making the painful disclosure of some secret faults: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing" (2 Cor. xii. 11).

The courtesy, and, if we might use the expression, the gentlemanly bearing of the apostle, are also remarkable. He was no reviler of dignities, but exhorted his converts to obedience to authority, and to render honour to whom honour was due. And what he preached he practised. A noble courtesy marked his conduct, as seen in the frank apology made to the high priest, "I wot not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people;" in his courteous reply to Festus, when rudely interrupted by that governor, and charged with madness, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;" and in his polite address to Agrippa, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."<sup>1</sup>

To us, Paul after his conversion appears an almost perfect man; the nearest approach that has been made to the character of our Saviour; one who carried human virtues to the greatest extent to which they can be carried on this side the grave.<sup>2</sup> The only fault that strikes us is an occasional warmth of temper

<sup>1</sup> The courtesy of the apostle is especially seen in the Epistle to Philemon.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Davidson accuses him, in assenting to the advice of the elders at Jerusalem, of having resorted to an artifice, for the purpose of conciliating the Jews (Acts xxi. 26), and of committing a similar fault when he divided the Sanhedrim on the question of the resurrection (Acts xxiii. 6).—*Introduction to N. T.* (old edition), pp. 92, 93. In both instances we judge that his conduct was perfectly justifiable. See author's *Commentary on the Acts*.

not always under control, if indeed this be a fault, and not the natural product of the earnestness of his disposition. We do not know if he was altogether free of blame in that sharp contention (*παροξυσμός*) between him and his old companion Barnabas, when the latter wished Mark to accompany them (Acts xv. 39);<sup>1</sup> nor is, perhaps, his passionate address to the high priest Ananias to be altogether justified (Acts xxiii. 3). But in both cases it was the moral earnestness of his character that could not endure the vacillating spirit of Mark, or the injustice and violence of Ananias.

It has been often observed that there is a remarkable resemblance between Paul and Luther. And certainly in many points there is a resemblance: the same heroic zeal, the same decision, the same sincerity, the same indefatigable energy, the same sympathy with humanity, the same liberality of mind actuated both. But Paul was a much higher type of man than the great Reformer: his unworldliness was more complete, his charity was more universal, his joyfulness was more spiritual, his temper was more heavenly. And yet, notwithstanding, Luther is perhaps the nearest approach which has been made to Paul in modern times; certainly much closer than the saints of the middle ages.<sup>2</sup>

## II. NUMBER AND ORDER OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

However influential Paul was in his lifetime, by his missionary labours, in planting Christianity in so many countries, and in the most renowned cities of the Roman Empire, he has been still more influential after his death by his writings. His missionary labours were limited to the first ages of Christianity,

<sup>1</sup> *Paulus severior, Barnabas clementior: uterque in suo sensu abundat. Et tamen dissensio habet aliquid humanæ fragilitatis* (Jerome).

<sup>2</sup> "The saints of the middle ages are in many respects unlike St. Paul, and yet many of them bear a far closer resemblance to him than is to be found in Luther and the Reformers."—Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 361. We rather on this point agree with Renan: "En somme, le personnage historique qui a le plus d'analogie avec Saint Paul, c'est Luther."—Renan's *S. Paul*, p. 569. There is no trace of *humour* in Paul, as was so observable in Luther; Paul's character was of too lofty and serious a nature.



and extended at the utmost only to a period of thirty years ; and, though extensive, were restricted to a small portion of the earth's surface. The influence of his writings, on the other hand, has been felt throughout the Christian world for more than eighteen centuries, and will doubtless continue to be felt to the end of time.<sup>1</sup> In them, Paul, "being dead, yet speaks" even more powerfully and more effectually than when he was charged at Thessalonica with turning the world upside down, or when he preached the unknown God in the Areopagus of Athens, or caused the worshippers of the Ephesian Diana to tremble for their gains. Paul is the most copious writer in the New Testament: nearly one half of its books are ascribed to him. And not only is he the most copious, but also the most influential of the sacred writers, at least among Western Christians.<sup>2</sup> The Pauline view of Christianity, as distinguished from the Johannean, the Petrine, and the Jacobean, has hitherto been the most prevalent, and has given rise to most discussion. Paul is generally regarded as the most dogmatic of the sacred writers ; and his views of human nature and divine grace have moulded the religious opinions of Christians in all ages. And especially is this the case with Protestants:<sup>3</sup> the phase of Christianity which exerted the greatest influence at the Reformation, and still leavens all Protestant communities, is the Pauline—the doctrine of justification, and the supremacy of faith.

Thirteen epistles in the New Testament are expressly ascribed to the Apostle Paul, and are received as genuine by the Christian Church in general. The authenticity of some of them has never been doubted, whilst that of others has been more or less impugned. Baur, perhaps the most destructive of all the German critics, whilst he reduces the number of Paul's genuine epistles to four, yet admits the genuineness of the

<sup>1</sup> And this notwithstanding Renan's assertion : " Après avoir été depuis trois cents ans le docteur chrétien par excellence, grâce au protestantisme orthodoxe, Paul voit de nos jours finir son règne."

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the influence of John is still greater among the Eastern Christians and the Greek Church.

<sup>3</sup> And so far as the writings of St. Augustine have influenced the Romish Church, Paul's influence has been felt there ; for the theology of St. Augustine is as strongly Pauline as the theology of Luther.

largest—the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, and the two Epistles to the Corinthians. Besides these thirteen, many of our most eminent critics have added a fourteenth—namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews. The reasons assigned for this opinion, if not entirely convincing, are so powerful as to lead to a strong presumption that this may be the case; certainly this epistle is written in a style somewhat similar to that of the apostle's, and exhibits his peculiarity of thought: if not Paul's, it is at least Pauline.

The thirteen epistles of Paul have been variously classified by different critics.<sup>1</sup> They are addressed either to a circle of churches, as the Epistle to the Galatians; or to a particular church, as the Epistles to the Thessalonians; or to individuals, as the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the best classification is according to the order of time in which they were written. According to this view, they admit of a three-fold arrangement: first, the “earlier epistles,” written before the first Roman imprisonment, of which there are six; secondly, “the epistles of the captivity,” written during the first Roman imprisonment, of which there are four;<sup>3</sup> and thirdly, the later or so-called “pastoral epistles,” written after the first Roman imprisonment, of which there are three. The order given in the Bible is not chronological, but according to their length and supposed importance. Epistles to churches are placed first, and afterwards those to individuals. The Epistle to the Romans stands first, as Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire; then the two Epistles to the Corinthians, on account of their length; then the Epistle to the Galatians, as Galatia was a country in which there were several churches; then the Epistle to the Ephesians, as next in point of length, and because Ephesus

<sup>1</sup> Baur, adopting the method of Eusebius, classifies them into *ἑμολογούμενα*, of which, according to him, there are four; whilst the other nine belong to the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*: he considers the pastoral epistles as *νόθα*.—Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Nine epistles are addressed to churches, and four to individuals. The four first are sometimes called the major, and the rest the minor, Pauline epistles.

<sup>3</sup> This may be considered as in one respect an erroneous division, as 2d Timothy was also written in captivity, though a later captivity; “the epistles of the captivity” are so called in a technical sense, to denote the epistles written during the first Roman imprisonment,—namely, the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

was the capital of proconsular Asia; then the Epistle to the Philippians, probably because Philippi was a Roman colony, and erroneously considered to be the capital of Macedonia; then the Epistles to the Colossians and the Thessalonians, for which order it is difficult to assign any reason; then the epistles to individuals according to their length; and the Epistle to the Hebrews follows last, because it was doubted whether it was actually the work of Paul.<sup>1</sup>

Different opinions have been formed regarding the true chronological order, and perhaps it is impossible to determine it with absolute certainty. This arises from the incomplete nature of the account of Paul's life given us in the Acts, and from the uncertainty of the apostle's fate after that history closes. The decision of the question whether Paul was or was not released from his Roman imprisonment, must materially affect any opinion as to the arrangement of his Epistles. It is also a point of dispute whether three of his Epistles—the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—belong to his Cæsarean or to his Roman imprisonment. Accordingly, different arrangements have been adopted by different writers. This subject will be fully discussed when the date of each epistle is considered; and therefore, without at all entering upon the subject at present, we merely state the chronological order which, after careful consideration, appears the most probable. That order is as follows: the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Epistle to the Galatians, the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans, constituting the first class, or the “earlier epistles;” the Epistle to the Colossians, the Epistle to Philemon, the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Philippians, constituting the second class, or the “epistles of the captivity;” the First Epistle to Timothy, the Epistle to Titus, and the Second Epistle to Timothy, constituting the third class, or the “later epistles.”<sup>2</sup>

A table is subjoined, containing the probable dates of the

<sup>1</sup> This is the opinion adopted by Lardner: *Works*, vol. iii. p. 457. See also Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald supposes the epistles were written in the following order: 2 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians. He does not admit the Ephesians and the pastoral epistles to be genuine.

epistles, and the names of the places from which they were probably written.

EPISTLES.	PLACES.	A. D.
1 Thessalonians, . . .	Corinth, . . .	52
2 Thessalonians, . . .	Corinth, . . .	53
Galatians, . . . . .	Ephesus, . . . . .	55
1 Corinthians, . . . .	Ephesus, . . . . .	57
2 Corinthians, . . . .	Philippi, . . . . .	57
Romans, . . . . .	Corinth, . . . . .	58
Colossians, . . . . .	Rome, . . . . .	63
Philemon, . . . . .	Rome, . . . . .	63
Ephesians, . . . . .	Rome, . . . . .	63
Philippians, . . . . .	Rome, . . . . .	63
1 Timothy, . . . . .	Macedonia, . . . .	67
Titus, . . . . .	Macedonia, . . . .	67
2 Timothy, . . . . .	Rome, . . . . .	68 <sup>1</sup>

There is little difficulty in accounting for the preservation of the Pauline Epistles: they were, with the exception of those written to individuals, sent to particular communities. It may safely be assumed that these communities, valuing what was written by an inspired apostle, and the founder of most of their churches, would preserve them as a sacred deposit. They were also enjoined to read them publicly in their religious assemblies, and provision was made for the interchange of epistles addressed to neighbouring churches. Thus, writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle gives this solemn

<sup>1</sup> The following are the dates of the Pauline epistles according to the chief authorities:—

NAMES OF THE EPISTLES.	Michaelis.	Lardner.	Macknight.	Alford.	Conybeare.	Wieseler.	De Wette.
1 Thessalonians, . . . .	51	52	51	52	52	54	52-3
2 Thessalonians, . . . .	52	52	52	53	53	54	53-4
Galatians, . . . . .	49	53	50	54-5	57	55	55-6
1 Corinthians, . . . . .	57	56	56-7	57	57	57	58
2 Corinthians, . . . . .	57	57	56-7	57	57	57	58
Romans, . . . . .	58	58	57-8	58	58	58	58-9
Colossians, . . . . .	61-2	61	60-1	62	62	61-2	62?
Philemon, . . . . .	61-2	62	61	62	62	61-2	62?
Ephesians, . . . . .	61-2	62	61	62	62	61-2	—
Philippians, . . . . .	61-2	62	61-2	62	62	62	63
1 Timothy, . . . . .	58	56	64	66	67	56	—
Titus, . . . . .	56	56	62?	66	67	57	—
2 Timothy, . . . . .	65	61	66	67	68	63	—

injunction: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren" (1 Thess. v. 27); and he commands the Colossians not only to read his epistle among themselves, but to send it to Laodicea, that it might be read in the church of that city, and that they should also read "the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16). Thus the epistles would be gradually circulated among the different Christian communities, and copies of them would be made. At the same time, considering the trouble and difficulty of the circulation of books in that age, and the comparatively limited extent of Christianity, the circulation must necessarily have been slow, and it must have been a considerable time before a collection of the sacred books was made; and hence the comparatively late formation of the canon, about the latter half of the second century,<sup>1</sup> so far from being a matter of surprise or of difficulty, is what we would *à priori* have expected.

But the question arises, Have we all the epistles of Paul? Are these thirteen, or, including the Epistle to the Hebrews, fourteen epistles, all that he ever wrote?<sup>2</sup>

This question has been generally answered in the affirmative. It has been laid down, as if it were an undoubted proposition, that God would not permit any writing which He had inspired to be lost; that to suppose such to have been the case, is contrary to our notions of the nature and importance of inspiration; and hence it is affirmed, either that Paul never wrote any more epistles than those which have come down to us, or that, if he did, they were uninspired, and of no importance to the Christian Church. Besides, it is added, the precautions taken for the preservation of these epistles, their being written to the churches, which would carefully preserve and readily communicate them to others, and their being read in the public assemblies of the saints, are all considerations which must induce us to think that no inspired

<sup>1</sup> It is generally agreed that the Peshito or Syrian version was made about this time. It contains all the epistles of Paul.

<sup>2</sup> On this question, see Professor Jowett's dissertation, "On the Probability that many of St. Paul's Epistles have been lost."—Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 195–201.

writing of an apostle could ever be lost.<sup>1</sup> The argument is well put by Dr. Macknight: "The writings of the apostles and evangelists being early and widely dispersed among the disciples of Christ, I think it cannot be doubted that the persons who obtained copies of them, regarded them as precious treasures of divine truth, and preserved them with the utmost care. We are morally certain, therefore, that none of the inspired writings, either of the evangelists or of the apostles, have been lost; and, in particular, that the suspicion which some have entertained of the loss of certain epistles of Paul, is destitute of probability. His inspired writings were all sent to persons greatly interested in them, who, while they preserved their own copies with the utmost care, were no doubt very diligent in circulating transcripts from them among the other churches; so that, being widely dispersed, highly respected, and much read, none of them, I think, could perish. What puts this matter beyond doubt is, that while all the sacred books which now remain are often quoted by the most ancient Christian writers whose works have come down to us, in none of them, nor in any other author whatever, is there so much as a single quotation from any apostolical writing that is not at present in our canon; nor the least hint from which it can be gathered, that any apostolical writing ever existed which we do not at present possess."<sup>2</sup> So also Dr. Alexander of America undertakes to demonstrate the proposition that "no canonical book of the New Testament has been lost." Of course, if by a canonical book be meant a book that has been admitted into the canon, the statement is a mere truism. But by a canonical book he seems to mean a book written by inspiration, and designed for the good of the Church. And hence he asserts, that if Paul, or any other apostle, did write letters other than those preserved to us, there is no reason to think that these were inspired; or if inspired, they were probably written for a particular occasion, and to rectify some disorder in a particular church, and so might have been lost without injury to the canon.<sup>3</sup> But all

<sup>1</sup> See Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 465-467.

<sup>2</sup> Macknight *On the Epistles*, the second preliminary essay.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander *On the Canon*, p. 282.

these arguments are only subjective considerations, which at the utmost amount to mere probabilities; and much that is said is a mere begging of the question. Epistles of Paul may, notwithstanding these considerations, have been lost; and if any have perished, they may, for anything we know to the contrary, have been as much inspired as those which have been preserved.

There are, so far as we can see, no cogent presumptive arguments against the supposition that some of Paul's epistles may be lost. Whether this is actually the case is a different question. The discourses of Paul were as inspired as his writings; and yet it is only a mere fraction of these discourses that have been preserved to us in the Acts: by far the greater number of them have been lost, and have left no trace behind them in the writings of the Fathers. And the same is the case with the words and actions of our Lord Himself. We have four narratives of His life; but yet here also we have a mere fragment of His discourses and conversation. John, at the close of his Gospel, tells us that "Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book" (John xx. 30); and he asserts that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the whole world itself would not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 28).<sup>1</sup> Now the discourses of the apostles, and above all, the discourses of our Lord, were as inspired, and would probably have been as useful to the Church, as the sacred writings. If, then, such inspired discourses have undoubtedly been lost to the Christian Church, what possible reason is there to lay it down dogmatically as an axiom, that it is impossible to suppose that God should suffer an inspired writing, which might be of use to the Church, to be lost?

But not only are there no cogent presumptions against the

<sup>1</sup> So also, the prophecies of the minor prophets which have been preserved are inconsiderable, when we reflect on the length of time during which they continued to prophesy. For example, Micah prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and we cannot suppose that all he predicted is contained in the short book which bears his name. See also 2 Kings xiv. 25, and compare it with the prophecies of Jonah.

notion that some of Paul's epistles may possibly be lost, but there are probable reasons which favour this opinion: (1.) The nature of Paul's connection with other churches is a reason why we can hardly suppose that his correspondence was of such a limited extent, as we must believe that it was, if all his writings are extant. It is highly probable that Paul, who was burdened with the "care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28), besides those churches mentioned in his genuine epistles, wrote to others with which he was intimately related: as, for example, the Church of Antioch, where he had laboured for so many years; the Church of Tarsus, to which he must have been peculiarly attached, not only as probably its founder (Acts ix. 30), but because Tarsus was his native city; not to mention the Churches of Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Berea, and Athens, which he had founded. (2.) The character of the extant epistles is such as would lead us to infer that Paul was accustomed to epistolary correspondence. They are all, with the exception of the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians, epistles called forth by the wants of the churches to which he wrote, or answers to inquiries made to him; they all imply a familiar acquaintance with the state of each particular church; and suggest that messengers must have been frequently going between him and the different Christian communities. (3.) The loving disposition of the apostle supplies a further presumption in favour of a more extensive correspondence than what remains. The Epistle to Philemon is the only extant example of a private letter,—the Epistles to Timothy and Titus being rather pastoral addresses; but, considering Paul's affectionate nature, we cannot suppose that this was the only letter of that description which he ever wrote. (4.) And further, when we reflect on the periods when his extant letters were written, the argument in favour of his having written other letters is greatly strengthened. If what has come down to us were his only epistles, then we must suppose that he wrote several letters all in a short period, whilst during long intervals he wrote nothing. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians, his earliest extant epistle, was not composed earlier than the middle of his second missionary



journey, fifteen years after his conversion. His three longest epistles, the Epistle to the Romans and the two Epistles to the Corinthians, were in all probability written within the course of a single year.<sup>1</sup> During his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, although he had free access to his friends, and might have sent them as messengers to the churches, he wrote nothing. The four epistles of the captivity were all written about the same period, toward the close of his first Roman imprisonment, whilst during the greater part of the two years which he spent at Rome his pen was idle. All this favours the presumption that Paul must have written other epistles which have not come down to us.<sup>2</sup>

But we are not left to reason on these mere conjectural considerations. We believe that there are clear allusions in the extant writings of Paul to at least two lost epistles, besides more doubtful indications of others. The two more distinctly alluded to are *an epistle to the Corinthians*, written before the two which have been transmitted to us, and *an epistle to the Laodiceans*.

In 1 Cor. v. 9 we have the following sentence : ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις; which literally rendered is, "I wrote to you in the epistle (not in 'an epistle,' as in our version) not to keep company with fornicators." Now to what epistle does the apostle here refer? There can be only two possible answers: either it was the epistle he was then writing, or it was an epistle which is now lost.<sup>3</sup>

Those who maintain the opinion that none of Paul's epistles are lost, are constrained to adopt the former alternative, that by ἡ ἐπιστολή the apostle means the epistle which he was now writing; so that the words are equivalent to, "I

<sup>1</sup> "Suppose," observes Jowett, "we take this as the criterion of the probable amount of his lost writings, and that during each year of his ministry, which extended over a period of at least twenty-five years, he wrote an equal quantity, the result would have been a volume three times the size of the New Testament."—Jowett's *Epistles of Paul*, vol. i. p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Dean Alford, perhaps somewhat too strongly, asserts: "Those who regard not preconceived theories, but the facts and analogies of the case, will come rather to the conclusion that *very many* (of Paul's epistles) have been lost."—*Greek Testament*, vol. ii. ; Prolegomena, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> A third possible alternative, that it was 2 Corinthians, being excluded from the nature of the case.

have written to you (or, according to some, 'I shall write to you') in this epistle not to keep company with fornicators." This is the opinion adopted, with various modifications, by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Erasmus, Lardner, Bloomfield, Whitby, Macknight, Alexander, Stanley, and others. Paul, it is asserted, in the beginning of the fifth chapter, had given the prohibition mentioned; and ἡ ἐπιστολὴ denotes "this epistle."<sup>1</sup> But there are several reasons against our adoption of this view of the subject. It is not the most natural meaning of the sentence—not that which would at first suggest itself. There is no express prohibition of the kind mentioned in the preceding part of the epistle; and it can only be found there by a strained interpretation. And if the words do actually refer to what was written immediately before, then ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ would be superfluous and unmeaning. It is true that the expression ἡ ἐπιστολὴ is sometimes used by the apostle with reference to the letter in which it occurs; but in these cases it is at the close, as if a postscript, and not, as here, in the middle of the epistle (Rom. xvi. 22; 1 Thess. v. 27; Col. iv. 16).

Accordingly, several who have felt the force of these objections have endeavoured by various shifts to avoid them; but the theories resorted to are still more untenable. Though not in the preceding, yet in the succeeding part of the epistle, there are clear prohibitions against keeping company with fornicators; and hence they attempt to refer the words not to what precedes, but to what succeeds. Thus Lardner, violating the meaning of the aorist, supposes that the words are a strong asseveration of what the apostle intended doing, and that the sense is equivalent to, "I shall in this epistle deliver some cautions against a dangerous and offensive intimacy with idolaters."<sup>2</sup> Dean Stanley supposes that the whole passage, v. 9–vi. 8, may have been a note or postscript inserted subsequently to the rest of the epistle, and referring especially to vi. 9–20. The reference of the phrases ἐν τῇ

<sup>1</sup> Thus Macknight: "By requiring you to clean out the old leaven (ver. 7), I have virtually ordered you in this epistle not to keep company with fornicators."—*In loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 469.

ἐπιστολῇ and ἔγραψα to the present epistle, he supposes, "may be partially explained by the fact of the amanuensis, who might regard the whole letter which he was transcribing as 'the epistle' distinct from himself."<sup>1</sup> Whitby adopts the extraordinary opinion that Paul, after writing the epistle, corrects it, and mentions the correction: "I had written to you in the epistle, before I was fully acquainted with the state of your affairs, not to keep company with fornicators; but now, since I have been more exactly informed of the state of your church, I have changed my style, and have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater," etc.<sup>2</sup> All which explanations are mere attempts to get rid of supposed difficulties.

The most natural meaning of the passage—that which an ordinary reader would derive from it—undoubtedly is, that the apostle had previously written to the Corinthians an epistle (now lost), in which he had given them the injunction in question; but that this epistle being misunderstood, he explains what he meant in the epistle he was now writing. The expression ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, referring to a former epistle, creates no difficulty, as the same expression is used by Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, when alluding to the first or earlier epistle (ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, 2 Cor. vii. 8). Nor is the verb ἔγραψα used in a different sense in ver. 9 (I wrote) from what it is used in ver. 11 (νυνὶ δὲ ἔγραψα), as νυνὶ there is not a particle of time (as rendered in our version), but of connection, and ought to be rendered "but now" (the case being so, as it is, namely, that you are obliged to associate with fornicators among the heathen): "I wrote to you not to associate with fornicators among the brethren; that was the true meaning of what I wrote." This opinion—that we have in this passage a reference to a lost epistle—is adopted, among others, by Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Wetstein, Bengel, De Wette, Neander, Bleek, Ewald, Meyer, Reuss, Alford, Ellicott,

<sup>1</sup> Stanley *On the Corinthians*, pp. 80, 81. We are not sure if we clearly understand Dean Stanley's meaning. The passage does not seem expressed with his usual perspicuity.

<sup>2</sup> Whitby, *in loco*.

Wordsworth, and Conybeare and Howson. "The epistle of which he speaks," observes Calvin, "is not at this day extant. Nor is there any doubt that many others are lost. It is enough, however, that those have been preserved to us which the Lord foresaw would suffice."<sup>1</sup>

Of course it is impossible to tell what was contained in this epistle, except that there was a command *μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις*, which had been misunderstood, and which mistake the apostle rectifies. Dean Alford further supposes that it contained an announcement of a plan of visiting them on his way to Macedonia, and again on his return from Macedonia (2 Cor. i. 15, 16); and that there were directions given with regard to the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

An epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, which professes to be the epistle in question, has been found in manuscripts of the New Testament written in the Armenian language, and entitled "The Third Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians." It was first published at Amsterdam in 1719.<sup>3</sup> Its genuineness was defended by Whiston, and more recently by Rinck,<sup>4</sup> whose arguments have been answered by Ullmann. But it cannot be doubted that it is spurious. It is destitute of external authority, its style and doctrine are entirely different from the manner and teaching of Paul in his genuine epistles, and it is now universally rejected.

Another allusion to a lost epistle is contained in Col. iv. 16 : *Καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ' ὑμῶν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ· καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε*; which is rendered with sufficient correctness in our version: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." The question is, What is meant by *ἡ ἐπιστολή ἐκ Λαοδικείας*? is it a lost epistle of Paul to the Church of Laodicea?

Various opinions which are perfectly untenable need not be

<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *in loco*.    <sup>2</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. ii. ; Prolegomena, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> The last translation of it was made jointly by Lord Byron and Father Aucher, and published in Moore's *Life of Byron*, vol. vi. pp. 269-275. It is also given by Stanley in an appendix to his *Commentary on the Corinthians*.

<sup>4</sup> *Das Sendschr. d. Kor. an den Ap. P. und dritte Sendschr. P. an die Kor.*, Heidelberg 1823.

discussed: as that of Schulthess, that the epistle in question is the Epistle to the Hebrews; that of Theophylact, that it is the First Epistle to Timothy; and that of Lightfoot, that it is the First Epistle of John. Three other theories have, however, been advanced to exclude the view that it is a lost epistle, which deserve consideration: (1) that it is an epistle from the Laodiceans to Paul, (2) that it is the Epistle to the Ephesians, and (3) that it is the Epistle to Philemon.

The first of these opinions, that the allusion is to an epistle written by the Laodiceans to Paul, and not to an epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, is adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Calvin, Beza, Erasmus, Alexander, and others. Their chief argument is, that this is the natural meaning of the passage. But what would be the object or benefit of the Colossians reading an epistle written by the Laodiceans? Paul puts the two epistles on an equality, and we can hardly suppose that he would in the same words command an epistle written by himself, and one written to him by his Laodicean converts, to be publicly read in the religious assemblies of Christians. Besides, had the Laodiceans written to him, he would have answered them directly, and not merely made this allusion to their letter in an epistle written to another church. Nor do the words *ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκ Λαοδικείας* naturally mean an epistle written by the Laodiceans. The preposition *ἐκ*, rendered *from*, denotes properly *out of*, and, as Winer observes, has a pregnant meaning, and expresses the force of two prepositions: it denotes not the letter written from Laodicea, but the letter written *to* Laodicea, and sent again *from* Laodicea.<sup>1</sup> Paul puts himself in the position of the Colossians, who, by sending, were to receive the letter from Laodicea. The letter, then, is clearly not an epistle from the Laodiceans to Paul, but an epistle from Paul to the Laodiceans.

The second opinion above stated is, that the epistle to the Laodiceans is identical with the Epistle to the Ephesians. This is the usual view of the subject, and has been adopted, with various modifications, by distinguished critics. Some (Grotius, Paley, Wetstein) suppose that the Epistle to the Ephesians was actually directed to the Laodiceans, and that the words *ἐν*

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 651; Olshausen on Col. iv. 16.

'Εφέσω are an error of transcribers, and should have been ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ.<sup>1</sup> But this opinion, with the exception of the testimony of Marcion, is unsupported by manuscripts, versions, or patristic evidence, and is now generally relinquished. The most prevalent form in which the opinion is now expressed is, that the Epistle to the Ephesians was not directed to any particular church, but was a circular epistle sent to the churches of proconsular Asia, and that either there was nothing in it corresponding to the words ἐν 'Εφέσω, or the space was left blank, and afterwards filled in by the names of the churches to which copies were sent; so that one manuscript might have in it "in Ephesus," another "in Laodicea," a third "in Hierapolis," a fourth "in Philadelphia," and so on.<sup>2</sup> This view of the subject is adopted by Usher, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Schrader, Neander, Anger, Harless, Bleek, Conybeare and Howson, and other distinguished writers. It is argued that the Epistle to the Ephesians bears internal marks of being a circular epistle, and that in the two oldest manuscripts, the Vatican and the Sinaitic, the words ἐν 'Εφέσω are omitted in the text, but written on the margin. Postponing as a subject of future consideration the question to whom the Epistle to the Ephesians was originally addressed, it may be sufficient here to observe that this opinion is opposed to the preponderance of the authority of manuscripts, versions, and Fathers, which is decidedly in favour of the genuineness of the words ἐν 'Εφέσω.<sup>3</sup> Others, again (Lardner, Macknight), suppose that Paul sent the Ephesians word by Tychicus, the bearer of the letter, to send a copy of it to the Laodiceans, with an order to them to communicate it to the Colossians,—an hypothesis which has no support, and is merely adopted to escape a difficulty.

A most ingenious hypothesis has been advanced by Wieseler in his *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, and supported with much learning and plausibility. He supposes that the epistle to the Laodiceans is identical with the Epistle to Philemon. The steps by which he arrives at this opinion are as follows :

<sup>1</sup> This is the supposition advanced by Paley in his *Hore Paulinae*.

<sup>2</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> This point is further discussed in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Directly after the apostle had told the Colossians to read the epistle from Laodicea, he sends a message to Archippus (Col. iv. 17), from which it is inferred that Archippus resided in Laodicea; but the Epistle to Philemon was directed not only to Philemon, but among others to Archippus (Philem. 2), and hence the destination of that epistle was Laodicea. The reason why the Laodiceans are saluted in the Epistle to the Colossians, is because that epistle was to be sent to them; whereas such salutations would have been inappropriate in the Epistle to Philemon, which was a private epistle, being a letter of recommendation given to Onesimus. And the reason why the apostle was desirous that the private letter to Philemon should be read to the Colossians was that it had reference to Onesimus, who was one of them (*ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν*, Col. iv. 9). And, further, Wieseler observes that it is undesirable to multiply unnecessarily the epistles of the apostle, especially as in the present case he sent three contemporaneous epistles to the same district—to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon.<sup>1</sup> It cannot be denied that the arguments adduced are very ingenious, but they are not convincing: they rest on an inference, which is by no means proved, that Archippus was a native of Laodicea, and not of Colosse.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, none of these hypotheses appear satisfactory; and the more simple and natural conclusion, against which there is nothing material to be opposed, seems to be that there is here another indication of a lost epistle—the epistle to the Laodiceans. When this epistle was written cannot be determined, but in all probability it was some time before the contemporaneous Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon; for if sent at the same time, the Laodiceans would have been saluted in their own epistle, and not in that to the Colossians. The opinion that the Laodicean epistle is lost is adopted by Doddridge, De Wette, Olshausen, Davidson, Alford, Jowett, Ellicott, Davies, Eadie, and others.

An epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans has come down to us: it is found in several manuscripts of the Vulgate, placed after

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 450–455.

<sup>2</sup> See Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.* 30; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 137 (old edition); Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 114.

the Epistle to the Colossians. It is a small document, consisting of nineteen short verses, and is a feeble imitation of the epistles of Paul, being chiefly made up of extracts from the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. Its composition was suggested by Col. iv. 16, and it ends with these words: "Cause this epistle to be read to the Colossians, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Colosse."

Besides these two passages, in which there are plain indications of lost epistles, there are other references of a somewhat similar but more doubtful nature, on which, taken by themselves, we should lay no stress, but which, combined with the fact that there are these two plain indications, we regard also as traces of lost epistles. Thus Paul, in writing to the Corinthians relative to the general collection which he was making for the Christians at Jerusalem, says: "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send by letters" (*δι' ἐπιστολῶν*: not, as in our version, "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send") "to bring your liberality to Jerusalem" (1 Cor. xvi. 3); thus intimating that it was the apostle's custom to give letters of recommendation. "Hence we see," observes Meyer, "how common in Paul's practice was the writing of epistles. Who knows how many private letters of his, not addressed to churches, have been lost? The only letter of the kind which remains to us (that of Philemon) owes its preservation perhaps to the mere circumstance that it is at the same time addressed to the church in his house." In 2 Cor. x. 10 we read: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." But if the opinion that Paul wrote no letters except those which have come down to us be correct, the Corinthians had only received one letter, and therefore could hardly speak of it in the plural. Paul sends the salutation of Mark to the Colossians, with the following addition: "Touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him" (Col. iv. 10). This may imply that he had written instructions to the Colossians concerning their reception of Mark, especially as he could not have given them by word of mouth, having never been at Colosse; though, of course, these commandments might have



been entrusted to messengers, and orally communicated by them. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle alludes to their receipt of a letter as from him (2 Thess. ii. 2). That is probably a forged epistle;<sup>1</sup> but this would seem to imply that it was not an unusual or strange thing in the apostle to write an epistle, whereas if those which are extant are all that he composed, this was only the second epistle which he wrote. And the same epistle is concluded with the following words: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token of every epistle: so I write" (2 Thess. iii. 17). But Paul, if we have all his writings, had only written one epistle before. Much stress, however, cannot be laid on this, as the words may only express the rule which would guide the apostle in all his future epistles. And in regard to all the above passages, it may be again observed that they deserve notice rather as harmonizing with the hypothesis supported otherwise, that Paul's writings were more numerous than those with which we are acquainted, than affording independent evidence of the existence of particular writings.

It would thus appear that the question, whether these thirteen or fourteen extant epistles of Paul are all that he ever wrote, must be answered in the negative. And the Church has to deplore the loss of two, possibly of several, epistles of the great apostle,—works which have perished in the first ages of the Church, and of which now hardly any traces remain. It is admitted that none of the Fathers quote either from the lost epistle to the Corinthians or from that to the Laodiceans, or indeed perhaps from any epistle of Paul not found in the canon. Polycarp, indeed, writing to the Philippians, says that Paul, when absent, wrote epistles to them (ὅς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς), as if there were more than one;<sup>2</sup> and Bleek and others think that it may be inferred from Phil. iii. 1, that Paul had written a previous letter to the Philippians which is now lost. But this remark of Polycarp cannot be considered as of great importance. The apostolic

<sup>1</sup> This appears to be the meaning of the expression, δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν. See Ellicott, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Polycarp, *ad Philippens*, c. 3. The word ἐπιστολαί is, however, often used to signify only one epistle.

Fathers seldom quote from Scripture, and if any of Paul's epistles are lost, they must have perished at an early period; for had they been preserved for any length of time, they would doubtless have been transmitted to us from the reverence of the early Christians for the writings of the apostles.

But the question still occurs, How has it come to pass that these two epistles in particular are lost? Two epistles to the Corinthians have come down to us; and if there was another, is it not reasonable to expect that it also would have been preserved? And the argument that the epistle to the Laodiceans, if ever existing, would have been preserved, is even stronger. Paul enjoined it to be read not only in the Church of Laodicea, but in the Church of Colosse, so that one would think we have a guarantee for its preservation. And in the earliest of his extant epistles, he gives the solemn injunction that his letter should be publicly read: "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" (1 Thess. v. 27). The preservation of thirteen of Paul's epistles, the value which the apostle himself puts upon his writings as containing a revelation from God, and the reverence with which the early Church regarded them as sacred books, no doubt might lead to the expectation that none of them would be lost. And it must be admitted that these circumstances are not without weight. There is a certain improbability that an inspired book should be lost;<sup>1</sup> but such presumptions do not overcome the positive evidence that at least two epistles are wanting. Perhaps the reverence for the apostolic writings among the early Christians was of gradual growth, and hence it might happen that Paul's first epistles were not preserved. Or it may be that the fact of his inspired discourses being of equal value tended to cause the early Christians to overlook the value of his inspired writings for future generations. Inspiration was not then a very rare gift, and there was then no reason to suppose that it would fail in the Church.

The thirteen or fourteen genuine epistles of Paul are all

<sup>1</sup> Note here the distinction between *inspiration* and *communication*. A book may have been inspired, and yet not designed by God to be transmitted to the universal Church.

that God in His providence considered requisite for the edification of the Church. We have in them, and in the other sacred writings, a sufficient rule for our belief and practice. What is lost, for example, of the words of Jesus, or of the writings of Paul, was indeed equally precious as what remains, but was not essentially necessary. In such an important matter as revelation, God would doubtless, by His superintending providence, preserve those inspired writings which were designed for our guidance, whilst He allowed other inspired documents to drop into oblivion. The early period at which these epistles of Paul must have been lost, entirely forbids the supposition that they will ever be discovered; but whilst it may be matter of regret that such writings should have disappeared, it ought to be a subject for thankfulness that so many of the epistles of the great apostle have been preserved.

### III. STYLE AND MATTER OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES.<sup>1</sup>

It is a common remark that the works of an author on religious or moral subjects, if written with a practical purpose, are a reflex of his character, and bear the impress of his individuality. Whether this assertion will always hold true may well be questioned, but undoubtedly it is true in the case of the Apostle Paul; no writings more certainly reveal their author. There is an artless candour, a transparency about them, that at once convinces us that the sentiments expressed spring from his inward disposition. Paul writes "out of the abundance of his heart." We see before us the same Paul whose actions are recorded and character depicted in the history of the apostles. The moral earnestness which constrained him to devote his life to the diffusion of Christianity, is impressed upon every page of his epistles. The love which caused him to spend and be spent in promoting the spiritual

<sup>1</sup> See Macknight's preliminary essay, *Of the Apostle Paul's Style and Manner of Writing*; Dr. Davidson on the "Style of the Apostle Paul," *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. pp. 144-156 (old edition); Olshausen and Tholuck's *Introductions to the Epistle to the Romans*; Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. i. pp. 149-159.

welfare of others, is written in golden characters in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The tenderness displayed in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, is exhibited in his affectionate interest for his converts, and especially in his loving exhortations and rebukes to the erring Galatians and Corinthians. The liberality with which, in the council of Jerusalem, he advocated the freedom of the Gentiles, is manifest in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, in his discussions on eating things offered to idols, and in his contentions with the Judaizing teachers. And the courtesy which he exhibited toward Agrippa and Festus, is conspicuous in his Epistle to Philemon. The Paul of the Acts is the Paul of the Epistles.

One peculiarity of Paul's style is its *argumentative character*. This is especially seen in his earlier epistles, above all in the Romans and Galatians. The apostle addresses himself not only to the affections, but even still more to the reason. He appeals to our judgment; he argues; he establishes propositions; he starts objections in order to refute them; he draws inferences; he aims at our convictions; and he fortifies his statements by proofs drawn from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He is by far the most argumentative of the sacred writers; so much so, that on this point he almost stands alone. The other writers address the conscience; Paul appeals to our intellectual nature. "I speak," says he, "unto wise men; judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. x. 15). Hence it is that his epistles abound with logical particles, such as *γάρ*, *οὖν*, *ὅτι*, *ὅπως*, and *ἵνα*; or with inferential phrases; or he makes use of participles instead of inferential conjunctions; and sometimes he formally states the conclusion arrived at (*λογιζόμεθα οὖν*, Rom. iii. 28).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it must be admitted that the reasoning of the apostle is not precisely that to which we are accustomed, and is not to be strictly judged by the rules of modern logicians. Paul was an Oriental, educated in the rabbinical schools. The method which he generally employs is first to prove his subject, then

<sup>1</sup> See, on the argumentative character of Paul's style, Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 145, 146, and Tholuck's *Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans*.

to take into account the objections to it, which he frequently does in the form of question and answer; and sometimes his answers to the objections are expressed as interrogative rejoinders (Rom. iii. 1-10, vi. 1, 2, 15, 16, ix. 19-21). All this occasions a certain degree of obscurity to us, who are accustomed to the syllogistic form of reasoning.

Perhaps, however, the chief characteristic in the style of the apostle is its *fervour*. It bears the impress of moral earnestness. His thoughts crowd upon him faster than fitting words can be found to express them; and his fervour creates a certain impatience, which leads him to break off abruptly what he has on hand, in order to express at once the thought which at the moment struck him. His style is removed as far as possible from monotony or cold correctness, and is on the contrary abrupt, rugged, and vehement. Well might the Corinthians say, "His letters are weighty and powerful" (2 Cor. x. 10). "When I read Paul," says Jerome, "I seem to hear not words, but thunder-peals."<sup>1</sup> Hence his epistles abound with strong expressions, with an accumulation of superlatives: as, for example, when he speaks of himself as "less than the least (ἐλαχιστότερος) of all saints;" and when he describes afflictions as working out for believers "a far more exceeding (καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολήν), even an eternal weight of glory." Hence also his frequent use of compounds with ὑπερ, in order to strengthen his words and render them emphatic. No writer in the New Testament deals so much in climax; and one of his great masterpieces, the eighth chapter of the Romans, may be described as one unbroken chain of fervent eloquence, rising gradually from note to note, beginning with the announcement of the sinner's forgiveness, and closing with the grand climax in which the apostle challenges all creation to separate the believer from the love of Christ.

This fervour and, so to speak, impetuosity of spirit gives rise to those numerous *digressions* or *parenthetic clauses* which are found in Paul's writings,—a peculiar kind of digression which has been not inappropriately termed "going off" at a

<sup>1</sup> *Paulum proferam, quem quotiescunque lego, videor mihi non verba audire sed tonitrua.*—Ep. 48, ad Pammachiam.

word." Paley thus alludes to it: "There is another singularity in Paul's style, which, wherever it is found, may be deemed a badge of authenticity; because, if it were noticed, it would not, I think, be imitated, inasmuch as it almost always produces embarrassment and interruption in the reasoning. This singularity is a species of digression which may properly, I think, be denominated *going off at a word*. It is turning aside from the subject upon the occurrence of some particular word, forsaking the train of thought then in hand, and entering upon a parenthetical sentence, in which that word is the prevailing term."<sup>1</sup> Many instances of such digressions are to be found in the epistles. But digressions are not merely occasioned by peculiar words, but still more so by new thoughts suggested at the time the apostle was writing. He suddenly breaks off his train of thought, and inserts in a parenthetical clause the new idea suggested, and then without any notice returns to his original subject. Thus it sometimes happens that his writing appears to be a series of parentheses or relative clauses, and his sentences become somewhat long and involved. So also there is often a long train of ideas, the one suggesting the other, without any break in the sentence. This characteristic, which is seen in all his epistles, is especially noticeable in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Eph. i. 3-14, for example, is but one sentence, containing a series of thoughts; whereas, in an ordinary writer, it would have been broken up into several clauses.<sup>2</sup>

From this arises a considerable *obscurity of style*. It is often difficult to trace the connection of the apostle's ideas, and to observe where the parenthetical clause terminates and there is a return to the subject on hand. Hence, also, interruptions occur in his reasoning, so that it is difficult to follow his line of argument. The obscurity of Paul's writings is adverted to by Peter in his second epistle, when he says that in them "there are things hard to be understood" (*δυσνόητα*, 2 Pet. iii. 16). No doubt there are other causes of obscurity,

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. vi. N. iii. The instances which Paley gives are: 2 Cor. ii. 14-16, iii. 1-3, iii. 12-16; Eph. iv. 8-11, v. 12-15. The number of examples might be increased.

<sup>2</sup> See also Rom. i. 1-7; Eph. iii. 2-12; 2 Thess. i. 3-10.

altogether independent of style. One of these is our ignorance of the circumstances under which the epistles were composed. Allusions obvious to those to whom the epistles were written, are unintelligible to us (2 Thess. ii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 7); and circumstances are adverted to of which we are ignorant. Besides, the apostle had necessarily an immense difficulty in selecting words to express his ideas. These ideas were often foreign to the Greek mind, and hence there were no adequate terms for them. He was therefore obliged to attach a new meaning to words, or at least to give them a signification which hardly belonged to them, and which signification is discernible only from the context.<sup>1</sup> But, notwithstanding all these allowances, it must be acknowledged that there is a considerable obscurity in the apostle's style,—a want of perspicuity,—occasioned chiefly by the fervour of his temperament. Hence, in reading his epistles, constant attention, amounting to a strain on the mind, is required.

Another cause of obscurity, arising partly from the nature of the subjects on which he wrote, and partly from his temperament, is the apostle's depth or profundity of thought. Paul wrote on subjects on which it was hardly possible to be clear, because their full comprehension is beyond our mental powers. Such are the dispensations of God to man, the decrees of God, the mysteries connected with election, the origin of moral evil, and the freedom of the human will: all which are certainly among the things in Paul's writings which are *δυσνόητα*—"hard to be understood." And not only in those epistles which are peculiarly doctrinal, as the Galatians and Romans, but even still more in the later epistles, as the Ephesians and Colossians, where the dogmatic element is less apparent, there is a depth of meaning which it is extremely difficult to fathom.<sup>2</sup>

Another obvious characteristic of Paul's style is its *refine-*

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, *δίκαιος, πίστις, χάρις, σωτηρία, σάρξ, πνεῦμα, οἰκοδομεῖν, διάβολος, εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, ἐκκλησία, Χριστός*. See Cremer's *Biblisch-Theologisches Wörterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Gräcität*, a translation of which has been published by T. & T. Clark. Since the translation was made, there is a second German edition.

<sup>2</sup> An extreme instance of obscurity is seen in Gal. iii. 20, to which, according to Meyer, 430 different meanings have been assigned.

*ment.* The courtesy and tenderness of the apostle are distinctly impressed upon his writings. Thus, in censuring his converts, he does so with extreme reluctance: he softens his rebukes, he makes every allowance for them, he yearns over them as a father over his prodigal children; and he who stood undaunted before kings and rulers, writes to his erring disciples with many tears (2 Cor. ii. 4; Phil. iii. 18). The same refinement is visible in the self-commendations forced on him by the unjust aspersions of his enemies. He often interrupts the train of thought by such expressions as, "I speak as a fool;" "ye have compelled me;" and in describing the visions which were vouchsafed to him, he speaks in the third person, "I knew a man in Christ." And in alluding to shameful vices and sins, which ought not to be even named among Christians, but were practised by the heathen without shame, he does so with a refined delicacy and a modest reserve.<sup>1</sup>

Another feature in Paul's style, adverted to by critics, is what is termed *paronomasia*. It has been remarked that there is a frequent play upon words, or a choice of words from a similarity of sound,—a feature which is often lost in translation, from the impossibility of retaining these *paronomasiæ*.<sup>2</sup> This imparts a liveliness and a terseness to the apostle's writings. Perhaps too much has been made of this peculiarity; but still, any one who reads the Pauline epistles in the original with attention may see traces of it.<sup>3</sup>

Another characteristic of Paul's writings is his *frequent citation of the Old Testament*. The references to the Old Testament in the sacred writings—as, for example, in the epistles of Peter and James—are perhaps as numerous as in the Pauline epistles; but, with the exception of the evangelist Matthew, no writer directly quotes so often as Paul from the sacred books of the Jews. In the Epistle to the Romans, for example, there are said to be fifty-three direct quotations.

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, vii. 1-7; 2 Cor. vii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> But also sometimes illegitimately inserted, as: Be not conformed (συσχηματίζεσθε) to this world; but be ye transformed (μεταμορφωσθε) by the renewing of your mind (Rom. xii. 2).

<sup>3</sup> For examples of *paronomasiæ*, see Rom. i. 20, v. 19; 1 Cor. vii. 31; 2 Cor. iv. 8, v. 4; Phil. iii. 2, 3; 2 Thess. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 4; Philem. 11.



This is a proof not only that the apostle was thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament, but that he had a great aptness in its application:<sup>1</sup> perhaps the result of his training in the rabbinical school of Gamaliel. It is also to be observed that, when writing to those churches which we know from other grounds to have been chiefly composed of Gentile converts, there are no quotations from the Old Testament,—as, for example, in the Epistles to the Thessalonians and Philippians,—an incidental proof of the genuineness of these epistles. The quotations themselves are generally taken from the Septuagint. Paul was doubtless well acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures, and could read them freely; but he was a Hellenist, whose native language was Greek, and therefore it was the Septuagint which he usually employed,—in the same manner as an English theologian, though well acquainted with his Greek Testament, in general quotes from the Anglican version.<sup>2</sup>

Paul's Greek is certainly not pure or classical. There are many *anacolutha*, or false constructions, in his writings. This arose chiefly from the insertion of parenthetical clauses. When he returns to his original topic, the syntactical connection is often overlooked, and the sentence is continued by a different construction. Perhaps this may be also partially due to the fact that Paul dictated his epistles. These *anacolutha* do not exhibit a want of knowledge of Greek, for other portions of the epistles prove Paul's mastery of the language, but only a certain carelessness of style. The absorption of his thought in the object caused him to overlook linguistic niceties. He was evidently a rapid composer, and did not aim at purity of style. There are also sufficient Hebraisms to prove that the epistles are the writings of a Jew; yet these are not so numerous as in some other of the writers of the New Testament, and are nearly all taken from the Septuagint. Some critics put too much importance on this Hebraistic element, and often regard certain expressions as Hebraistic which are

<sup>1</sup> Compare the character given to Apollos, *δυνατὴς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*.

<sup>2</sup> See Jowett's *Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 401–416; essay "On the Quotations from the Old Testament in the Writings of St. Paul." See also remarks on Paul's quotations from the Old Testament in Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 310 ff.

pure Greek, and thus destroy the beauty and force of the expression. Jerome asserts that there are also Cilicisms in the epistles.<sup>1</sup> Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia; and although Greek was the native language of Cilicia, yet we may reasonably conclude that it was not free from provincialisms. Jerome accordingly remarks that several provincial terms are to be found in the Pauline epistles, and that these idioms were used in Cilicia even in his own age. He gives as examples, ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας (1 Cor. iv. 3), οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν (2 Cor. xii. 13), and μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς κατεβραβεύετω (Col. ii. 18). Whether, however, he has proved his point has been questioned by scholars; and, indeed, from our ignorance of what are proper Cilicisms, it must remain always doubtful.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the occasional obscurity in Paul's style, yet his vigour and fervour,—his intellectual grasp of the subject,—rank him high among eloquent writers. Longinus ranks Paul of Tarsus with Demosthenes, Isocrates, and the first orators of ancient times.<sup>3</sup> And certainly there are specimens in Paul's speeches and writings, which, viewed merely as pieces of oratory, will bear a comparison with the writings of the most celebrated rhetoricians of antiquity.<sup>4</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles we have examples of his speeches: his oration to the Athenians on Mars' hill, his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, and his apology before Festus and Agrippa, are specimens of true oratory. And in his epistles there are passages which can scarcely be equalled by the finest writers of antiquity. For example, the description of the Christian life and hopes in the eighth chapter of the Romans, the

<sup>1</sup> *Quæstiones ad Algasiam*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> See Michaelis' *Introduction to N. T.*, translated by Marsh, vol. i. p. 151, "Of the Cilicisms discovered in the Writings of St. Paul."

<sup>3</sup> Longinus, *Frag.* I. The genuineness of this fragment has been questioned, but is defended by Hug and other eminent critics.

<sup>4</sup> "When," observes Beza, "I more narrowly consider the whole genius and character of Paul's style, I must confess that I have found no such sublimity of speaking in Plato himself, as often as the apostle is pleased to thunder out the mysteries of God; no exquisiteness of vehemence in Demosthenes equal to his, as often as he had a mind either to terrify men with a dread of the divine judgments, or to admonish them concerning their conduct, or to allure them to the contemplation of the divine benignity, or to excite them to the duties of piety and morality."

masterly personification of charity in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the statement of the doctrine of the resurrection in the fifteenth chapter of the same epistle, and his apology of himself in the twelfth chapter of Second Corinthians; all these are passages distinguished alike for sublimity of sentiment and beauty of diction. Besides these larger portions, there are numerous other smaller pieces of exquisite beauty, which prove that the apostle was a master of eloquence; as, for example, when he asserts that believers shall be transformed by the contemplation of Christ, in the following terms: "We all, with unveiled face beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transfigured into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18); and when he thus describes the nature of the raised bodies of believers: "Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned into the body of His glory, according to the working of His power, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

Whilst such is the general style of the apostle,—argumentative, fervent, vigorous, refined, yet somewhat obscure,—we find at the same time that he suits himself to those to whom he writes, and so adapts his style to their various peculiarities. Thus there are specialities in the different epistles; each is distinguished by its own style and diction. For example, the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians are dogmatic, and the Epistle to the Galatians in particular is likewise polemical. In the two Epistles to the Corinthians, tender expostulation is the predominant element; the apostle mourns over his erring converts, and seeks to restore them in the spirit of love. In the Epistle to the Philippians we see more of the inner sympathy of the apostle than in any of his other epistles; he is evidently writing to his favourite church. In the Epistles to the Thessalonians the same spirit of love is seen combined with anxiety about the spiritual welfare of his converts. In the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, the subjective phase of Christianity is displayed. In the Epistle to Philemon, we notice especially the courtesy of the apostle. And in the Pastoral Epistles there is greater particularity than in the other epistles; they are official letters

relating to the duties of the office-bearers of the Church. But still in all, the peculiar characteristics of Paul's style are more or less discernible.

Besides, there is in Paul's epistles a certain uniformity in order and method, which distinguishes them from the other sacred writings.<sup>1</sup> After saluting the particular church by name, and invoking grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> the apostle first renders thanks to God for what good is in the Church, and for what God has wrought for it,—the *Danksagung* of the epistle, as the Germans express it.<sup>3</sup> He then enters upon the main topic—the design of his writing; and this main portion is generally divided into two parts, the first doctrinal, and the second practical. The conclusion is occupied with salutations, informations, and directions; and the epistle closes as it commenced, with invoking the blessing of God: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”<sup>4</sup>

There are other minor peculiarities. In nearly all the epistles to the churches, the apostle associates others with himself in the salutation; the only exception to this being the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians. Though this is the case, yet it is undoubted that the sentiments are those of the apostle only, and not the conjoint expressions of himself and those associated with him. Paul also appears to have dictated his epistles. Thus one Tertius was the amanuensis employed in writing the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xvi. 22).<sup>5</sup> To this the Epistle to the Galatians is an exception, for the apostle informs us that he himself wrote it (Gal.

<sup>1</sup> On this point see Ewald's *Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus*, pp. 5–11; and Reuss' *Geschichte der heil. Sch. N. T.*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> The apostle commences all his epistles with invoking grace and peace for his converts. In the pastoral epistles, however, it is grace, mercy, and peace. In Tit. i. 4 the reading is doubtful.

<sup>3</sup> This is omitted in the Epistle to the Galatians.

<sup>4</sup> We find a similar salutation, containing the word grace, at the close of all the Pauline epistles. Bishop Wordsworth supposes that this is the token which Paul attached to every epistle; and he derives from this a proof of the Pauline origin of the Hebrews.

<sup>5</sup> Ewald supposes that Timothy was the chief amanuensis whom Paul employed, and that this is the reason why he is so often conjoined with him in the epistles.

vi. 11).<sup>1</sup> Paul authenticated the epistles by writing the concluding salutation: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (2 Thess. iii. 17, 18.)

Lists of Pauline words and phrases have been given by several critics.<sup>2</sup> Too much stress ought not to be laid on them; as, although every writer may have a few favourite expressions, yet these alter as a man advances in life. And therefore to argue that an epistle is not genuine, because it is destitute of Pauline words and phrases,—even although that should be proved,—appears to be precarious reasoning.

In judging of the matter of Paul's epistles, we must always bear in mind their epistolary nature. None of them are treatises on Christianity; even the Epistle to the Romans must not be considered as a dissertation: they are all letters addressed to particular churches or individuals, often in answer to other letters received by the apostle. There is not in them the method which belongs to a treatise, but the freedom which is characteristic of epistolary composition. The statements of doctrine arise from the nature of the circumstances under which the apostle wrote. For example, the opposition of the Judaizing teachers among the Galatians caused him to assert the doctrine of justification in his epistle to that Church; the errors of certain teachers, allied to those who afterwards appeared as Gnostics, called forth the statements concerning the nature of Christ in the Epistle to the Colossians; and the denial of the resurrection among the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 12) was the cause of the sublime exposition of this doctrine in the first epistle to that Church.

It is an interesting question whether there is any *difference in matter* between Paul's earlier and later epistles? This has been variously regarded by different writers, according to their preconceived views of the nature and extent of inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> Others suppose that the Epistle to the Galatians is not an exception, and that Gal. vi. 11 only refers to the concluding portion of the epistle. See Professor Lightfoot's Commentary, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of Pauline words and phrases, see Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 155, 156; De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 270.

When we compare the earlier epistles, especially Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, and Galatians, with the "epistles of the captivity,"—namely, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians,—we think that we can discern a certain difference. The earlier epistles are more controversial, more directly opposed to the doctrine of false teachers, more objective, so to speak, than the epistles of the captivity.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this difference may be accounted for by the change of circumstances under which the earlier and later epistles were written. The "earlier epistles" were written when Paul was in the full bustle of the world, engaged in his missionary journeys. The "epistles of the captivity" were composed in retirement, when he was Paul the aged, withdrawn from the world, and confined as a prisoner at Rome. In the later epistles also the apostle dwells more upon Christ's nature, His divinity, His creation of the world, His pre-eminence above all creatures, His being in the form of God, His glorious exaltation (Eph. i. 20–23, iii. 9; Phil. ii. 6–11; Col. ii. 9, 10). There is, however, not the slightest indication of any change in Paul's opinions; it is the same gospel, indeed the same Pauline phase of Christianity, that appears in all his epistles. Some suppose that Paul altered his views concerning the second coming of Christ: that in his earlier epistles he expressed his belief that he and the majority of those whom he was addressing might be alive at the time of the Lord's advent (1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.), but that in his later epistles he renounced this hope, and expressed his willingness to depart (Phil. i. 23).<sup>2</sup> The full consideration of this opinion is reserved to another portion of this work;<sup>3</sup> but meantime it need only be remarked that it seems a groundless hypothesis, unwarranted by the words of the apostle.

But another question arises: Allowing that there is a difference in matter between the earlier and the later epistles, can we trace in that difference a development of the apostle's teaching? Are his views of Christianity more enlarged, more

<sup>1</sup> Were it not for certain expressions in the Epistle to the Romans, especially in the eighth chapter, we would be inclined to say that the "epistles of the captivity" were more *spiritual*—related more in the inner life—more *Johannean*, so to speak, than the "earlier epistles."

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen *On the Romans*, p. 11; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 527.

<sup>3</sup> See special introduction to the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

symmetrical, more complete, in the later epistles? It can hardly be affirmed that this question is at once to be dismissed and answered in the negative, as being incompatible with the inspiration of the apostle. Inspiration does not necessarily exclude development. For all that we know, revelation might be progressive in the minds of the apostles, just as it was in the Church generally—Christianity itself being but a development of Judaism. The inspired apostles might grow in religious knowledge, as they undoubtedly did in holiness. Higher revelations might from time to time be vouchsafed to them. Nay, we find that in one remarkable instance this was actually the case. Even after the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and after the minds of the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, their views concerning the relation of the Gentiles to Judaism were obscure, and it required a new revelation to convince Peter that the Gentiles could be admitted into the Christian Church without circumcision. But although there seems nothing in the idea of a progressive revelation inconsistent with inspiration, yet we have completely failed to trace any such development in the writings of Paul.<sup>1</sup> His earlier epistles are as full as his later; nay, if it were asked which was the most developed of Paul's epistles, the answer would probably be, the Epistle to the Romans. Although Paul may dwell more in his later epistles on the exalted nature of Christ, yet the same sentiments are expressed in outline in his earlier writings.<sup>2</sup>

It is also to be observed, that not only is the style of Paul different from that of the other sacred writers, but there is also a peculiarity in the views which he takes of divine truth: there is a Pauline phase of Christianity. Although all the sacred writers were inspired by the same Spirit, and wrote the same divine truths, none of them being at variance with or contradicting another, so that the whole of their writings may be considered as the product of the divine mind; yet we

<sup>1</sup> This against Usteri's view of the development of Paul's doctrine—*Entwicklung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffes*.

<sup>2</sup> There is here no development, as if Paul's views of the nature of Christ became more enlarged; but in the later epistles he was induced to dwell upon this subject from the circumstances of the churches to which he wrote, which only then gave occasion for a written exposition of these views.

must not suppose that the faculties of the sacred writers were entirely superseded, so that they lost all voluntary agency, and were converted into mere machines—the amanuenses, so to speak, of the Holy Ghost. Such a mechanical view of inspiration has no foundation in the sacred writings themselves, is contradicted by their contents, and opposed to the free agency of man. We find, on examination, that each writer preserves his own style and mental qualities; and although all exhibit one gospel, yet each presents a peculiar phase of Christianity. Thus, in the four Gospels, Matthew gives us the life of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews, the prophet like unto Moses; Mark describes Him as the Son of God, authenticating His mission by the working of miracles; Luke, as the Saviour of the human race, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; and John, as the eternal Logos, dwelling chiefly upon His internal life. So also the writers of the Epistles differ from each other in their representation of Christian doctrine. There are especially three distinct phases of Christianity—the Pauline, the Johannean, and the Jacobean.<sup>1</sup> Paul is the apostle of faith, John of love, and James of works. The grand peculiar doctrine of Paul is justification by faith; of John, spiritual union with Christ; and of James, the necessity of practical religion. “To disown these phases,” observes Nitzsch, “in favour of a one-sided dogmatism, is to abandon that completeness and solidity which these modes of contemplating the Christian faith impart, while they reciprocally complete one another; it is to slight that by which Scripture truth maintains its elevation above all conflicting systems.”<sup>2</sup>

The two most important and distinct phases of Christianity are the Pauline and the Johannean. Although Paul and John, inspired by the same Spirit, announce the same glorious truths, yet they express themselves each according to his peculiar gifts and character. John presents the *subjective*, and Paul the *objective* phase of Christianity. Contemplation is the peculiar

<sup>1</sup> Some writers also distinguish a Petrine phase of Christianity, and regard Peter as the apostle of hope, whose peculiar doctrine is a future life; but the Petrine phase is not so distinctly marked as the other three.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 414.



feature of John's character: he discourses entirely on the spiritual aspect of Christianity; he addresses himself to the affections. Paul, on the other hand, though not devoid of a contemplative nature, appeals chiefly to the intellect.<sup>1</sup> John dwells on what is revealed to us of God and Christ—he discloses the heart of God; Paul on what is revealed of the divine dealings to the human race—he makes known to us the way of salvation. The abuse of the one system is mysticism; the abuse of the other is rationalism. John is in a peculiar sense the apostle of Eastern, and Paul of Western Christianity. "As the grain of corn," observes Olshausen, "though one, opens itself into two halves on the unfolding of the grain, or as the magnet from a middle point discharges at the same time a positive and a negative power; so the two chief tendencies of the Church—the Eastern and the Western—which mutually complete each other, are represented in the earlier ages by the great apostles, John and Paul."<sup>2</sup>

No one can attentively read the Epistle to the Romans without discerning that Paul has formed a well-developed system of theology. He proceeds in this epistle, step by step, to unfold the principles of Christianity. "Paul," observes Olshausen, "is the author of a precisely defined doctrinal language, and the founder of theology, as a science, in the Church of Christ. In him is represented the necessity of science for the Church, even in the very narrow circle of those on whom the Holy Spirit was first poured forth."<sup>3</sup> Paul is not merely by his moral earnestness and missionary labours the Luther, but also by his theology, as disclosed in his writings, the Calvin of the primitive Church. He combines in himself, in a much higher degree than either, the qualities of these two great leaders of the Reformation, without their faults; he unites the characters of the devoted missionary and the profound theologian; and whilst we admire and value his unparalleled labours for the cause of Christ, we owe still more

<sup>1</sup> As the Germans would express it, *Vernunft* was the organ of John, and *Verstand* that of Paul.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen, *An die Römer*, p. 13, and p. 10 in the excellent translation of that commentary. According to others, Petrinism is the Church of the middle ages, Paulinism the Protestant Church, and Johanneanism the Church of the future.

<sup>3</sup> Olshausen *On the Romans*, p. 9.

to those writings which he has left as the inheritance of the Church.

#### IV. INTERPRETATION OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

The interpretation of the Pauline epistles is a subject of great consequence and peculiar interest. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of these writings, or the necessity of exercising great care in their interpretation. They form the most important record of the doctrines of Christianity, and a very considerable part of divine revelation, constituting nearly one-half of the books of the New Testament. Nor is their interpretation so simple a task as might at first sight appear. We have to contend not only with the difficulties proper to the author,—the peculiar Greek dialect, of which there are elsewhere few remains,—the style, though masculine and powerful, yet somewhat involved and obscure,—and the matter often profound and difficult of apprehension ; but we have also to take into account the element of inspiration which distinguishes the sacred writings from all other books, and it is an inquiry of considerable difficulty how far this element affects or modifies the ordinary rules of interpretation. Accordingly, in point of fact, very different ideas of interpretation have been adopted in the Christian Church ; and, probably as a consequence, the most opposite opinions in theology claim support from the epistles of Paul.

It is evident that, whatever modification may be necessitated by the element of inspiration, *the ordinary methods of interpretation* must be applied in the first instance. A book written in a dead language is handed down to us from a remote period, and we have to endeavour to ascertain its true meaning. First of all, it is necessary to obtain a pure and authentic text, so far as that is possible ; and for that purpose we must examine manuscripts, versions, quotations, and apply in that examination just the same tests as we would were we determining the text of Homer or Sophocles. The next task is to obtain the true sense of the words, and to attend to the true force of the construction ; and the more minutely we do

so, the more accurate will be our translation. In this work of translation, we must pay special attention to the niceties of the peculiar dialect of the New Testament, and the divergencies of meaning which words may have undergone. Here, also, we must make use of everything that can throw light on Paul's epistles, such as the topography of the places mentioned, the history of the times, and the manners and customs of the age and of the different nations referred to. And we must interpret contextually, not regarding the statements of the apostle as mere abstract declarations, nor resting any argument on detached expressions, but looking narrowly at the context, and thus endeavouring to give to the precepts and doctrines of Paul's epistles their true and full significance.

We must also interpret Paul *in consistency with himself*; that is, we must not make him say one thing in one part of his writings, and another thing in another. This is a general canon of criticism which applies to all works. It is, of course, not in general to be affirmed without qualification, for there is nothing unusual in an author holding and expressing different opinions at different times, while some development or modification of view is inevitable; but there is a certain consistency in a writer of any mark, which ought as much as possible to be recognised and respected. Thus, in a passage of doubtful interpretation, we rightly give a preference to that meaning which is in harmony with the views of the writer elsewhere expressed. But this rule is especially applicable to the writings of Paul; because, as we shall afterwards see, inspiration at once supposes and guarantees consistency, and prevents the writer from contradicting himself. Therefore, if a difficulty occur in any passage; if, when grammatically rendered, it seem to admit of more than one meaning; and if the context throw no light on it, that meaning is to be preferred which is in correspondence with Paul's usual mode of thought. Not that by this is meant that we must first form a general conception of the Pauline phase of Christianity, and then bring Paul's writings into harmony with it, but merely that in doubtful passages the consistency of the apostle should be preserved. What is true of the apostle's sentiments is also true of his words—the *usus scribendi* of the writer. Words

and phrases which admit of a certain variety in meaning, and which, from the particular passages in which they occur, are of somewhat doubtful import, are to be taken in that sense in which the apostle elsewhere employs them.

One great requisite for the interpretation of Paul's epistles is *candour*. From various causes, and especially from sectarian bias, we are liable to err in this particular; and, indeed, it is difficult for one who has adopted a peculiar creed to come to the study of biblical interpretation without prepossession. Still it is evidently the duty of the true interpreter not to come with a preconceived creed, and to force Paul into an agreement with it, softening what is harsh, modifying what seems to be opposed, and giving unnatural meanings in order to get rid of difficulties. But he must reverse the process, and come to the study of Scripture with an unprejudiced mind and a susceptible heart, and derive his creed directly from it; to find out without prepossession Paul's opinions from his own writings: not to assert dogmatically that such must be the meaning of Paul, because such is the doctrine we believe; but the reverse, such is the doctrine we believe, because such is the obvious meaning of Paul. Not what we think should be meant, but what the apostle really means, ought to be the object of inquiry. "We must not," says Luther, "make God's word mean what we wish: we must not bend it, but allow it to bend us, and give it the honour of being better than we can make it, so that we must let it stand." This evident rule has often been violated by sectarian efforts. A Unitarian will force Paul to teach Unitarianism, a Romanist Romanism, a Lutheran Lutheranism, a Calvinist Calvinism, an Arminian Arminianism, and an Anglican Anglicanism. Each one comes with his rule, and squares Paul's writings so as to harmonize with it; explains away what is apparently opposed, and magnifies what is apparently in agreement; often indeed unconsciously, but frequently also with an evident purpose.

It is especially necessary for the student of Paul's epistles to sympathize with and endeavour to put himself in the place of those whom the apostle addresses. The writings of Paul are letters to certain churches, written with an evident design

of being understood by them, whatever ulterior design the Spirit of God may have intended in their composition.<sup>1</sup> We must therefore, by a combined act of the imagination and judgment, put ourselves into the state of those to whom the epistles were first written; we must try and realize their circumstances, feel their wants and difficulties, picture to ourselves their internal and external condition, and examine especially those occurrences which occasioned the composition of the epistles. Just as the true historian throws himself back into the times of which he writes, enters into the feelings of those times, imbibes their spirit and politics, lives in thought at that period; so must the true interpreter of the epistles of Paul transfer himself to the age of the apostle, visit those churches which he has planted, try and understand their views and difficulties, their temptations from the corruptions of the heathen world without, and from the proselytizing zeal of false teachers within. Take, for the sake of illustration, the First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is evidently impossible fully to understand it, unless we realize the state of the Corinthian Church—the converts of whom it was composed, the factions which were formed within it, the corruptions of life and the errors of doctrine which had arisen, the questions which perplexed them, the abuses which arose in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, the disorders in their public worship, the false teachers who had entered in among them, and the relation in which they stood to the apostle; and, in short, become, as it were, a member of the Church of Corinth, at the time the apostle wrote this epistle. It is evident that the more thoroughly this mental process is gone through, the more qualified will we be to understand the epistle.

<sup>1</sup> There is considerable truth in the remark of Professor Jowett, when restricted to Paul's epistles, that "the office of the interpreter is not to add another (to the numerous interpretations which have been given), but to recover the original one; the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears, or flashed before the eyes, of those who first heard and read them."—*Essays and Reviews*, p. 338. Not, however, that it can be affirmed that those to whom the epistles were written perfectly understood their full meaning; that, probably, was impossible from the nature of the truths they contained, and, we may also believe, on account of the ulterior design of the Spirit who inspired them.

Not only must we sympathize with those to whom the apostle wrote, but also with the apostle in writing. We must put ourselves in his position. His writings are not abstract treatises on Christianity, but vivid and living appeals, called forth by particular and, in general, pressing circumstances. We must inquire into the circumstances which occasioned the writing of these epistles; what the definite purpose was which the apostle had in view; in other words, we must try and discover the *design* of each epistle. We shall thus be the better enabled to enter into its spirit, to trace its train of thought, to follow its arguments, and to understand the emotions expressed. Thus, for example, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we must inquire what the apostle felt when he heard of the corruptions, disorders, and factions of the Corinthian Church, the mixture of indignation and pity which must have filled his soul, his earnest longings toward the Corinthians, similar to the feelings experienced by a fond mother at hearing the excesses of her prodigal son. And hence we can clearly understand and appreciate that stern invective and that persuasive tenderness which, like alternate shades and lights, are impressed upon this epistle. And hence it further follows, that no one can fully understand Paul's epistles without a correct appreciation of his character.

Much of what has been hitherto said applies, in a greater or less degree, to all criticism, at least to criticism unmodified by the element of inspiration. It is, however, necessary to consider what modification in the rules of interpretation that element introduces. Many biblical interpreters refuse to admit of any modification; their words imply that we must interpret Scripture as any ordinary book; that precisely the same rules are applicable to it as are applicable to the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*. This appears to be the meaning of Professor Jowett in his remarkable essay on the "Interpretation of Scripture." "The interpretation of Scripture," he observes, "has nothing to do with any opinion respecting its origin. The meaning of Scripture is one thing; the inspiration of Scripture is another. It is conceivable that those who hold the most different views about the one, may be able to agree about the other. . . . The question of inspiration, though in one sense important, is to

the interpreter as though it were not important; he is in no way called upon to determine a matter with which he has nothing to do, and which was not determined by the Fathers of the Church. And he had better go on his way, and leave the more precise definition of the word to the progress of knowledge and the results of the study of Scripture, instead of entangling himself with a theory about it."<sup>1</sup> All this is very unsatisfactory. It would rather appear that a biblical critic cannot avoid the question, Whether, assuming inspiration, the ordinary rules of interpretation are entirely applicable? It is absolutely necessary either to reject the doctrine; or if, on the contrary, it be accepted, to consider how it affects the question of interpretation. It seems impossible (as Professor Jowett appears to do) both to accept and to ignore it.

It is entirely foreign to this work to enter upon any lengthened discussion of the doctrine of inspiration, either in proof of its truth, or in explanation of its nature and extent. That task belongs to the department of dogmatics. Our blessed Lord, on the eve of His departure, promised such an inspiration to His apostles: the Holy Spirit was to enlighten their minds in the knowledge of the truth, to guide them into all truth, to show them things to come, to reveal those "many things" which Christ had not disclosed, and to assist them in their defences before kings and rulers. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 25, 26). As it was promised by our Lord, so it was claimed by the apostles. "All Scripture," says Paul, referring to the Jewish Scriptures, "is given by inspiration of

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 350, 351. So also, in the same essay he observes: "*Interpret the Scripture like any other book.* There are many respects in which Scripture is unlike any other book: these will appear in the results of such an interpretation" (p. 377). "Scripture, like other books, has one meaning, which is to be gathered from itself, without reference to the adaptations of fathers or divines, and without regard to *à priori* notions about its nature or origin. It is to be interpreted like other books, with attention to the character of its authors, and the prevailing state of civilisation and knowledge, with allowance for peculiarities of style and language, and modes of thought and figures of speech" (p. 404).

God" (θεόπνευστος, 2 Tim. iii. 16). And Peter, speaking of the prophets of the Old Testament, says: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). Now, what is true of the Old Testament also holds good of the New. The apostles regarded their writings as holy scriptures (2 Pet. iii. 16), and ranked them along with those of the prophets (Eph. ii. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 11). Paul especially, in numerous passages in his epistles, asserts his own inspiration—that the gospel which he taught was made known to him by revelation; that, in short, it was not so much he, Paul, who spoke and wrote, as the Holy Ghost who was the inspirer of his words and writings.<sup>1</sup> "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 7, 13). And again: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 11, 12).

If we explain away these strong assertions of the apostle, and consider inspiration merely as "the idea of Scripture which each man gathers from his knowledge of it," and as being compatible with opposite views of truth, with the sacred writers changing their minds and correcting themselves, and with numerous errors and variations of fact,<sup>2</sup> then we admit that such an inspiration cannot modify our method of interpretation, and indeed it is a matter of little consequence whether the sacred writers were thus inspired or not. The nature of inspiration is, indeed, left in Scripture undefined. We do not know how the Holy Spirit acted upon the minds of the apostles. Evidently it was not by superseding their faculties; but rather by so adapting His influences, that to each sacred writer were left his own style and mental peculiarities:

<sup>1</sup> This is not contradicted by 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, where the apostle makes a distinction between his words and those of the Lord. He there means that in the one case the Lord Himself had already decided (1 Cor. vii. 10); but in the other case the Lord had determined nothing, and therefore he, the inspired apostle, gave his judgment (1 Cor. vii. 12).

<sup>2</sup> See Jowett's "Essay on Interpretation," *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 346-348.



these were not abolished, but permeated by the Spirit. The freedom of the writers was not destroyed, but guided, directed, and controlled by influences from above. And so also the extent of inspiration is left undefined. We cannot assert, with some, that it extended only to the thoughts and ideas, but not to the words—that it was an inspiration of suggestion: because the meaning of an expression often depends not merely on the selection of a single word, but also on the particular tense of a verb, the insertion or omission of the article, and the choice of a particular particle; and generally, an alteration of the words is an alteration of the sense. But one thing appears evident, that inspiration must preclude all error either in doctrine or in morals. An inspiration which is consistent with error is a contradiction in terms; for there can be no possible criteria by which we can judge whether the doctrinal statements of the sacred writers are true or false. If error were possible, certainly there could be no possible doctrinal system; truth would be a variable quantity; each man would be left to himself to choose what to accept and what to reject.

Now if this element of inspiration be admitted to exist, it cannot with any fairness be disregarded, but must of logical necessity materially modify our methods of interpretation; and, in particular, it appears that a certain quality of mind must be admitted in the interpretation of Scripture, which has no scope in the interpretation of any other book, and that is *faith*. We must come to the study of Scripture with a humble mind, not calling in question its declarations, however transcending the notions of our reason, but submitting our judgments to the announcements of infinite wisdom. In reading Paul's epistles, for example, we must do so under the impression that he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; that the doctrines which he taught were not the words of human wisdom, not the result of his own deliberations, but a revelation of the divine will; in short, they were God's thoughts expressed in human language. We must not attempt to explain away the deep things of Scripture, because we do not understand them; but receive and believe them according to the measure in which they are revealed. A

man's notion of the degree of inspiration will materially influence his judgment as an interpreter; he who denies or overlooks inspiration, must give a different explanation of the statements of gospel mysteries, from the man who admits that the apostles wrote under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and were kept free from error. Nowhere is this difference more perceptible than in the method of interpretation employed by Paulus of Heidelberg, and the school which he represents. As they denied the supernatural and miraculous, so they were constrained to explain away all allusions to miracles, and to have recourse to mere naturalistic explanations.

Further, by inspiration a *unity* is imparted, not only to all the writings of Paul, but to the whole of the books of Scripture. We are led to regard the word of God not merely as a collection of books, written at different times and by different persons, but also as one book, inspired by one Spirit. The same mind or Spirit pervades the whole: both the Old Testament and the New are one revelation. The Spirit of Christ, who inspired the apostles, spoke through the prophets. Just as the thirteen epistles of Paul are all the productions of the same apostle, and all bear the marks of the same master mind; so, in a higher sense, all the books of Scripture may be truly said to be the composition of one mind, namely the divine. But whilst there is this substantial unity of doctrine, there is also a variety of style and form. The sacred writers, indeed, taught the same gospel, yet each preserves his own style, his own marked peculiarities, his own views of sacred truth; but all harmonize; the one supplements the other; there is one Spirit and one gospel; all declare the words of eternal life. "The books of Scripture," observes Bengel, "were not handed down to us by chance or accident; neither are we to regard them only as a manual of sayings and examples, or as isolated relics of antiquity, from which no perfect whole, no comprehensive and finished plan, can be educed; but as a matchless regular account of God's dealings with man through every age of the world, from the commencement to the end of time, even to the consummation of all things. They indicate together one beautiful, harmonious, and gloriously connected system. For though each scriptural book is in

itself something entire, and though each of the inspired penmen has his own manner and style of writing, one and the same Spirit breathes through all; one grand idea pervades all.”<sup>1</sup>

Now from this it follows, that as we interpret any particular writer in consistency with himself, so we must interpret Scripture *in consistency with itself*; or, as it is otherwise expressed, “the Bible is its own interpreter.” Truth must ever be consistent; and therefore, as Scripture contains only truth, one passage of Scripture cannot contradict another: there can be no conflicting truths; there must be a reconciling principle between two apparently conflicting propositions. Hence we are entitled, in the interpretation of Scripture, to compare the writings of one apostle with those of another, and to draw our views from the whole. The principle here stated is the canon usually given by biblical critics, that we should *interpret according to the analogy of faith*.<sup>2</sup> Its import is thus clearly stated by Dr. Campbell: “When a passage appears ambiguous, or is susceptible of different interpretations, that interpretation is to be adopted which is most conformable to the whole scheme of religion, in respect both of doctrine and of precepts, delivered in the sacred oracles.”<sup>3</sup> Thus stated, there is nothing objectionable in the rule. It is the same principle applied to Scripture as a whole on the ground of its inspiration, which we apply to a particular book. Still the principle is apt to be abused, and must be very cautiously employed. It can only be of use when there is an ambiguity in the interpretation, and when the true meaning cannot otherwise be obtained.

Various objections have been made to this principle of interpretation. It is asserted that we set up tradition as a standard of interpretation,—as, for example, when we employ the “Apostles’ Creed” as a rule of faith; that we commit

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Remains of Bengel*, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> The expression “analogy of faith” is derived from Scripture—*κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως* (Rom. xii. 6). But it may be questioned if it is happily chosen. It is ambiguous, and liable to be abused. It would be more advisable to say, “that Scripture is to be interpreted in consistency with itself.”

<sup>3</sup> Campbell’s *Fourth Dissertation*. See also Fairbairn’s *Hermeneutical Manual*, pp. 103–109; Ernesti’s *Institutes*, translated by Bishop Terrot.

an anachronism by attributing to the sacred writers abstract notions of Christian truth, which sprang up after their days in the Christian Church ;<sup>1</sup> that we are reasoning in a circle, first forming a creed from Scripture, and then interpreting Scripture in conformity with that creed ; and that such a rule is at variance with the spirit of candour, which is so essential a requisite in the case of every interpreter of Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

It is not to be denied that there is some plausibility in the above objections, and there is no doubt whatever that this principle of the analogy of faith has been often abused. But the abuse of a principle ought not to prevent the cautious use of it. We are not first to form a creed, and then to square our interpretations of Scripture in conformity with it ; but in doubtful interpretations, it is permissible to be guided by the general scope and spirit of Scripture, and to use those passages which are clear and simple for the purpose of elucidating those which are dark and obscure.

It has already been observed, as one great rule of interpretation, that in reading the epistles of Paul we must acquaint ourselves with the circumstances of those to whom he wrote ; but we have now arrived at a higher idea of these epistles, and must regard them as designed, not for the good of this or that particular church, but for the use of the Church universal. For example, it was not merely to correct certain disorders in the Church of Corinth that the epistles to the Corinthians were written ; but in the intention of the Holy Ghost, the primary author of the epistles, it was for the guidance of the Church at large ; and hence these epistles are to be interpreted with a view to this higher employment of them. "The Scriptures," observes Lord Bacon, "being written to the thoughts

<sup>1</sup> "To attribute to St. Paul or the twelve the abstract notion of Christian truth which afterwards sprang up in the Catholic Church, is the same sort of anachronism as to attribute to them a system of philosophy. It is the same error as to attribute to Homer the ideas of Thales or Heraclitus, or to Thales the more developed principles of Aristotle and Plato."—Jowett, *Essays and Reviews*, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> These objections are well and forcibly stated by Principal Campbell in his fourth preliminary dissertation. He represents "the analogy of faith" as importing that we first form a system of doctrine for ourselves,—as, for example, that of Luther, Calvin, or Arminius,—and then go to Scripture, not to ascertain the true doctrine, but to find confirmation for the particular system adopted.

of man, and to the succession of all ages, are not to be interpreted only according to the latitude of the proper sense of the place, and respectively towards that present occasion whereupon the words were uttered, but have infinite springs and streams of doctrine to water the Church in every part ; so that I much condemn the interpretation of Scripture which is only after the manner as men use to interpret a profane book.”<sup>1</sup> Paul, indeed, may have been ignorant of this extended use of his epistles ; he may have had no thought of the universal Church, but only of the necessities of the particular churches to which he wrote ; in like manner as the prophets had no idea of ministering to later ages, while so earnestly addressing their own. It is not so much with what Paul intended that we have to do, as with what the Holy Ghost intended, and He certainly designed them for the edification of the Church of Christ.

In Paul’s epistles there are broad principles laid down, which admit of application to all ages and to all states of society : they are epistles not to Rome or Corinth merely, but to the human race. The disputes among the early Christians have passed away ; but the principles by which these disputes were settled abide. There is now no longer any controversy between clean and unclean meats ; but the noble principles of Christian charity and self-sacrifice, which Paul inculcated in connection with that controversy, are eternal. The disputes and heart-burnings as to the use of spiritual gifts are ended by the withdrawal of these gifts ; but the “more excellent way” which the apostle sketched out, the love which overcomes all disputes, remains. The bitter contentions between Paul and the Judaizing teachers have disappeared ; but the gospel of the apostle, the doctrine of free justification by faith in Christ which he asserted, is the everlasting inheritance of the Church. The party factions of the Corinthian Church have ceased ; but the great principles of Christian unity and toleration are indelibly written in the pages of inspiration for the instruction of Christians in all ages. The disorders which prevailed at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at Corinth can hardly be repeated ; but the exposition of that sacrament,

<sup>1</sup> Bacon *On the Advancement of Learning*, p. 265.

called forth by these disorders, is at once our warrant and our directory in the celebration of the holy communion. These applications, though they might not be discovered by the first readers, or even intended by the apostle, were designed by the Spirit, the inspirer of the epistles. In short, the spirit, all that is valuable in the epistles, remains, however much the circumstances which originated their composition may have changed.

From these remarks results another special requisite for a correct understanding of Paul's epistles, and that is a *religious spirit*.<sup>1</sup> The epistles of Paul were written for our use; they are a revelation to us from God; and to interpret them aright we must enter into their spirit, there must be a sympathy between our feelings and their contents. Nor is this special to our study of Paul's epistles or of the other sacred books of Scripture: it is true generally of all books, namely, that our disposition or attainments must bear a correspondence to the nature of the book which we study, in order to a full comprehension of its meaning. For example, a philosophical spirit is necessary for the study of Plato; a poetical spirit for a due appreciation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*; a logical and mathematical mind for the comprehension of the *Principia* of Newton; a sympathy with nature for relishing the poems of Wordsworth: so no less is it true, that a religious mind is an indispensable qualification for a true interpretation of the epistles of Paul. And thus we may understand, in some measure, what the apostle meant when he said: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Thus we require the assistance of a higher spirit than our own, even the Spirit of God, the great inspirer, to enable us to understand His word; we must be in sympathy with the great Author. *Pectus est quod theologum facit.*

<sup>1</sup> This over and above faith, the mere intellectual belief, in the truth of the statements already postulated.

## V. AUTHENTICITY OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

It is a point of primary importance to be fully satisfied that the epistles which profess to be written by Paul are really genuine; and accordingly it is the object of this section to examine the external and internal evidences bearing on the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles. It is to be observed that only the thirteen acknowledged epistles of Paul are here considered, excluding the fourteenth, or the Epistle to the Hebrews; because, though its Pauline origin may be probable, it does not directly profess to have been written by Paul, and because the question of its authorship was a matter of dispute in the early Church. The remarks made in this section are entirely general: the special consideration of the authenticity of each epistle, and the examination of the objections brought against it, are reserved as matters for future consideration.

Until a comparatively recent period, the authenticity of the thirteen Pauline Epistles was universally acknowledged in the Christian Church. In the primitive Church no doubt of their authorship appears to have been raised.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius (A.D. 315), in his classification of the books of the New Testament, ranks them among the *ὁμολογούμενα*, or those apostolic writings which were undisputed. Even those early heretical sects, such as the Ebionites, Encratites, and Severians, who rejected them as apostolic writings, did so not because they questioned their genuineness, but from purely dogmatic grounds, because they were opposed to their opinions.<sup>2</sup> With the Epistle to the Hebrews it was somewhat different. Whilst the thirteen epistles were universally admitted to have been written by Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews was assigned by some to one or other of the apostolic fathers, as Luke, Barnabas, or Clement. In recent times, however, the genuineness of several of Paul's

<sup>1</sup> De Wette observes: "Antiquity has unanimously received thirteen epistles of Paul as genuine; only the fourteenth, the Epistle to the Hebrews, was contested."—*Einführung*, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, p. 171. These heretics did not assert that the epistles were not written by Paul, but they regarded that apostle as a false teacher.

epistles has been questioned. The previous universal consent of the Christian Church, which had endured for centuries, has been disturbed, and a destructive criticism has sought to undermine this groundwork of our faith. The grounds of this criticism have been rather subjective than historical; indeed, the historical evidence has to a considerable extent been ignored. Certain epistles of Paul have been rejected, not because they were unsupported by external testimony, but rather because, in the opinion of the critics referred to, they are un-Pauline in their sentiments and expressions. This subjective and destructive mode of criticism was introduced by Semler, a Lutheran divine, toward the close of last century.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards objections were brought against particular books of the New Testament, and among them against some of Paul's epistles. Schleiermacher challenged the authenticity of First Timothy, and in this he was followed by Bleek, whilst Eichhorn rejected the "Pastoral Epistles" in general. De Wette objected to the Epistle to the Ephesians, Mayerhoff to the Epistle to the Colossians, and Schrader to Second Thessalonians. But still more recently the German rationalistic criticism has advanced far beyond such special and exceptional objections, and Baur, Schweigler, Zeller, and other writers of the Tübingen school, have by a process of speculation and internal criticism rejected the whole of the Pauline Epistles, except the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and the two Epistles to the Corinthians.<sup>2</sup>

1. In judging of the authenticity of a book, it is unquestionably the *external evidence* which is of paramount importance. Internal evidence affords, at best, evidence of a secondary kind. Now with regard to the Pauline Epistles, the external evidence is strong and convincing.

The first catalogue of Paul's epistles must be regarded, considering the obstacles to their diffusion, as an extremely early one, namely, that given by the Gnostic Marcion.

<sup>1</sup> *Untersuch. d. Kanon*, Halle, pp. 1771-75.

<sup>2</sup> These four epistles are all that Baur admits to be genuine. As already observed, he classifies the Pauline Epistles into *ἀπολογούμενα*, of which, according to him, there are these four; whilst the other nine belong to the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*. He considers the Pastoral Epistles as *νέα*.—*Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 276. Bruno Bauer went a step further, and denied the authenticity of all Paul's epistles.



Marcion, according to Eusebius, lived in the time of Polycarp, and was alive when Justin Martyr wrote his apology in the reign of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 108–140).<sup>1</sup> His heresy consisted in carrying Paulinism to an extreme. He considered the God of the Jews, whom he named *δημιουργός*, as an inferior being to the God and Father of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> In conformity with these views, he rejected all the books of the New Testament except the Gospel of Luke (which he is accused of corrupting) and some of the Pauline Epistles. His *Apostolicon* omitted the "Pastoral Epistles" and the Epistle to the Hebrews, but contained the other ten epistles of Paul. The order in which he enumerated them, according to Epiphanius, was as follows: Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, First and Second Thessalonians, Ephesians (which he called the Epistle to the Laodiceans), Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.<sup>3</sup> It is not easy to assign a reason for his omission of the "Pastoral Epistles;" but considering the summary way in which he treated the other books of the New Testament, it cannot be regarded as an argument against their genuineness: he was guided not by critical rules, but by his dogmatic opinions.<sup>4</sup>

The next catalogue is the Muratorian Canon. This celebrated fragment, mutilated both at the beginning and end, first published by Muratori in 1740,<sup>5</sup> was discovered in the Ambrosian library in Milan. It is in a manuscript of the seventh century, in the Latin language, and is by the best critics supposed to be a translation from the Greek of a writ-

<sup>1</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 14 and iv. 11. According to Bleek, Marcion formed his system not later than A.D. 140.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of Marcion and his views, see Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. i. pp. 139–154; Lardner's *Works*, vol. iv. pp. 589–611; Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 129 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Epiphan. *hær.* xlii. 9; Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, p. 363. The same order in Marcion's catalogue is given by Tertullian, except that Philippians precedes Philemon.—*Adv. Marc.* v. It is utterly improbable that Marcion was the first to collect the Pauline Epistles: the collection was already formed, and he made a selection from it.

<sup>4</sup> The Pastoral Epistles were anti-Gnostic in their sentiments, and therefore must have been offensive to the Gnostic Marcion.

<sup>5</sup> *Antiquitates Italice*, iii. 851 ff., Milan 1740. Since then it has been frequently reprinted, and translated into various languages. Not only is it a fragment, but the text is much corrupted.

ing belonging to the second century.<sup>1</sup> It professes to have been written by a contemporary of Pius I., Bishop of Rome, and is therefore to be placed about the year A.D. 170. Its genuineness has been generally acknowledged. This fragment contains all the thirteen epistles of Paul, and gives them in the following order: First and Second Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, First and Second Thessalonians, Romans, Philemon, Titus, First and Second Timothy. The Epistle to the Hebrews is omitted.<sup>2</sup>

Caius, the Roman presbyter, who lived about A.D. 210, expressly mentions thirteen epistles of Paul. "He makes mention," observes Eusebius, "of only thirteen epistles, not reckoning that to the Hebrews among the rest."<sup>3</sup> And Jerome also gives the same testimony. "Caius, in the time of Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, had a very notable dispute with Proclus, a follower of Montanus; and in the same book, reckoning up only thirteen epistles of Paul, he says the fourteenth, which is inscribed to the Hebrews, is not his."<sup>4</sup> Eusebius himself (A.D. 315), in his classification of the books of the New Testament, asserts that Paul's thirteen epistles were universally received and acknowledged. "The epistles of Paul are fourteen, all well known, and beyond doubt."<sup>5</sup> It should not, however, be concealed that some have set aside the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it was disputed as not being one of Paul's epistles; but we shall in the proper place also subjoin what has been said by those before our time respecting this epistle."<sup>6</sup> And the council of Laodicea (A.D. 363) gave an authoritative catalogue of the epistles of Paul in the same order as given in our Bible, except that the Epistle to the Hebrews comes after Second Thessalonians and before First Timothy.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the early catalogues of the Pauline Epistles, there are also the early translations, all of which contain the whole of Paul's epistles. Perhaps the earliest translation of the

<sup>1</sup> So Hug, Thiersch, Guericke, Westcott.

<sup>2</sup> A transcript of the Muratorian Canon is given by Westcott in his *Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 466-480.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Hieron. *de vir. Illustr.* c. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Τοῦ δὲ Παύλου προδηλοὶ καὶ σαφεῖς αἱ δεκατρίσσαι.

<sup>6</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 284.

New Testament was the Peshito or ancient Syriac.<sup>1</sup> Some critics, as Jones and Michaelis, have placed the date of this translation very early, either at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century;<sup>2</sup> but it is now generally agreed that it belongs to the middle of the second century (A.D. 160).<sup>3</sup> This early date is a strong evidence in favour of the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles. The Peshito, whilst it omits some of the catholic epistles and the Apocalypse, contains all the epistles of Paul, including that to the Hebrews.

The next translation in order of time is the old Latin, the so-called *Vetus Latina*. This does not appear to have been made for the use of the Roman Church. That Church was at first not Latin but Greek. The names of its first fifteen bishops are, with four exceptions, Greek; and not only was the Epistle to the Romans written in Greek, but the early Roman fathers, for the first two centuries, wrote in Greek. The first Latin father belonged not to the Roman but to the African Church. Accordingly it has been conjectured by Wetstein, Eichhorn, and others, that the locality of the old Latin version was Northern Africa, whose capital was Carthage.<sup>4</sup> Tertullian alludes to the existence of a Latin version, and gives citations from it, so that it must have been made before his time; but we have no evidence to determine how long it

<sup>1</sup> Whatever be the age of the Curetonian Syriac, it only contains fragments of the Gospels.

<sup>2</sup> Jones' *Canon of the New Testament*, vol. i. pp. 81-107; Michaelis' *Introduction to the N. T.*, translated by Marsh, vol. ii. pp. 29-39.

<sup>3</sup> We want data to determine the age of the Peshito. It is generally admitted that it was in existence in the second century. Westcott observes: "There is no sufficient reason to desert the opinion, which has obtained the sanction of the most competent scholars, that its formation is to be fixed within the first half of the second century."—Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 211. Some, however, put it later, and assign its age to the close of the second century.—See Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the N. T.*, pp. 229 ff.

<sup>4</sup> See Westcott *On the Canon*, pp. 215-218. He observes: "Rome itself under the emperors was well described as a 'Greek city;' and Greek was its second language. As far as we can learn, the mass of the poorer population, to which the great bulk of the early Christians everywhere belonged, was Greek either in descent or in speech."—See also Wiseman's *Essays on Various Subjects*, vol. i. pp. 46-66; Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the N. T.*, pp. 252-256.

previously existed. It has been referred by competent critics to A.D. 170. The old Latin, like the Peshito, contains all the epistles of Paul.

Besides the concurrent testimony of ancient catalogues and versions, there is also the testimony of the fathers. This is given us by Lardner with such impartiality and care, that his accuracy both as regards dates and quotations has seldom been called in question. Kirchhofer also gives us a valuable collection of authorities for the several books of the New Testament. The following are the chief testimonies of the principal fathers down to the middle of the third century. Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96), the earliest extra-canonical Christian writer whose remains have come down to us, in his epistle to the Corinthians mentions the First Epistle of Paul to that Church: "Take into your hands the epistle of the blessed Paul, the apostle. What did he at first write unto you in the beginning of the gospel? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then you did form factions."<sup>1</sup> Ignatius (A.D. 115)<sup>2</sup> ascribes the Epistle to the Ephesians to Paul, and alludes to several other of the apostle's epistles. Writing to the Ephesians, he says: "Ye are the companions of Paul in the mysteries of the gospel, who throughout all his epistles makes mention of you in Christ Jesus."<sup>3</sup> Polycarp (A.D. 116),<sup>4</sup> writing to the Philippians, mentions the Epistle of Paul to that Church: "For neither I nor any one like me can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned Paul, who, when absent, wrote to you epistles."<sup>5</sup> Irenæus (A.D.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. i. ad Corinth. c. 47.*

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius, according to Lardner, suffered martyrdom in the "tenth year of the reign of Trajan, A.D. 107." Merivale fixes the date at A.D. 115. The latter date is the more probable.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Ephes. c. 12.* The genuineness of these words of Ignatius have, however, been questioned. They are not found in the larger Greek rescension and Syriac version.

<sup>4</sup> Polycarp suffered martyrdom in the reign of Marcus Antoninus, about A.D. 167, in his 86th year.—Eus. *H. E.* iv. 15. His epistle to the Philippians was written shortly after the martyrdom of Ignatius, as is inferred from chaps. 9 and 13 of his epistle. Others fix the date about A.D. 140. The former date is the more probable.—See Ritschl, *Entstehung d. altkath. Kirch.*, pp. 584-601.

<sup>5</sup> *Ad Philippiens, c. 3.*

178) quotes twelve epistles of Paul, most of them with the names of the churches and persons to whom they were sent. The only one of the thirteen epistles which he omits is the Epistle to Philemon, for which its brevity and the nature of its contents readily account. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 181), refers to the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Timothy, and Titus. Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194) quotes frequently and expressly all the epistles of Paul, with the exception of Philemon; and Eusebius informs us that in his work called *Hypotyposés*, Clement has given us abridged accounts of all the canonical Scriptures, not even omitting those that are disputed.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian (A.D. 200) received thirteen epistles of Paul, but ascribed the Epistle to the Hebrews to Barnabas.<sup>2</sup> Origen (A.D. 230) received the thirteen epistles of Paul; and Cyprian (A.D. 248) quotes them all, with the exception of Philemon.<sup>3</sup> Nor are these quotations and references few, but in several of the writings of the fathers are more numerous than in modern works of theology; so that Lardner observes: "In the remaining works of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian (though some works of each of them are lost), there are perhaps more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages; insomuch that we have reason to think a late learned and judicious divine did not exaggerate beyond the truth, when he said 'that the facts upon which the Christian religion is founded have a stronger proof than any facts at such a distance of time; and that the books which convey them down to us may be proved to be uncorrupted and authentic, with greater strength than any other writings of equal antiquity.'"<sup>4</sup>

This remark can hardly be considered as an exaggeration when applied to the thirteen epistles of Paul. The evidence

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *De pulcrit.* c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> See Lardner's recapitulation of authorities, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 99-110; Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 171 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 106.

of their genuineness is superior to the evidence of the genuineness of many classical writings of equal antiquity, such as the history of Livy or the geography of Strabo. The genuineness of both classes of writings is proved on the same grounds, namely, because they have been acknowledged in an age nearly contemporary as the writings of those whose names they bear. But the reasons for the genuineness of Paul's epistles are in point of fact stronger than those which can be adduced in support of the genuineness of the classical writings. They are mentioned by a greater number of writers, belonging to different nations, several of whom lived at no great distance in time from the apostolic age; they have been at an early period translated into several languages, as the Syriac and the Latin; and their genuineness has not been disputed even by those who questioned the sentiments they contained.<sup>1</sup> The external evidence alone is sufficient to attest the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles, and to overcome all those objections of a subjective nature raised against particular epistles, even independent of the corroboration which the internal evidence affords; but when the external evidence is combined with such corroboration, and especially with the ingenious argument of Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, the authenticity of the epistles is placed beyond all reasonable doubt.

2. The *internal evidence* of the authenticity of any writing is, from its nature, not so strong as the external; it is rather presumptive than conclusive. Still there are some internal marks of genuineness in Paul's epistles which afford a strong corroborative evidence, and especially Paley's argument amounts in many cases almost to actual demonstration.

The *language* in which Paul's epistles are written affords a presumption that they were composed about the period when they profess to have been written, that is, in the latter half of the first century. It is a species of Hebraistic Greek, that is, Greek mixed with Hebraisms, such as would then have been employed in the composition of a Jewish Christian. Now such a dialect soon ceased in the Christian Church. Shortly after the death of the apostles, the Jewish Christians seceded from

<sup>1</sup> See some excellent remarks of Michaelis on this subject, *Introduction to N. T.*, vol. i. pp. 24-26.

the Church, and formed the sects of the Nazarenes and Ebionites. We find scarcely any traces of Hebraisms in the writings of the early fathers ; indeed, the greater number of them were ignorant of Hebrew, and were only acquainted with the Old Testament through the medium of the Septuagint. The dialect of the New Testament belongs to the first ages of the Christian Church, and therefore attests that age as the period of its composition.

The *style* of the epistles is another internal mark of genuineness. Paul's style is very marked, and is extremely difficult to imitate. His repeated digressions and parentheses impart to it a certain degree of obscurity, and along with these digressions must be taken into account the anacolutha or false constructions which are so numerous in Paul's writings. Such a style is found in no other part of the New Testament. Now this style can be traced in all the epistles, and is perhaps nowhere so strongly marked and discernible as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which exception has been specially taken in modern times.

The general *form* of the epistles may also be adverted to as another internal mark. It has been previously observed that the Pauline Epistles are all cast after a particular form, not only as regards the introductory and concluding parts, but also as regards the general structure. This form is not in any two epistles precisely the same : it admits of considerable variation, but yet is distinctly traceable in each of the thirteen epistles : it is general uniformity along with particular diversity. This diversity occasions a greater difficulty of imitation than if there had been a precise sameness ; and although the argument must not be pushed too far, yet there is a certain Pauline form which, when it exists in any epistle, is a presumption in favour of its genuineness.

Baur, with much skill and ingenuity, endeavours to employ the internal evidence as an argument against the genuineness of certain of Paul's epistles.<sup>1</sup> He admits the genuineness of the four first epistles in our Bible. From these unquestionably authentic epistles he forms a certain standard of Pauline doctrine, and then takes this standard and applies it as a test

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, Zweiter Theil.

to the examination of the other epistles, and decides against their authenticity, because, according to his opinion, they contain sentiments which are un-Pauline. Thus, for example, Baur rejects the Epistle to the Colossians, because in his view the sentiments contained in it are Gnostic, and not Pauline. The argument he employs is entirely subjective: the epistles must be in conformity with what he supposes Paul must write; they must be measured by his standard of Pauline doctrine. Now this is certainly carrying the subjective argument to an extreme.<sup>1</sup> The four epistles assumed to be genuine all belong to the earlier epistles, and no allowance is made for the change which time may have effected on Paul's diction, or for the alterations which the very different circumstances in which he was placed may have made on his statements.<sup>2</sup> Paul, in the prime of life, in the full bustle of the world, and in constant conflict with false teachers, would naturally write differently from Paul the aged, and a prisoner at Rome. And besides, the circumstances of the Christian Church were also somewhat changed. The Judaizing teachers who disturbed the peace of the churches in Galatia had been vanquished, and new forms of heresy, which afterwards developed into Gnosticism, arose, especially in the churches of Proconsular Asia; and hence there was of necessity a difference in sentiment between the Epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, as the heresies which these epistles opposed were different. And besides, as Reuss well remarks, "the destructive criticism has rendered its assertions the more improbable, because in the progress of doubt it has increased the number of authors, and has made a whole class of false Pauls, each of whom must not only be brought into an unintelligible relation with the genuine Paul, but with one another."<sup>3</sup>

It is further to be observed, that be the force of the subjective evidence what it may, it can never overthrow positive

<sup>1</sup> "How an author *ought* to have written, is a question in which imagination has a wide range. A meagre induction gathered from a few short works is not a sufficient criterion of how he must have written everywhere and at all times."—Jowett, *Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> See on this defect of Baur's method of criticism, Davidson's *Introduction*, *N.T.*, vol. i. p. 25, last edition.

<sup>3</sup> Reuss' *Geschichte der heil. Schrif. N.T.*, p. 64.



historical evidence. The presumption drawn from internal indications that an event would not happen, cannot possibly overthrow the positive testimony of unprejudiced witnesses that it did happen. Subjective evidence depends almost entirely on the views of the individual critic. It is admitted that in certain circumstances the subjective argument may be legitimately used, as when external testimony is imperfect, and when the opinions of a writer are obvious. We may then reject a book whose authenticity is only doubtfully supported by external evidence, and whose views appear to us to be different from the expressed sentiments of the supposed author in his acknowledged works. But the argument must be very carefully employed, as it is liable to many abuses. In the analogous case of biblical criticism, where certain readings are doubtful, and where the balance of authorities is nearly equal, subjective criticism, when used by a skilful critic, as Lachmann or Tischendorf, is a valuable auxiliary. But where the preponderance of the external authorities is unmistakeable, such evidence is inapplicable. Thus no subjective considerations ought to be permitted to influence our belief in favour of the genuineness of the text containing the testimony of the heavenly witnesses (1 John v. 7), because the preponderance of external authorities against it is too decided. And so also with regard to the epistles of Paul. The external evidence in their favour cannot be shaken by any supposed subjective evidence against them. The testimony of Polycarp, for example, in favour of the Epistle to the Philippians—a testimony which Baur omits to mention—is not weakened because, in the opinion of Baur or any other critic, that epistle contains un-Pauline sentiments and expressions.

One of the most ingenious internal arguments in favour of the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles is that advanced by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. The validity of the argument has recently been questioned, and therefore it is proper to consider its nature and force.

Paley takes the Acts of the Apostles and the thirteen epistles of Paul, omitting the Epistle to the Hebrews. He makes no assumption regarding the genuineness of either of these works. "The reader," he observes, "is at liberty to

suppose these writings to have been lately discovered in the library of the Escorial, and to come to our hands destitute of any extrinsic or collateral evidence whatever." And what he proposes to show is "that a comparison of the different writings would, even under these circumstances, afford good reason to believe the persons and transactions to have been real, the letters authentic, and the narrative in the main to be true."<sup>1</sup> It is a mistaken view to suppose that Paley rests his argument on the mere similarity or agreement between the Acts and the Pauline Epistles. He is very guarded in his remarks. Mere general agreement, he admits, proves nothing: the epistles might be compiled from the history, or the history might be fabricated to correspond with the epistles. But his argument rests on the many undesigned coincidences which are to be found between the history and the epistles; coincidences so undesigned as to prove that the history was not taken from the epistles, nor the epistles from the history; that they are independent writings, and yet so exact, that both agree in the main particulars. The multitude and variety of these undesigned coincidences increase the force of the argument, so that in reference to several of the epistles it amounts almost to demonstration. "As to the authenticity of the epistles," observes Paley, "this argument, where it is sufficiently sustained by instances, is nearly conclusive; for I cannot assign a supposition of forgery, in which coincidences of the kind we inquire after are likely to appear."

There have not, however, been wanting objections to this mode of reasoning. The ingenuity of the *Horæ Paulinæ* has been generally admitted, but its validity has been severely criticised. It has been asserted that Paley here, as generally in all his writings, exhibits too much the tact of an advocate and not the impartiality of a judge; that he is to be placed in the rank of apologists and not of impartial writers; that he overlooks difficulties, and omits discrepancies in the epistles; that he carries his argument too far, and thus weakens its force; that his work is an *ex parte* statement; and that the argument may be equally applied against the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles, for there are not only coincidences,

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, cap. i.

but, as is asserted, manifest discrepancies between the Acts and the epistles.<sup>1</sup>

Now there is no doubt that the logical acumen of Paley gives him the appearance of an advocate rather than a judge, and perhaps prejudices some against him, as if he were a partial writer; but this, though it may cause us to exercise caution, yet does not diminish the force of his arguments. It is also admitted that in some cases his inferences seem far-fetched, and perhaps, when examined, may appear even fallacious; but this, though it weakens or destroys the argument in these particular cases, yet does not affect other instances to which no such exception can be taken. As Paley himself remarks, "If the reader meets with a number which contains an instance that appears to him unsatisfactory, or founded in mistake, he will dismiss that number from the argument, but without prejudice to any other." And with regard to the supposed discrepancies between the Acts and the epistles, it is erroneous to suppose that these are intentionally omitted by Paley. On the contrary, they are met and discussed; but, at the same time, so far from being regarded by him as an objection to his argument, they are looked upon as a confirmation,—as a proof that there could be no possible collusion between the writer of the Acts and the writer of the epistles. According to him, these discrepancies are for the most part only apparent, or if not, an acquaintance with all the circumstances of the case might lead to their solution. Nor is there the slightest reason to charge him with unfairness or want of candour in the discussion of these discrepancies. The ingenuity of many of his remarks, so far from being a fault, is one of his great merits.

Upon the whole, the *Horæ Paulinæ* must be regarded as a masterpiece of polemical theology, eminent for ingenuity, originality, and conclusiveness. "It must be conceded," observes Jowett—no partial judge—"that no author has done as much as Paley in the *Horæ Paulinæ* to raise up a barrier against unreasoning scepticism, and to place the epistles on an historical foundation. The ingenuity of his arguments, the minuteness of the intimations discovered by him, the remote-

<sup>1</sup> Jowett *On the Epistles of St Paul*, vol. i. pp. 204, 227, 397.

ness and complexity of his combinations, leave the impression on the mind of absolute certainty in reference to the great Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, and of high probability in reference to most of the others. And even though some of his defences may be untenable, it is true also that other lines of argument first indicated by him admit of being carried further than he has carried them. Such are those from undesigned coincidences of style and character, that is, from similarities which, with a previous knowledge of the style and character of an author, are capable of being recognised and appreciated, and yet so latent and complex, that no forger could have invented them.”<sup>1</sup>

It would tend to show more clearly the nature and validity of Paley’s argument, were we to illustrate it by one or two examples, taking especially those instances to which objections have been made, or on which eminent critics have arrived at different conclusions. But instances of this kind will frequently occur in discussing the several epistles, and it appears unnecessary to anticipate them here. It would be a great matter were the works of Paley more appreciated and read, instead of being depreciated and attacked by a certain school of theologians. We would then have a more healthy theology; our conclusions would be more logical, resting less on mere individual opinions and arbitrary assumptions, and more on the eternal grounds of truth. And notwithstanding that it is the fashion of this age to decry Paley, his arguments have been seldom fairly met, and still more rarely confuted.

<sup>1</sup> Jowett *On Paul’s Epistles*, vol. i. p. 204.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

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**I**N a special introduction to an epistle, there are six points which merit observation : first, its authenticity ; secondly, the circumstances of the particular church to which the epistle was written ; thirdly, the occasion of the epistle ; fourthly, its contents ; fifthly, its date ; sixthly, its distinctive peculiarities. Any difficulties or controversial questions arising from the epistle are discussed in separate dissertations.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is one of those epistles of Paul whose genuineness has been almost universally acknowledged. It has only recently been questioned by Baur, and even his objections have not been adopted by all the disciples of his school.<sup>1</sup> The external evidence in its favour is very strong. It is true that the allusions to it in the apostolic fathers, given by Kirchhofer, are obscure and doubtful ;<sup>2</sup> but it is directly attested by Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian. Thus Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes : “ And on account of this the apostle, explaining himself, has set forth the perfect and spiritual man of salvation, saying thus in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians : ‘ And may the

<sup>1</sup> Hilgenfeld, for example, maintains the genuineness of First Thessalonians.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens, *Ep. ad Corinth.* c. 38 ; Ignatius, *ad Polycarp*, c. 1 ; *ad Ephes.* c. 10 ; Polycarp, *ad Philipp.* c. 2 and 4.

God of peace sanctify you wholly, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved without complaint until the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ'" (1 Thess. v. 23).<sup>1</sup> And again, "The apostle thus speaks, 'When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them'" (1 Thess. v. 3).<sup>2</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) observes, "This St. Paul clearly signified, saying, 'When we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ, we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children'" (1 Thess. ii. 7).<sup>3</sup> And again, "'Bear all things,' says the apostle, 'and retain what is good'" (1 Thess. v. 21).<sup>4</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) thus writes: "What these times are, learn with the Thessalonians; for we read, 'After what manner ye were turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to expect His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus'" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).<sup>5</sup> And again, "And therefore the majesty of the Holy Spirit, which discerns such senses, suggests in this very Epistle to the Thessalonians: 'But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write to you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night'" (1 Thess. v. 1, 2).<sup>6</sup> And over and above these direct quotations, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians is contained in the catalogue of Marcion (A.D. 130), in the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170), and in the Syriac (A.D. 160) and Latin (A.D. 170) versions.

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. hæres.* v. 6, 1. Et propter hoc apostolus seipsum exponens, explanavit perfectum et spirituale salutis hominem, in prima epistola ad Thessalonicenses dicens sic: "Deus autem pacis sanctificet vos perfectos, et integer vester spiritus, et anima, et corpus sine querela in adventum Domini Jesu Christi servetur."

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. hæres.* v. 30, 2. Hoc et apostolus ait: "Cum dixerint, pax, et munitio, tunc subitaneus illis superveniet interitus."

<sup>3</sup> *Pædagog.* i. c. 5. Τοῦτό τοι σαφίστατα ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ὑπισσημένωτο εἰπών· δυνάμειν ἐν βαρεῖ εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, ἐγγενήμεν ἥπιοι ἐν μίσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἂν τροφὸς βάλαν· τὰ ἑαυτοῦ τέκνα.

<sup>4</sup> *Strom.* i. c. 11. Πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, ὁ ἀποστόλος φησι, καὶ τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε.

<sup>5</sup> *De resurrect. carn.* c. 24. Quæ hæc tempora, cum Thessalonicensibus disce. Legimus enim: Qualiter conversi sitis ab idolis ad serviendum vivo et vero Deo, et ad expectandum e cœlis filium ejus, quem suscitavit e mortuis, Jesum."

<sup>6</sup> *De resurrect. carn.* c. 24. Et ideo majestas Spiritus sancti perspicax ejusmodi sensuum, et in ipsa ad Thessalonicenses epistola suggerit: "De temporibus autem et temporum spatiis, fratres, non est necessitas scribendi vobis. Ipsi enim certissime scitis, quod dies Domini, quasi fur nocti, ita adveniet."

The internal evidence is equally strong. The character of Paul is impressed on this Epistle : his anxiety about his converts (iii. 1, 2) ; his earnest desires for their spiritual good (iii. 8-11) ; his almost womanly tenderness (ii. 7) ; his joy when he hears from Timothy of the steadfastness of their faith (iii. 6, 7) ; and his sympathy with them in their distress (iv. 13, 18). So also the style of this Epistle is undoubtedly Pauline. We have examples of Pauline digressions and expansions (i. 2-6, v. 2-6), of climax (i. 5, 8, ii. 8), of delicate allusions (v. 6), of a play upon words (ii. 4, iv. 9), and of numerous Pauline expressions and modes of thought (i. 6, ii. 2, 19, v. 23).<sup>1</sup> The language employed regarding the advent (iv. 15-17, v. 4) is also, as Paley remarks, a strong internal proof of genuineness ; for whatever construction such language may bear, it is coloured with the possibility of the immediate coming of the Lord, and would not have been employed by a forger of the second century, when the lapse of time had disappointed such an anticipation.<sup>2</sup> In short, as Professor Jowett well remarks, " It has been objected against the genuineness of this Epistle, that it contains only a single statement of doctrine. But liveliness, personality, similar traits of disposition, are far more difficult to invent than statements of doctrine. A later age might have supplied these, but it could hardly have caught the very likeness and portrait of the apostle." " Such intricate similarities of language, such lively traits of character, it is not within the power of any forger to invent, and, least of all, of a forger of the second century."<sup>3</sup>

The objections urged by Baur are not formidable, and are all of a subjective and arbitrary nature : the external evidence is left untouched. The following is a summary of his objections : 1. In the collection of the Pauline Epistles there is none which is so devoid of individuality and doctrinal statements. It consists entirely of instructions, admonitions, and wishes, with only one doctrinal statement on the advent of Christ (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). 2. The Epistle betrays a dependence on

<sup>1</sup> The internal evidences are well stated by Professor Jowett in his *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 27-29.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Hore Pauline* on 1 Thessalonians, No. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 28, 29.

the Acts of the Apostles and on the other epistles of Paul, especially on the two Epistles to the Corinthians.<sup>1</sup> 3. There is internal evidence that the Epistle belongs to a later age; for when mention is made of wrath having come upon the Jews to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 16), there is an evident allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem. 4. The Epistle itself evidently professes to have been composed only a few months after Paul's first visit to Thessalonica, yet it contains a description of the church—that their faith was spread abroad in every place, and that they had a regular church government—which is only suited to a later date. 5. The Epistle, in common with the Second Epistle, is far too apocalyptic in its tone to induce us to regard it as the composition of the Apostle Paul.<sup>2</sup>

The mere statement of these objections is sufficient to prove their weakness. Their arbitrary nature renders them difficult to answer. As De Wette remarks, "Such objections rest on mere subjective considerations, to which other similar considerations might easily be opposed."<sup>3</sup> The comparative absence of dogmatic statement is easily explained, by considering the circumstances of the church to which the apostle wrote. The agreement with the Acts of the Apostles, so far from being an objection, is an argument in favour of the genuineness of this Epistle, this agreement being of an undesigned nature, and there being several apparent discrepancies between the history and the Epistle.<sup>4</sup> The similarity of expressions with those found in the Epistles to the Corinthians is in conformity with the style of Paul, who has his favourite expressions; and besides, is really not so strong as the verbal similarity between

<sup>1</sup> The resemblances between First Thessalonians and the Epistle to the Corinthians, as stated by Baur, are the following :—i. 5, as compared with 1 Cor. ii. 4; i. 6, with 1 Cor. xi. 1; ii. 4-10, with 1 Cor. ii. 4, iv. 3, 4, ix. 15, 16, 2 Cor. ii. 17, v. 11, xi. 9.—Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 95, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 94-107. Baur does not make any regular statement of his objections, but those given above are what he chiefly insists upon.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> As, for example, the different statements regarding the movements of Silas and Timothy, the duration of Paul's residence at Thessalonica, and the composition of the Thessalonian Church. These apparent discrepancies are afterwards discussed.



the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, both of which are regarded by Baur as indisputably authentic. It would hardly have struck any one that there is a direct allusion in 1 Thess. ii. 16 to the destruction of Jerusalem; but even supposing this were the case, the condition of the Jewish nation led many among the Jews themselves to anticipate the Jewish war and its fatal issue. It is admitted that the strong probability is that this Epistle was composed only a few months after Paul's visit to Thessalonica; but the circumstances mentioned in the Epistle which would seem to indicate a later date may easily be accounted for, by admitting an interval of six months between the visit and the writing of the Epistle. And as to the last objection, the apocalyptic nature of the two Epistles, it is not permissible to judge *à priori* whether such statements are inconsistent with Paul's style and manner; and we see evident reasons in the disturbed state of the Thessalonian Church why Paul in his epistles to it should especially dwell on the kingdom of Christ and the doctrine of the advent.<sup>1</sup>

The points of agreement with the Acts of the Apostles are circumstantial and undoubted. Of these the three following are mentioned by Paley:<sup>2</sup>—1. In the Acts we learn that Paul, accompanied by Silas and Timothy, came to Philippi, where Paul and Silas were scourged, thrown into prison, and had their feet made fast in the stocks. In the Epistle, written in the name of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, there is an allusion to this treatment at Philippi: "Even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God with much contention" (1 Thess. ii. 2). 2. In the Acts we learn that a similar treatment befell Paul and Silas at Thessalonica: "The Jews which believed not set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason (where Paul and Silas lodged), and sought to bring them out to the

<sup>1</sup> The objections of Baur are ably discussed and answered in Lünemann's *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, pp. 10-15; Jowett on *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 18-27; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 455-460 (old edition), vol. i. pp. 21-25 (new edition); and by Lightfoot in the article "The Epistles to the Thessalonians" in Smith's *Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Hore Paulineæ* on 1 Thessalonians, No. III.

people" (Acts xvii. 5). In the Epistle there is the following reference: "When we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know" (1 Thess. iii. 4). 3. In the Acts we are informed that Silas and Timothy joined the apostle at Corinth: "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia (to Corinth), Paul was pressed in the spirit" (Acts xviii. 5). The Epistle is written in the joint name of these three persons, and speaks of their conjunct ministry at Thessalonica as a recent occurrence: "We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire" (1 Thess. ii. 17). There can be no question as to the harmony on these points between the Epistle and the history; and yet the allusions in the Epistle to these historical occurrences are quite incidental and perfectly natural, and do not in the least degree favour the supposition of Baur, that the writer of the Epistle took his materials from the Acts.

The apparent discrepancies between the Acts and the Epistle are not difficult to reconcile, and yet are of such a nature as to render all idea of collusion impossible. Some of these will be referred to, when we consider the circumstances of the church at Thessalonica; one only is mentioned at present, as having given rise to a diversity of opinion. In the Acts we are informed that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were together at Berea, but that there they separated. Paul went to Athens, and Silas and Timothy remained behind. Paul sent a message from Athens requesting them to join him there, and we are informed that he waited for them (Acts xvii. 14-16); but it would seem, from the history, that they did not join him until he came to Corinth (Acts xviii. 5). In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, however, we read: "Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith" (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2). From this it is inferred that Timothy actually joined Paul at Athens, but was sent back by him to Thessalonica to inquire into the state of the converts in that

city. Hence De Wette and Meyer assert that there is a real discrepancy between the Epistle and Luke's narrative, and that all attempts to reconcile it are unavailing: that Luke was ignorant that Timothy joined the apostle at Athens.<sup>1</sup> Most critics (Michaelis, Paley, Bleek, Neander, Ewald, Jowett, Ellicott, Davidson) admit that Timothy did actually join Paul at Athens. Paley, so far from seeing in this a discrepancy, regards it as an undesigned coincidence. He supposes that Timothy's visit to Athens is indicated in the history by the command of Paul that Silas and Timothy should join him at Athens, by Paul waiting for them there, and by the fact that his departure from Athens was not in any sort hastened or abrupt. "The Epistle discloses a fact which is not preserved in the history; but which makes what is said in the history more significant, probable, and consistent."<sup>2</sup> But be this as it may, the mere omission by Luke of Timothy's visit to Athens and return to Thessalonica cannot be considered a discrepancy, as the circumstance had no bearing upon his narrative. If Timothy had remained with the apostle at Athens, and thus had not rejoined him at Corinth, the case would have been different. But, after all, it is a mere assumption that Timothy was sent by the apostle from Athens to Thessalonica: no such assertion is made in the Epistle. Accordingly others (Hug, Hensen, Burton, Reuss, Wieseler, Alford) suppose that Timothy was sent by Paul to Thessalonica from Berea, and not from Athens; and that he and Silas went direct from Macedonia to Corinth.<sup>3</sup> If Paul had given this direction before he left Berea, and if circumstances had prevented Silas and Timothy joining him at Athens, he might well say, "We thought it good to be left at Athens alone." Or it may be supposed that Paul sent a message from Athens to Berea, that Timothy should go to Thessalonica. In either case there is a perfect harmony between the Epistle and the history.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 346; De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Hore Pauline* on 1 Thessalonians, No. IV.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Reuss' *Geschichte N.T.*, p. 68. He very pertinently asks: "To what purpose so many journeys?"

## II. THE CHURCH OF THESSALONICA.

Thessalonica was a large maritime and commercial city, situated on the slope of a hill at the northern end of the Thermaic Gulf, now called the Gulf of Saloniki. Its former name was Thermae. It was rebuilt by Cassander, who called it Thessalonica after his wife, the sister of Alexander the Great,<sup>1</sup>—Thessalonica herself having received her name on account of the victory of her father Philip over the Thessalonians on the day of her birth. Under the Macedonians, Thessalonica flourished as their most important seaport; and its prosperity greatly increased when the country was attached to the Roman empire. It was first made the capital of the second of the four districts into which Macedonia was divided; and afterwards, when the province of Macedonia was formed, it became the metropolis, and the residence of the Roman proconsul. It received the privilege of a free city, and was governed by its own magistrates (*πολιτάρχαι*, Acts xvii. 6). Strabo, in the first century, mentions it as the most populous city in Macedonia.<sup>2</sup> Its inhabitants were chiefly Greeks, with a mixture of Romans, and a large colony of Jews who had settled there on account of trade. Such was the condition of the city when Paul visited it, and announced in the synagogue Jesus as the Christ. Since that time Thessalonica has had few reverses. Until the founding of Constantinople, it was the most important city of Achaia, Macedonia, Thrace, and Illyricum; after the empire became Christian, it became an important episcopate, and received the designation of “the orthodox city.” For centuries it stood as a strong bulwark of Christendom against the encroachments of the Mahometans. It was finally captured by the Turks under Amurath II. in 1430; and at present it is considered the second city of European Turkey, having a population of 70,000. The greater part of its population is composed of Greek Christians, with a large proportion of Jews, who are estimated at the

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, vii., *Frag.* 24.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, vii. 7, 4.

lowest at 10,000.<sup>1</sup> Its modern name is Saloniki, an evident corruption of the ancient Thessalonica.

— An account of the origin of the church in Thessalonica is given in Acts xvii. Paul and his fellow-labourers Silas and Timothy, being driven out of Philippi, came to Thessalonica. Here was the principal synagogue of the country, and Paul, according to his custom, entered into it and taught. For three Sabbaths he preached to the Jews and the devout persons who came to worship, testifying that Jesus was the Christ. The result of his preaching is thus related by the sacred historian: "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts xvii. 1-4). We are afterwards informed that the Jews excited the rabble to raise a tumult against the Christian preachers, in consequence of which Paul and Silas were forced to leave the city secretly by night for Berea.

From the narrative of the Acts, it would at first sight appear that the apostle remained only three weeks in Thessalonica, and that the tumult which expelled him from the city took place immediately after the third Sabbath; but this account has to be supplemented by what we read in the Epistle. We find that a large and flourishing church, chiefly composed of Gentile converts, was formed (1 Thess. i. 8); that Paul worked for his own support (1 Thess. ii. 9); and that the Philippians sent twice to supply his necessities (Phil. iv. 16), the distance between the two cities being a hundred miles: so that Paul must have remained a longer time at Thessalonica. Olshausen, indeed, refers the repeated contributions of the Philippians not to the first sojourn of Paul in Thessalonica, but to the second, which occurred after his departure from Ephesus (Acts xx. 1);<sup>2</sup> but such a view is excluded by the apostle's own words, when he says that it was "in the beginning of the gospel" (Phil. iv. 10)—that is, at the introduction of Christianity into Macedonia—that the Philippians contributed to his support. The proba-

<sup>1</sup> According to some authorities, they amount to 35,000, or nearly one-half of the population.—Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 383, note.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen *On the Thessalonians*, p. 394, Clark's translation.

bility is, that the three Sabbaths mentioned in the Acts relate to Paul's preaching in the synagogue; that afterwards, finding the Jews obstinate, he, according to his usual custom in other cities, desisted, and turned to the Gentiles; and that it was his increasing success among the Gentiles that excited the envy of the Jews (*ζηλώσαντες*, Acts xvii. 5), and led to the tumult. Still, though not necessarily limited to three weeks, it is evident, both from the spirit of the Epistle and from the history, that Paul's residence at Thessalonica was comparatively short, and that he was constrained to leave, in a somewhat imperfect condition, the church which he had established.

It would appear from both Epistles, that Paul when at Thessalonica dwelt much on the kingdom of Christ and His coming as Judge of the world. The burden of his preaching was, that they should wait for the Son of God from heaven, that the day of the Lord shall come suddenly and unexpectedly, and that the Lord Himself shall be revealed from heaven; and he dwelt upon the hindrance which prevented the advent of Christ (2 Thess. ii. 5). It would seem that certain expressions of his were either misinterpreted or wilfully perverted, as if he taught that Jesus was a rival monarch to Cæsar: "These men do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7).<sup>1</sup>

From the Epistle, it is evident that the Church of Thessalonica was chiefly composed of Gentile Christians. They are represented as those who turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. i. 9),—a description applicable to converted Gentiles, but not to converted Jews. And in both Epistles to the Thessalonians there is not a single quotation from, and hardly an allusion to, the Old Testament. Now when we turn to the Acts, we find an apparent discrepancy, and a real agreement. We are informed, as the result of Paul's three Sabbaths' preaching in the synagogue, that "some of the Jews believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts xvii. 4). If we adopt the reading approved by Lachmann, *τῶν τε σεβομένων καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ*

<sup>1</sup> There is in this an undesigned coincidence between the history and the Epistle, not alluded to by Paley.

πληθος (and of the devout persons and of Greeks a great multitude), there is a perfect harmony. But, admitting the correctness of the received text, it is evident from the narrative that Paul's success was limited among the Jews, but great among the devout Greeks, that is, among those religious Gentiles who, without being proselytes, attended the Jewish synagogue, and were formerly idolaters. And if we admit that Paul remained longer than the three weeks preaching to the Gentiles with much success (1 Thess. i. 5), we can easily perceive how the church would be composed chiefly of Gentile converts. It is also to be observed, that there are indications in the Epistle that the church increased during Paul's absence (1 Thess. i. 7, 8),—perhaps by the labours of Timothy, who appears to have been left for a time behind (Acts xvii. 10), and who a second time visited the city at the request of the apostle (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2).

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

It would appear that the persecution excited against the Christians at the instigation of the Jews, which had arisen during Paul's presence, continued in his absence (1 Thess. ii. 14); and besides, Paul feared that, by reason of the shortness of his residence, his converts were only partially instructed in the nature of Christianity. He was therefore filled with anxiety on their account, lest they should fall from the faith. Twice he had attempted to visit them, but had been prevented. He had therefore sent Timothy, who had laboured with him in founding the church at Thessalonica, to ascertain their state, "to establish and comfort them concerning their faith" (1 Thess. iii. 2). Timothy had now rejoined the apostle at Corinth, and the information which he brought was the occasion of this Epistle. That information was, upon the whole, satisfactory. Believers, in spite of persecution, continued stedfast in their faith and in their attachment to Paul, their spiritual father (1 Thess. iii. 6, 7); so that they became examples to all that believe in Thessalonica and Achaia (1 Thess. i. 7): their faith was everywhere spread abroad, and their love to one another abounded. The infor-

mation, however, was not wholly satisfactory. The knowledge of the Thessalonians was defective, and the apostle required to supply that which was lacking in their faith (1 Thess. iii. 10); there were those among them who had not ceased from the prevalent vices of their heathen neighbours (1 Thess. iv. 1-7); and in consequence of certain fanatical views concerning the advent of Christ, some had become disorderly, and neglected to work for their own support (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12). It would also appear that some of the converts had died, and the Thessalonians were distressed about the fate of their deceased friends, especially lest they should not participate in the blessings to be bestowed at the coming of the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. iv. 13).<sup>1</sup>

The general design of this Epistle, then, was to confirm the Thessalonians in the Christian faith, to exhort them to relinquish those vices in which they still indulged, to comfort them in the sufferings to which they were exposed, to console them under the loss of their friends, and to exhort them to make further progress in every department of the Christian character.

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is divided into two distinct parts. The first part, comprehending the first three chapters, may be termed *historical*, and contains an account of the apostle's anxiety for the Thessalonians. The second part, including the two last chapters, is *practical*, and contains various admonitions and exhortations concerning their Christian conduct. In the first part, the apostle commences with thanking God for all the grace bestowed upon the Thessalonians in their reception of the gospel (i. 1-10). He then reminds them of his labours among them, and of his conduct when in Thessalonica, and thanks God for the steadfastness of their faith, in spite of the persecution to which they were exposed (ii. 1-16). He expresses his great anxiety on their behalf, his repeated attempts to come to them, the reason why he sent Timothy,

<sup>1</sup> The occasion of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians is well stated by Lünemann in his *Commentary*, pp. 3-5.



and the great joy which he experienced at the information which was brought to him (ii. 17—iii. 13). In the second part, Paul exhorts them to continue in holiness, to avoid the vices of the Gentiles, to abound in Christian love, and instead of being led away by excitement, to be diligent in the performance of their earthly duties (iv. 1–12). He then comforts them concerning the fate of their deceased friends, and exhorts them to be watchful and prepared for the coming of Christ (iv. 13–v. 11). Then follow several exhortations, adapted to the circumstances of the Thessalonians, to cultivate the virtues of Christianity; and the Epistle concludes—after a solemn charge that it be publicly read—with the apostolic blessing (v. 12–28).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

There is little dubiety as to the time when this Epistle was written. When Paul and his associates Silas and Timothy left Thessalonica, they came to Berea. Here Paul left them, with directions to Timothy to return to Thessalonica, and proceeded alone to Athens. He alludes to his solitary residence at Athens in the Epistle (1 Thess. iii. 1). From Athens he went to Corinth, where Silas and Timothy rejoined him (Acts xviii. 5). Now, as the Epistle is written in the names of Paul, Silas, and Timothy (1 Thess. i. 1), it is evident that it was not composed until they all met together at Corinth; and it must have been written there, as this is the last time that we read of Silas being in company with Paul. It is also evident that some time must have elapsed between the introduction of Christianity and the writing of this Epistle. The faith of the Thessalonians was spread abroad in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess. i. 8); Paul had made two attempts to visit them (1 Thess. ii. 17, 18); and it would seem that some of the members of the church had died (1 Thess. iv. 13).<sup>1</sup> But still the interval could not be long. The circumstance of Paul's visit to Thessalonica was fresh upon his memory (1 Thess. ii. 17); his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of his converts was great; and as the information brought by Timothy

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 411.

was the direct occasion of the Epistle, it would probably be written shortly after that evangelist's return. Besides, the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was also written during the same residence at Corinth (2 Thess. i. 1); and some time must be allowed for the growth of those opinions which are combated in that Epistle. We may therefore fix the date of the composition of this Epistle toward the close of the year 52 or at the beginning of 53, that is, during the early part of Paul's residence of a year and a half at Corinth (Acts xviii. 11).

Other dates have been assigned to the Epistle, but they do not require any refutation, as the arguments in favour of the above date are so convincing that it is now almost universally adopted. Michaelis and Benson suppose that the Epistle was written during the latter part of Paul's residence at Corinth, and after he had made several excursions from that city;<sup>1</sup> Schrader fixes the date during the apostle's journey to Macedonia and Greece, after his departure from Ephesus (Acts xx. 1-3);<sup>2</sup> and Köhler and Whiston<sup>3</sup> suppose that it was among the last of Paul's epistles, and was not written until after his release from his Roman imprisonment, at a period beyond the history contained in the Acts of the Apostles.

It follows that the *place* of writing was Corinth. In our Bible, at the end of this Epistle, there is the following note: "The First Epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens." But this is an evident mistake, arising from a careless inference drawn from the words, "We thought it good to be left at Athens alone." Paul speaks of his sojourn at Athens as a past event; and it was not at Athens, but at Corinth, that he was joined by Silas and Timothy. These subscriptions at the end of the epistles are of no authority, as not belonging to the original text; and although perhaps in general correct, yet occasionally, as in the present instance, they are erroneous.

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. vi. pp. 23-25.

<sup>2</sup> Schrader's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 90 and 164.

<sup>3</sup> Köhler's *Versuch über die Abfassungszeit der apostolischen Schriften*, p. 112 et seq.; and Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, vol. iii. pp. 46, 47.

## VI. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

The great distinctive peculiarity of this Epistle consists in its being the first of Paul's extant epistles.<sup>1</sup> Whether it is the first epistle he ever wrote may be doubtful, but it is certain that it is the first which has come down to us,—perhaps the earliest of all the books of the New Testament. The priority of this Epistle is now a point which is generally admitted by all those who allow its genuineness.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to compare this Epistle with those of Paul's later years.<sup>3</sup> About three years intervened between these Epistles to the Thessalonians and the Epistle to the Galatians, the next in the series, and at least ten between them and the epistles of the captivity. The great outlines of the gospel—the kingdom of Christ, the atoning death of Christ, the reign of Christ in heaven, the resurrection of believers, and the second advent of Christ—are contained in all the epistles. Nor is there any development of doctrine, properly so called. Still it is true that, compared with the other epistles,—for example, Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians,—there is an absence of doctrinal statement in this Epistle to the Thessalonians. Indeed, what is considered the peculiar Pauline doctrine, that of justification by faith, is not even mentioned; there is no contrast between faith and works,—no statement of the peculiar provinces of the law and the gospel. The reasons for this are obvious enough. The circumstances of the churches to which the apostle wrote were the occasion of his doctrinal statements. It was chiefly the opposition of the Judaizing teachers that caused him to assert the doctrine of justification; but when he wrote the Epistle to the Thessa-

<sup>1</sup> The inner essential peculiarity consists in the reference to the second advent. This is reserved as the subject of a separate dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> The order of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians is afterwards discussed.

<sup>3</sup> See this comparison carried out by Professor Lightfoot, in his able article on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*. He notices three points of difference between this Epistle and Paul's later letters:—1. In the general *style* of these earlier letters there is greater simplicity and less exuberance of language. 2. The *antagonism to St. Paul* is not the same. Here the opposition comes from the unconverted Jews; afterwards Paul's opponents are Jewish Christians. 3. The *doctrinal teaching* of the apostle does not bear quite the same aspect as in the later epistles.

lonians, such an opposition, though it had already arisen, was not so strong as it afterwards became, and does not seem to have affected the churches of Macedonia. The opponents of Paul at Thessalonica were not Jewish Christians, but unconverted Jews. It was "the Jews who believed not" (*οἱ ἀπειθοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι*) who were the instigators of the tumult against the apostle (Acts xviii. 5), and who forbade him to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved (1 Thess. ii. 16). Hence the circumstances of the Thessalonian church did not require that the apostle should dwell upon the doctrine of justification in opposition to the Judaizing Christians, but rather on the doctrine of the second advent, for the consolation of the persecuted believers.

The observation of Baur, that this Epistle to the Thessalonians is the least doctrinal of all the Pauline Epistles,<sup>1</sup> is perfectly correct, and the state of the Thessalonian church accounts for this peculiarity. The Epistle which it most resembles is that addressed to the sister church of Macedonia—the church of Philippi. In both we have an insight into the heart of Paul; in both there is more of commendation than of blame. The churches of Macedonia were perhaps the fairest examples of the Pauline churches: their charity and liberality abounded (2 Cor. viii. 1–5); and once and again they are held forth as examples of faith and love to the churches of Achaia (1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Cor. ix. 1–4).

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### PAUL'S VIEWS OF THE ADVENT.

~ It is evident, from the perusal of the Thessalonian Epistles, that the Christians of Thessalonica expected the immediate advent of our Lord. An impression prevailed among them, that at the most in a few years the Lord Jesus Christ would

<sup>1</sup> In der ganzen Sammlung der paulinischen Briefe gibt es keinen, welcher allen andern in Hinsicht der Eigenthümlichkeit und Gewichtigkeit des Inhalts so sehr nachsteht wie 1 Thess.; mit Ausnahme der iv. 13–18 enthaltenen Vorstellung tritt nicht einmal irgend eine dogmatische Idee mit besonderer Bedeutung hervor.—*Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 94.

come down from heaven, destroy their enemies, and establish His Messianic kingdom. Whether they thought that, according to the Jewish notion, His kingdom was to be erected in this world; or whether they supposed that the earth was to be destroyed, and the saints with their Lord were to be transferred to heaven, does not appear. In consequence of this expectation, great excitement prevailed, and the Thessalonian church was thrown into a state of confusion. Men's minds were withdrawn from their ordinary duties; the interests of a world which was in a few years to pass away appeared insignificant; the awfulness of the impending advent preoccupied their thoughts; secular business was neglected, and idleness and disorder were the inevitable result. Hence the repeated exhortations of the apostle to the quiet performance of their earthly duties: "to study to be quiet, and to do their own business, and to work with their own hands;" "to walk honestly toward them that are without, so that they might have lack of nothing" (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 9-13). Some also were in perplexity and distress concerning the fate of their deceased friends, fearing that these would miss those blessings which they expected Christ to confer at His advent (1 Thess. iv. 13). It was with special reference to these disorders and opinions that the apostle wrote his first epistle; but it would appear that the excitement, instead of being allayed, had rather increased. The Epistle had been misinterpreted. Enthusiastic men, who supposed themselves privileged with revelations and visions, taught that the day of the Lord was at hand. A spurious epistle of the apostle had been circulated, announcing the immediate advent of Christ (2 Thess. ii. 2). Paul's preaching when at Thessalonica had either been perverted or misunderstood. And thus the Thessalonian converts "were shaken in mind and troubled" (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2).

It has already been observed that Paul, when at Thessalonica, had directed the special attention of his converts to the kingdom of Christ, and to His coming as the Judge of the world. He comforted them amid persecution with the prospect of Christ's final victory over all their enemies; exhorted them to possess their souls in patience, and to "wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus,

which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 10); and he announced that the Lord Himself would descend from heaven, accompanied with His mighty angels (1 Thess. iv. 16). And indeed in all his epistles Paul lays great stress on the advent,—it occupies a prominent part in his teaching. He held it forth as the object of the believers' faith and hope, and the great motive to stir them up to watchfulness, holiness, unworldliness, and a patient endurance of those sufferings to which, as Christians, they were exposed. "The grace of God," writes the apostle in one of his last epistles, "that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the manifestation of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 12). And again: "Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv. 5). Paul seldom refers, as we do, to the solemnity and uncertainty of death as a motive to watchfulness and obedience. The "coming of the Son of man" was not used by him in a metaphorical sense, and in reference to Christ's coming at death, but it was a real and actual advent, for which all ought to be prepared. Believers should hold themselves in a state of constant preparation, not so much because all must die, but because the Judge standeth at the door.

It has been plausibly argued that the reason why Paul places so much stress on the second advent is because he believed that Christ would come in his own day; in short, it is asserted that he believed and taught, especially in this First Epistle to the Thessalonians, the immediateness of the advent. Thus the Thessalonians were not guilty so much of misunderstanding Paul's declarations, as of perverting them: their error did not consist in erroneously imagining that the apostle taught that Christ would soon come, but in deriving from this notion false consequences. "St. Paul himself," observes Dean Howson, "shared in that expectation, but being under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, he did not deduce therefrom any erroneous practical conclusions."<sup>1</sup> It is affirmed that

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 475.

Paul speaks of the advent in such terms as would warrant the supposition that he and those to whom he wrote would be alive at the time of its occurrence. "This I say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (*ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Κυρίου*) "shall not prevent them which are asleep" (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Here "those who are alive and remain" are distinguished from "those who are asleep," in which former class the apostle, by prefixing *ἡμεῖς*, includes himself and his readers.<sup>1</sup> And a similar declaration is contained in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51).<sup>2</sup> Nor indeed, it is asserted, was this the opinion of Paul only, but was shared in by the other sacred writers. "Be ye also patient," writes James; "stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (Jas. v. 8, 9). "The end of all things," writes Peter, "is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet. iv. 7). "Little children," writes John, "it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). And the Apocalypse closes with words announcing the immediate advent: "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20).<sup>3</sup> And to the positive declarations of Paul are to be added, as confirmations, all those passages in which he exhorts his converts "to wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 7); "to wait for the Son of God from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10); "and to wait patiently for Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5),—expressions which seem to make the certainty of Christ's immediate advent the direct motive to vigilance and patience. And it is further asserted that this opinion appears to receive justification from the words of our Lord Himself. In His prediction

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., note on 1 Thess. iv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Another but inferior reading of this verse, adopted by Lachmann, is: "We shall all sleep, but we shall not be changed:" meaning, "All men shall die, but all shall not experience the glorious transformation of the blessed."

<sup>3</sup> See Reuss' *Geschichte N.T.*, pp. 25, 26, where a list of passages is given, supposed to refer to an immediate advent.

of the destruction of Jerusalem, He tells His disciples that "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." And He adds, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, 34). Now it has been said that whatever explanation may be given to these words after the fulfilment of the prophecy in the destruction of Jerusalem, yet before that occurrence they must have been understood as indicating the immediate coming of the Son of man.

Such a view, that Paul not only expected but inculcated the immediateness of the advent, has been adopted by Grotius, Olshausen, Koch, Neander, Lechler, Baur, Winer, Reuss, Lünemann, and among English divines by Alford, Jowett, Stanley, and Conybeare and Howson. "The belief in the near approach of the coming of Christ," observes Professor Jowett, "is spoken of or implied in almost every book of the New Testament: in the discourses of our Lord Himself as well as in the Acts of the Apostles; in the Epistles of St. Paul no less than in the book of the Revelation."<sup>1</sup> Some suppose that on this point Paul changed his views. In the beginning of his ministry and in his first epistles, he taught the immediateness of the advent; but as time rolled on, and he became "Paul the aged," this doctrine made less impression on him, until the expectation faded away, and he was led, toward the close of his ministry, to entertain the desire to depart and to be with Christ. "In this single point," observes Olshausen, "can we discern in his later writings a different form of doctrinal statement from that contained in his earlier epistles. In his earliest epistles, St. Paul expresses a hope that he himself may live until the time of the Lord's return (see 1 Thess. iv.; 2 Cor. v.), but in the later he renounced

<sup>1</sup> Jowett *On the Epistles of Paul*, vol. i. p. 108.



this hope, and longs to depart and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23).<sup>1</sup>

An insidious use has been made of this opinion by Gibbon in assigning the causes for the rapid propagation of Christianity. Among these causes, he mentions the belief in the approaching end of the world as taught by Paul, and perhaps countenanced by the discourses of our Lord Himself; and he asserts that such a belief, though erroneous, was permitted to continue, because it was found helpful in gaining converts to Christianity. "It was universally believed that the end of the world, and the kingdom of heaven, were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apostles; the tradition of it was preserved by their earliest disciples; and those who understood in their literal sense the discourses of Christ Himself, were obliged to expect the second and glorious coming of the Son of man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguished which had beheld His humble condition on earth, and which might still be witness of the calamities of the Jews under Vespasian or Hadrian. The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation; but as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the Church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself and all the various races of mankind should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge."<sup>2</sup>

Now if Paul did inculcate the immediateness of the advent; if he did assert that he and his Thessalonian converts would actually be alive at the coming of Christ; then unquestionably he was mistaken and in error; and to admit that an erroneous doctrine could be taught by him must materially influence our

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen, *Der Brief an die Römer*, p. 14; also Clark's translation of *Olshausen on the Romans*, p. 11. See also Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 182, and Alford on 1 Thess. iv. 15. "His expectation," observes Alford, "does not seem to have been so strong toward the end of his course."

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xv., the Second Cause. In a note he observes: "This expectation was countenanced by the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, and by the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians."

idea of inspiration—we must relinquish the infallibility of revelation.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it any answer to affirm that the time of the advent was expressly excluded by our Lord Himself from being a matter of revelation,<sup>2</sup> because, according to the above opinion, Paul taught definitely concerning it. To assert its uncertainty, and the consequent possibility of its occurrence in the lifetime of himself and of his converts, was not at variance with inspiration; but to affirm definitely that it would happen in his days is another matter, and appears to be utterly at variance with the character of an inspired teacher of truth. And it is to be observed that in the very passage on which the view in question is founded, the apostle asserts his inspiration, and affirms that the statement which he makes was by the word of the Lord (τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου),<sup>3</sup> plainly appealing to the authority of Christ for what he was about to say;<sup>4</sup> so that if he were mistaken, either our Lord Himself must err with him, or the apostle had no such divine authority for the statement which he made.

But in truth it is an error to suppose that Paul either entertained the belief of Christ's immediate advent or asserted it, and this appears even from what he himself says in these two Epistles to the Thessalonians.<sup>5</sup> This is especially evident from the language of the Second Epistle. In it the apostle tells them directly that the day of Christ was not at hand, but that a series of events would take place before its occurrence. "Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and concerning our gathering unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day

<sup>1</sup> This is the alternative which Professor Jowett adopts. See his work on *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> The answer given by Dean Alford.

<sup>3</sup> Ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου, "in a word of the Lord," that is, according to, in conformity with, the word of the Lord,—alluding not to any particular saying, but to a special revelation.

<sup>4</sup> Lünemann gets over this difficulty by asserting that the λόγος Κυρίου refers to the relation of those who sleep to the living, but not to the persons who will belong to the one class or the other at the advent.—*Kommentar*, p. 130. See also Olshausen *in loco*.

<sup>5</sup> See an excellent sermon by Professor Butler on the "Practical Uses of the Uncertainty of Christ's Coming," First Series, Sermon I.

of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come the apostasy first" (2 Thess. ii. 1-3),—words which would seem almost to exclude the notion of an immediate advent. Nor can it be affirmed that the apostle, in consequence of the continued disorder of the Thessalonian Church, here intimates a change of opinion from what he entertained when he wrote the First Epistle, in which he speaks of himself and his converts being alive at the coming of the Lord ; because he had told the Thessalonians about this apostasy when he was in Thessalonica, and consequently before the First Epistle was written. "Remember ye not that, when I was with you, I told you these things?" (2 Thess. ii. 5). And in the First Epistle he represses the curiosity of the Thessalonians about the precise time of the advent, by telling them that it was beyond the sphere of his teaching, and shrouded in mystery and uncertainty : "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you : for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. v. 1, 2). And in the Epistle to the Romans he asserts that before the coming of Christ, the fulness of the Gentiles and the conversion of the Jews would occur,—in other words, the world would be Christianized (Rom. xi. 24-27),—which was evidently a matter of time. So also in various passages he looks forward to death, and speaks in the same comprehensive terms of being raised from the dead, as those in which he speaks of believers being alive at the coming of Christ, so that the one expression must modify the other : "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power" (1 Cor. vi. 14). And in a somewhat similar form : "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. iv. 14).<sup>1</sup> And in the same Epistle, in which he makes the announcement, "The

<sup>1</sup> "It is evident, whatever force may be in the expression, 'We the living, who remain at the coming of the Lord,' to prove that Paul thought he was to be one of the living at Christ's coming to judgment, the expression found in 2 Cor. iv. 14, 'He who raised up Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you,' must be of equal force to prove that Paul thought he would be of the number of the dead who are to be raised by Jesus at His coming."—Macknight *On the Epistles*, note on 1 Thess. iv. 15.

Lord is at hand," he looks forward not to being alive at the coming of the Lord, but to his own death: "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 20-23).

Accordingly most critics have adopted the opinion, that when the apostle says, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," he speaks neither of himself nor of his contemporaries, but of a later age of Christianity. This opinion, with considerable variations in the interpretation of the words, is adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, Theophylact, Erasmus, Castalio, Calvin, Bengel, Lange, Doddridge, Whitby, Macknight, Ellicott, and Wordsworth. There are, however, several explanations of the words which are to be rejected, as a straining of the passage and as manifestly erroneous. For example, that of Turretin: "We, if we survive and remain;" that of Œcumenius, that *οἱ ζῶντες* are the souls and *οἱ κοιμηθέντες* the bodies of Christians; and that of Joachim Lange: "We who survive in our posterity."<sup>1</sup> The words must be taken in their plain grammatical meaning. Now there does not seem to be any violence done to the passage, if we suppose that the apostle here speaks as a member of the Christian Church; that he uses a common form of expression, "we Christians," but not at all intending to express his confidence that he himself and his converts would be actually alive at the advent. "He spoke," says St. Chrysostom, "not of himself, but of Christians that would be alive at the day of judgment." "He is speaking," says Theodoret, "of the faithful who will then be alive, and will be caught up in the air." The reason why he classes himself among the *οἱ ζῶντες*, and not among the *οἱ κοιμηθέντες*, is because he then belonged to that class when he wrote the Epistle. It is admitted that the words are also susceptible of the meaning, that the apostle taught that he and his converts would be alive at the coming of Christ; but this meaning is excluded by contrary statements in other portions of his writings, and therefore the other meaning, that he speaks of

<sup>1</sup> See Lünemann's *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, pp. 123-130.

Christians generally, equally justified by the words, is to be adopted.<sup>1</sup> The apostle must be interpreted in consistency with himself. The same remarks are applicable to the similar passage in First Corinthians: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51).

It is to be observed that the time of the advent is expressly excluded by our Lord from the sphere of revelation: it is one of those secret things not to be revealed, which the Father has reserved to Himself. Christ and His inspired apostles announced the *certainty* of the advent,—that the day of the Lord would come; but neither Christ nor His inspired apostles were commissioned to announce the *time* of the advent,—when the Lord would come. In the same prophecy, where our Lord asserts that immediately after those days the sign of the Son of man shall be seen in the heavens, He adds, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. xxiv. 36). And before His ascension He checks the curiosity of His disciples on this point, saying, "It belongs not to you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i. 7). And in a similar manner, in a passage formerly adverted to, Paul announces the uncertainty of the time of the advent, and that the only point that was known about it was, that it would come unexpectedly (1 Thess. v. 2, 3).

Such being the case, the time of the advent being a point not revealed,—indeed, being expressly excluded from the sphere of revelation,—the Church was to be kept in a state of expectation and watchfulness. The inspired apostles were themselves in ignorance when Christ should come. It was to them, as well as to other Christians, a matter of uncertainty, veiled in an impenetrable mysteriousness; here they were obliged to confess their ignorance: they knew neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man would come. Hence it was obviously impossible for them to teach anything definite or certain on the subject. The Lord might come at any time.

<sup>1</sup> See long and interesting notes on the passage in Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, and Ellicott *On the Thessalonians*. Both of these commentators adopt the view that Paul did not teach the immediateness of the advent.

The fact that Christ had so lately left the world, the warm impressions which His presence made having not yet cooled, and the recent promises of His return, would impress more deeply upon the minds of the early Christians the desire for His second advent, and may perhaps in part account for the great stress which the sacred writers put upon that event. They were so near to the first advent, that they felt in a stronger manner than we can possibly do the importance of the second. It may be that the apostles did not regard the advent, as we are apt to do, as far removed into the distant future, as wholly impossible to happen in their days, but as an occurrence which might at any time take place. They had perhaps but little conception that eighteen centuries afterwards believers would be in the same position as themselves, looking forward to the coming of the Lord as a future event.<sup>1</sup> Hence it was that they exhorted their disciples to hold themselves in constant readiness, so that if the Lord came in their days, He might not find them unprepared. Although they taught nothing definite as to the time, yet its very indefiniteness and uncertainty was to the apostles the strongest reason why they and their converts should be watchful, waiting for the return of the Lord. The attitude of Christians was not to be an impatient and restless longing, but a patient waiting for the coming of the Son of God; and the great lesson which its uncertainty was designed to teach them was vigilance. "That day is concealed," observes St. Augustine, "that all days might be observed,"<sup>2</sup>—in conformity with our Lord's own application of the subject, "Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matt. xxiv. 42, 44).

There is no reason, then, for the somewhat rash assertion that Paul shared in the erroneous views of the Thessalonians concerning the immediateness of the advent. Such an opinion he did not teach. The passage on which it is founded is clearly susceptible of another meaning, more in accordance with his

<sup>1</sup> Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ergo latet ille dies, ut observentur omnes dies.*

declarations elsewhere expressed. On the contrary, he wrote the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians with the express purpose of refuting that opinion. His office was to proclaim the certainty of the advent,—that the Lord would surely come, and would come unexpectedly; but it was no part of his mission to declare when He would come. Nay, it would appear from his predictions of the previous coming of the man of sin and of the conversion of the world, that he himself did not expect the coming of Christ in his own days, and that he looked forward to death, and not to translation, as the end of his course;<sup>1</sup> though at the same time there seems nothing at variance with inspiration in supposing that Paul, whilst he abstained from all definite statements, might hope that Christ would come speedily. So that what Paul taught was the uncertainty of the time of the advent, or at the most the possibility of its occurrence in his days, and the consequent necessity of living in a state of constant preparation.

The Thessalonian Church—and indeed, it would seem, the early Christians in general—went beyond this teaching of Paul, and it appears to have been not an unusual belief among them that Christ would come in their days. Various causes served to originate and foster this belief. Certain expressions in our Lord's prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem might be construed as if they inculcated that opinion. Before its fulfilment in the actual destruction of Jerusalem, it must have been very difficult, if not impossible, to understand the double sense of the prophecy, and to separate those portions of it which refer to the destruction of Jerusalem from those which refer to the coming of Christ as the Judge of the world; and therefore it is not at all wonderful that the early Christians saw in this prediction the announcement of an immediate advent. Even to us, with all the knowledge which the fulfilment of the prophecy and the experience of the past afford, there is still considerable difficulty in its interpretation, arising

<sup>1</sup> “In view of all the circumstances, we must believe that Paul, when he wrote *ἡμῶν οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι*, knew this much, that the time of Christ's coming was more distant than to allow of himself or any of his contemporaries living to see it.”—Davidson's *Introduction to N. T.* (old edition), vol. ii. p. 465.

in all probability from the fact that the complete fulfilment is yet future ; but how much more difficult must it have been for the early Christians, who did not possess our advantages !

The state of the early Church was another reason why Christians were led to believe in the speedy advent of the Lord. Christianity was then fresh and new to the world : its truths must have made a far stronger impression on believers in those days than they do now. The Church, as a whole, possessed the deep feelings which are in general only now experienced on the first flush of conversion. Besides, as already remarked, the fact that Christ had so lately left the world would impress more deeply upon their minds the desire for His return. Further, the Church was then in a persecuted condition, and therefore would naturally long for deliverance, and anticipate the coming of their great Deliverer and King.

The state of the world may be mentioned as an additional reason. The wars and commotions abroad ; the earthquakes, famines, and pestilences ; the condition of the Jewish people ; the rise of Christianity,—all seemed to be the precursors of some great crisis. And if, even in our days, important crises cause many to believe in the approaching advent of Christ and the end of the world, such crises must have created a still stronger influence on the early Christians, when the promise of Christ's coming was fresh, and when time had not yet falsified the idea that it was at hand. The early Christians would naturally read in all remarkable occurrences the signs and forerunners of the Son of man in the heavens. For all these reasons, we are not to wonder at the erroneous views concerning the advent entertained by the Thessalonians and other early Christians ; indeed, it is rather a matter of surprise that they were not more prevalent than they appear to have been, and certainly would have been, had they been actually entertained by Paul and the other sacred writers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the opposite view of the subject, see Professor Jowett's able dissertation "on the belief in the coming of Christ in the apostolic age," *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 118-124.



## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

**T**HE authenticity of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians has been more disputed by recent critics than the First. This has been mainly on account of the predictions contained in it relating to "the man of sin." It was universally acknowledged as Paul's until the beginning of the present century, when it was first questioned by Schmidt. The external testimonies in its favour are, however, if anything, even stronger than those in favour of the First Epistle. It is admitted that the following supposed allusion to it by Polycarp (A.D. 116), given by Lardner and Kirchhofer, is doubtful: "Be ye also moderate, and count not such as your enemies, but call them back as suffering and erring members" (2 Thess. iii. 15).<sup>1</sup> But the allusion by Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) seems unquestionable: "When also the man of apostasy, who speaketh great things against the Most High, shall dare to commit unlawful deeds against us Christians" (2 Thess. ii. 3).<sup>2</sup> The Epistle is also directly quoted by Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian. Thus Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "And again in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he [Paul] says: 'And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the presence of His

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Philipp.* c. 11. Sobrii ergo estote et vos in hoc; et non sicut inimicos tales existimetis, sed sicut passibilia membra et errantia eos revocate, ut omnium vestrum corpus salvetis.

<sup>2</sup> *Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 110. "Ὅταν καὶ ὁ τῆς ἀποστασίας ἄνθρωπος, ὁ καὶ εἰς τὸν ὕψιστον ἐξέλλα λαλῶν, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἄνομα τολμῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανούς.

coming'” (2 Thess. ii. 8).<sup>1</sup> And again: “Concerning whom the apostle in the Epistle which is the Second to the Thessalonians thus speaks: ‘Except a falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped’” (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4).<sup>2</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) says: “There is not in all of us, says the apostle, that knowledge. But pray ye that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (2 Thess. iii. 2).<sup>3</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) writes: “And in the Second Epistle to the same persons, he [Paul] writes with greater solicitude, ‘But I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering to Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, namely of false prophets, nor by epistle, namely of false apostles, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand’” (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2).<sup>4</sup>

Nor is the internal evidence in favour of this Epistle by any means defective. The character of Paul is impressed upon it: his lively sympathy with his converts (i. 4), his tenderness when censuring them (iii. 14, 15), his commendation of them (i. 5), his characteristic mention of himself (iii. 7–9), and his desire for an interest in their prayers (iii. 1). The style is also undoubtedly Pauline. We have examples of Pauline digressions and expansions (i. 3–10), of paronomasia (iii. 3, 11), of anacoluthon (ii. 3), and of numerous Pauline expressions and phrases (ii. 13, 15, iii. 6, 9),—in short, as many

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. hæres.* iii. 7, 2. Et iterum in secunda ad Thessalonicenses, de antichristo dicens: “Et tunc revelabitur iniquus, quem Dominus Jesus Christus interficiet Spiritu oris sui, et destruet presentia adventus sui illum.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 25, 1. De quo apostolus in epistola, quæ est ad Thessalonicenses secunda, sic ait: “Quoniam nisi venerit abscessio primum, et revelatus fuerit homo peccati, filius perditionis, qui adversatur et extollit se super omne quod dicitur Deus, aut colitur.”

<sup>3</sup> *Stromata*, v. 3, 17. Οὐκ ἐν πᾶσι, φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος, ἡ γνῶσις· προσεύχισθε δὲ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπόρων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων· οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις.

<sup>4</sup> *De resurrect. carn.* c. 24. Et in secunda pleniori sollicitudine ad eosdem: Obsecro autem vos, fratres, per adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et congregationem nostram ad illum, ne cito commoveamini animo, neque turbemini, neque per spiritum, neque per sermonem, scilicet pseudoprophetarum, neque per epistolam, scilicet pseudoapostolorum, ac si per nostram, quasi insistat dies Domini.

internal proofs of Pauline origin as could be expected to be found in so short an epistle.<sup>1</sup> Many of them are beyond the power of imitation; and, all combined, prove that the Epistle is undoubtedly the composition of Paul. "None of the writings of the New Testament," observes Ewald, "have so much of the living freshness of the first age of the gospel, or present so vivid a picture of the hopes of the first believers, as the Epistles to the Thessalonians."<sup>2</sup>

But notwithstanding these external and internal evidences, this Epistle, of all the Pauline Epistles with the exception of the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, has been most severely assailed, and that not on historical grounds, but chiefly on account of the prophecy of Antichrist contained in it. The first to question its genuineness was Schmidt in 1801, in his *Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des N. T.*<sup>3</sup> De Wette followed in the first edition of his *Introduction*, but in subsequent editions he modified his opinions; and latterly in his fourth edition, and in his commentary on the Thessalonian Epistles, he declares himself decidedly in favour of its genuineness. Schrader, in his *Apostel Paulus*, in various notes and in his paraphrase of the Epistle, attacks its authenticity. Kern assails the Epistle on the ground of its being subsequent to the time of the apostle, proceeding on the assumption that the man of sin was Nero.<sup>4</sup> Baur, in his *Apostel Paulus*, as well as in his *Theological Journal* for 1855, argues against the Epistle, stating the objections of former opponents with his usual ability and skill.<sup>5</sup> And more recently, in 1862, Hilgenfeld calls in question the genuineness of the Epistle, and assigns it to the age of Trajan.<sup>6</sup> It has as yet been assailed by no theologian of any note in Britain.

Besides objections similar to those urged by Baur against

<sup>1</sup> Professor Jowett gives a very clear statement of the internal evidences in his *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 146-149.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Handschriften des Apostels Paulus*, p. 13, quoted by Professor Jowett, vol. i. p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Also in his *Einführung in das N. T.*, vol. ii. p. 256 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Tübing. Zeitschr. f. Theol.* 1839, ii. pp. 145-214.

<sup>5</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 99-107; *Theolog. Jahrb.* 1855, vol. ii. pp. 141-168.

<sup>6</sup> *Zeitschr. für wiss. Theol.*, Halle 1862, p. 242 ff.

the First Epistle, and which have already been considered, this Second Epistle has especially been assailed on account of the prophetic portion in the second chapter. The following is a summary of these special objections:—

1. The prediction of Antichrist is pronounced to be un-Pauline, and to indicate a later Montanist origin. This prediction certainly distinguishes the Epistle from the other writings of Paul, but only as regards the subject treated, not the style or phraseology of the passage, which is undoubtedly Pauline. To argue that the subject is one which Paul would not discuss, is certainly very precarious reasoning, being a point which we have no right *à priori* to determine. And to assert that it indicates a Montanist origin is very arbitrary; rather it may be affirmed to be a Jewish notion derived from the prophecies of Daniel, though at the same time there is no reason why it should not be considered as original and undervived.

2. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, it is alleged, contradicts the First. In the First Epistle, Paul declares that the day of the Lord is at hand, and expresses his expectation that he and his converts would live to see the coming of Christ. But in the Second Epistle the coming of Christ is deferred, and declared to be not immediate. "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess. ii. 3).<sup>1</sup> But it has already been shown, in the remarks on Paul's views of the advent, that there is no contradiction between the First and the Second Epistles, as there is no reason to suppose that the apostle ever taught the immediate advent of Christ. But even supposing that there is an apparent discrepancy between these two epistles, yet this would rather appear to be an argument in favour of genuineness, as such a discrepancy would have been avoided by a forger.

3. Kern asserts that the prophecy concerning Antichrist refers to a later period, after the death of Paul. He assumes that the Antichrist, whose coming is described as impending, is Nero, who after his death was supposed to be alive, and whose speedy return from the East to the throne was dreaded

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 103 ff.

as Antichrist by several among the early Christians :<sup>1</sup> he that withholdeth (ὁ κατέχων) is Vespasian, with his son Titus, who was then besieging Jerusalem ; and the apostasy (ἡ ἀποστασία) is the general falling away of Jews and Christians. The temple of Jerusalem, however, must have been still standing, as the prediction speaks of Antichrist sitting in the temple of God. Hence, according to Kern, the Epistle must have been composed between the years 68 and 70, after the death of Nero and before the destruction of Jerusalem. Hilgenfeld, on the other hand, supposes that the statements in the prediction suit the time of Trajan ; because it was then that the Gnostic heresy first arose, which, according to him, is the apostasy averted to ; and because the persecution mentioned in 2 Thess. i. 4-10 suits the reign of Trajan, when the Christians were for the first time generally persecuted throughout the Roman empire, the Neronian persecution being confined to Rome. But to affirm with Kern that the man of sin is Nero, and the restrainer Vespasian, are mere gratuitous assumptions which have no foundation in the prediction, and are at best only ingenious hypotheses worked out of the superstitious notions prevalent after the death of Nero.<sup>2</sup> The opinion of Hilgenfeld, that the apostasy is the Gnostic heresy, is equally arbitrary, and is without warrant in the Epistle. And the various local persecutions recorded in the Acts are a sufficient explanation of 2 Thess. i. 4-10.

4. The authentication given at the end of the Epistle, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token of every epistle : so I write" (2 Thess. iii. 17), is objected to by Baur as an evident desire of the writer to represent the epistle as Paul's, and because Paul could not thus mention this authentication as the token of every epistle, inasmuch as this was only the second epistle which he had composed.<sup>3</sup> But the same authentication is expressly given at the close of First Corinthians and Colossians (1 Cor. xvi.

<sup>1</sup> This popular belief that Nero was alive was not confined to the Christians : it is alluded to by Tacitus in his *History*, ii. 8, and by Suetonius (*Nero*, 57).

<sup>2</sup> See a statement and a refutation of Kern's views in Lünemann's *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, pp. 170-175 ; and in Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 105.

21; Col. iv. 18); and it is extremely probable that the concluding salutation of all Paul's epistles was written by his own hands, as a voucher of their genuineness; for it is the salutation, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (2 Thess. iii. 18), which the apostle here asserts to be the token in every epistle. It is a mere assumption that this is only the second epistle which Paul wrote; but even if it were, Paul may here only express the rule which he intended to follow in all future epistles. And such an authentication in this epistle was the more necessary and appropriate, if we admit, as is probable, that a spurious epistle had been circulated among the Thessalonians, and had occasioned those disorders which disturbed the peace of the Church (2 Thess. ii. 2).

The undesigned coincidences which refer to this Epistle, given by Paley in the *Horæ Paulinæ*, are neither numerous nor important. They amount only to three, and the third is inconclusive. They are as follows:—

1. The obscurity of the prophetic part can only be accounted for on the supposition of the genuineness of the Epistle. The whole passage is involved in mystery, and is probably inexplicable. But what is obscure to us, may not have been obscure to the Thessalonians. The passage refers to a conversation which the author had with them on the subject: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time" (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6). If such a conversation actually passed, it follows that the Epistle is authentic. "No man," observes Paley, "writes unintelligibly on purpose. But it may easily happen that a part of a letter which relates to a subject upon which the parties had conversed together before, which refers to what had been before *said*, which is in truth a portion or continuation of a former discussion, may be utterly without meaning to a stranger who should pick up the letter upon the road, and yet be perfectly clear to the person to whom it is directed, and with whom the previous communication had passed. And if, in a letter which thus accidentally fell into my hands, I found a passage expressly referring to a former conversation, and

difficult to be explained without knowing that conversation, I should consider this very difficulty as a proof that the conversation had actually passed, and consequently that the letter contained the real correspondence of real persons." The argument is ingenious, and, so far as appears, conclusive; at least it is exceedingly improbable that it would have occurred to a forger to take such a roundabout mode of making his writing appear to be genuine, certainly not to such clumsy forgers as those of the second century.

2. In the Epistle we read: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you" (2 Thess. iii. 8). It is evident from this, that during his residence in Thessalonica the apostle received nothing from the church of the Thessalonians; and this fact is asserted by implication in the Epistle to the Philippians: "Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. iv. 15). And the apostle also states the motive which induced him to decline support from the Thessalonians: "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us" (2 Thess. iii. 9). Now in the Acts we are informed that the same conduct was pursued by the apostle at Ephesus, and that the motive which induced him to do so was the same, namely, to set an example to his converts. Thus, in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, he is represented as saying, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak" (Acts xx. 34, 35).

3. The third instance mentioned by Paley is a supposed reference to the First Epistle, contained in 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor *by letter as from us*, as that the day of Christ is at hand." From these words Paley argues that the apostle here

alludes to a misconstruction which the Thessalonians had put upon his words in the First Epistle (1 Thess. iv. 15-17, v. 4). But, as will afterwards be observed, the most natural meaning of this passage is that the reference is to a forged epistle which had been circulated among the Thessalonians; so that there is here no allusion to the First Epistle. But, on the other hand, such an allusion appears to be contained in 2 Thess. ii. 15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

## II. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle appears to have been occasioned by the intelligence brought back to the apostle by the bearer of the First Epistle, or through some other channel. The circumstances of the Thessalonian Church had not materially altered. The same persecutions continued, and the same fanatical views of the advent prevailed. But with this general agreement there was some change. Progress had been made in Christian virtue, especially in the cardinal graces of faith and love. The apostle was enabled to thank God that their faith grew exceedingly, and that their charity toward each other abounded; and to glory in them among the churches of God, for the remarkable patience with which they endured their persecutions and trials (2 Thess. i. 3, 4). Their anxiety for the fate of those who had died before the advent of Christ had been allayed by the instructions of the apostle, given in the First Epistle; but the idea of an immediate advent had taken a stronger hold on their minds. This had occasioned fear and alarm among some, and an impatient longing for the coming of Christ among others. In consequence of this, there were several who had left off working for their subsistence, and the Church in general was in danger of falling into a state of religious fanaticism. Hence the apostle was constrained to employ still stronger terms than in the First Epistle, in censuring them for their idleness and unsteadiness: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that



there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. iii. 10-12).

To this increased disorder in the Thessalonian Church the apostle alludes, when he beseeches them not "to be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us" (*μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὥς δι' ἡμῶν*), "as that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. ii. 2). Some suppose that the reference here is to a misinterpretation of the First Epistle,<sup>1</sup>—that the Thessalonians erroneously supposed that the apostle taught the immediateness of the advent, whereas he only insisted on its suddenness and unexpectedness. But the words *ὥς δι' ἡμῶν*, which can only signify "as purporting to proceed from us," seem rather to point to a spurious epistle. It would thus appear that not only were the words of the apostle perverted (*μήτε διὰ λόγου*), but that a false epistle, purporting to be the apostle's (*μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς*), had been circulated, announcing the immediate advent of Christ; and that this, and not a mere misunderstanding or perversion of the words of the former Epistle, was the cause of the increase of the excitement.<sup>2</sup>

Such then appears to have been the state of matters which occasioned the writing of this Second Epistle. The main design of the apostle was to correct the prevailing error concerning the advent of Christ,—to refute the mistaken notion "that the day of Christ is at hand." And, along with this correction of error, was the removal of abuses to which it had given rise: the apostle sought to warn his converts against that idle and disorderly state into which they had fallen. But, at the same time, he was enabled to praise and commend them for the progress which they had made in faith and love, and to exhort them to perseverance.

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 415; Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Second Thessalonians, No. III.; Reuss' *Geschichte N. T.*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> See Ellicott *in loco*; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 204; Lünemann *in loco*. So also Alford. Jowett's opinion is that the apostle is not referring definitely to any particular epistle, but to the possibility only of some one or other being used against him.

## III. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is divided into three distinct parts. The first part is *eucharistic*, and contains the thanksgiving of the apostle on behalf of the Thessalonians (i. 1–12). The second part is *apocalyptic*, and contains the prediction concerning the man of sin (ii. 1–12). And the third part is *practical*, and contains warnings against idleness and disorder, and admonitions to honesty and diligence (ii. 13–iii. 18). In the first part, the apostle thanks God for the progress which the Thessalonians had made in faith and love, praises their patience in the endurance of persecutions, encourages them to perseverance by the prospect of victory and recompense at the advent of Christ, and prays for their further perfection in Christianity. In the second part, he adverts to their error of regarding the day of Christ as at hand, admonishes them not to be shaken in mind or troubled concerning it, and reminds them of his former conversations with them on this subject,—how he had told them that the coming of Antichrist must precede the coming of Christ. In the third part, he exhorts them to continue in the instructions which he had delivered to them; requests an interest in their prayers that he might be delivered from his enemies, and that the cause of Christ might continue to prosper in the world; admonishes them to walk worthy of the gospel, especially warns them against that unsteadiness and idleness which prevailed among them, and exhorts them to a diligent performance of their earthly duties; and concludes the Epistle by appending with his own hand his apostolic benediction.

## IV. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

There is very little controversy concerning the date of this Epistle, among those who admit its genuineness. It was evidently written shortly after the first. The circumstances both of the apostle and of the Thessalonian Church remained in a great measure unchanged. Paul was still in the company of Silas and Timothy, whose names are attached with his own to this Epistle (2 Thess. i. 1). But after Paul left Corinth,

these two fellow-workers were never again together with him. Timothy rejoined Paul at Ephesus (Acts xix. 22), but there is no further mention of Silas in the Acts of the Apostles. Besides, the relations and wants of the church are similar to those which are presupposed in the First Epistle: similar commendations, warnings, instructions, and prayers are contained in both Epistles.<sup>1</sup> This Epistle, then, like the first, was written during Paul's residence of a year and a half at Corinth. It cannot, however, with any certainty be determined how long after the writing of the First Epistle it was composed. We must allow time for further information concerning the Thessalonian church to have reached the apostle, and also for the progress which the Thessalonians appear to have made in Christian virtues. An indication of time is supposed to be contained in 2 Thess. iii. 2, when the apostle entreats the Thessalonians to pray for him that he might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; which is supposed to allude to that outbreak of Jewish hatred and fanaticism which occurred toward the close of Paul's residence at Corinth (Acts xviii. 12, 13). The allusion, however, is doubtful. Still we cannot be far wrong in fixing the date of the composition of this Epistle in the year 53, during the latter part of Paul's residence at Corinth.

Some (Grotius, Ewald, Baur, Laurent, Davidson, 2d ed.) reverse the order of the Epistles, and suppose that the Second Epistle was in reality the first. Grotius supposes that it was written to Jewish Christians who had fled from Judea, even before Paul had been at Thessalonica. The reason of this strange supposition was a desire to identify the man of sin with Caligula, who demanded to be worshipped as God, and attempted to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Ewald thinks that there are in the Epistle itself evidences of its priority, and that it has been placed second on account of its brevity. The Second Epistle, it is argued, alludes to conversations which the apostle had with the Thessalonians; and the authentication attached to it, as the token in every epistle, agrees best with the fact of its being the first which

<sup>1</sup> See Lünemann's *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius' *Caligula*, 22, 23; Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 8.

the apostle wrote to them ; besides, there are indications in the First Epistle which presuppose a longer lapse of time than merely a few months.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Ewald supposes that the Second Epistle was written from Berea before the apostle came to Corinth, and that the First Epistle was written at the close of the Corinthian residence.<sup>2</sup> But the reasons given are without weight. Rather the Second Epistle refers to the First. The First Epistle describes how the Thessalonians received the gospel, whilst the Second mentions their advancement in faith and love ; the First Epistle alludes to the commencement, the Second to the progress of the Christian life. And indeed the First Epistle seems to be directly mentioned in the Second : "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or *our epistle*" (2 Thess. ii. 15). It is a mere evasion to assert that the Epistle here mentioned may be an epistle now lost, an assertion which is destitute of all probability.

The place of composition was Corinth. The note at the end of the Epistle, "The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens,"<sup>3</sup> is of no authority, and is undoubtedly erroneous. This, then, is the second in order of the extant epistles of Paul.

#### V. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

The great distinctive peculiarity of this Epistle is its apocalyptic nature—the prediction of Antichrist contained in the second section (2 Thess. ii. 1–12). This distinguishes that section from all the other writings of Paul, and allies it to the prophecies of Daniel or the apocalyptic visions of John. Paul here glances into the future, and reveals what is to happen. It is almost the only purely prophetic portion in his writings. (See, however, Rom. viii. 19–24, xi. 25 ; 2 Tim. iii. 1–5.) Still, as already observed, the difference is

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 30–33.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus*, pp. 16–18 ; *Geschichte des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> This is the superscription in AKL ; other MSS. read ἀπὸ Ῥώμης.

one of subject rather than of style or phraseology. "The passage in question," observes Dean Alford, "will be found on comparison to bear, in style and flow of sentences, a close resemblance to the denunciatory and prophetic portions of the other epistles. Compare, for instance, ver. 3 with Col. ii. 8, 16; vers. 8, 9 with 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; ver. 10. with Rom. i. 18, 1 Cor. i. 18, 2 Cor. ii. 15; ver. 11 with Rom. i. 24, 26; ver. 12 with Rom. ii. 5, 9, and Rom. i. 32."<sup>1</sup> And although this passage has been much objected to by modern critics, yet there is scarcely any passage in the New Testament which is more frequently alluded to by the early fathers, and that without the slightest doubt that it formed a part of a genuine epistle of Paul.

Besides the important commentaries of Calvin, Bengel, Olshausen, De Wette, Alford, and Wordsworth, in their works on the New Testament, the following are the best exegetical commentaries on the Epistles to the Thessalonians: those of Lünemann (third edition, 1867) in Meyer's *Kritisch exeg. Commentar über das Neue Testament*, Jowett (second edition, 1859), and Ellicott (third edition, 1866).<sup>2</sup>

### THE MAN OF SIN.<sup>3</sup>

As already observed, the reason why the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians has been so much assailed is the prediction concerning the man of sin contained in chap. ii. 1-12. Although it cannot be admitted that this is any objection to the genuineness of the Epistle, yet it must be allowed to be

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Lünemann's commentary is of peculiar excellence, hardly if at all inferior to the commentaries of Meyer himself; Jowett's commentary is excellent for the detached dissertations and the sympathy exhibited with those to whom the apostle wrote; and Ellicott's commentary is peculiarly valuable for its exegetical remarks.

<sup>3</sup> For dissertations on the "man of sin," see Lünemann's *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, pp. 214-229; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, pp. 55-68; Jowett *On the Thessalonians*, vol. i. pp. 178-194; and Wordsworth's *Greek Testament*, in *loc.*; also Bishop Newton's *Dissertation on St. Paul's Prophecy of the Man of Sin*.

perhaps the obscurest passage in the writings of Paul ; certainly it is to be classed among those things in his epistles which "are hard to be understood" (2 Pet. iii. 16). But it is to be observed that the description of the man of sin, though obscure to us, was not necessarily obscure to the Thessalonians. They had information on this point which we do not possess. The apostle, when at Thessalonica, had discoursed to them on this subject : "Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time" (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6). Nor was the information which the apostle imparted to them indefinite and general, but definite and precise. He had described to them the nature of the apostasy, the characteristics of the man of sin, and the influences which retarded his appearance (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4) ; and if these three points were known to us, as they were to the Thessalonians, we would in all probability possess the key to the interpretation of the passage.

A literal translation is here given, adopting the text of Tischendorf as the best : "But we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken from your [sober] mind nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle as from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, because [that day shall not come] except there come the apostasy first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or is an object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember you not that when I was with you, I told you these things? And now you know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only until he who restraineth is removed ; and then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the spirit of His mouth, and annihilate by the brightness of His coming ; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all deceit of unrighteousness in them that perish,

because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God sends to them the working of error that they might believe the lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

A few exegetical notes are necessary for the interpretation of the passage. Verse 1: *ὑπὲρ* is not to be translated "by," as in our version, as if it were a form of oath, but "in behalf of," "in regard to," "concerning." Verse 2: *σαλευθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς*, literally "shaken"—agitated like the waves by a storm, as the word signifies—"from your mind." The nearest approach to this is "disconcerted" or "unsettled,"—"that ye be not soon disconcerted." Verse 3: *ἡ ἀποστασία*, not "a falling away," but "the falling away," namely that on which the apostle had orally instructed his readers. "The article added," as Erasmus remarks, "signifies that before predicted apostasy." So also *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, "the man of sin." Verse 4: The words *ὡς Θεόν* are to be rejected, as the authority of manuscripts is against them. Verse 6: The restraining influence is in this verse in the neuter gender (*τὸ κατέχον*), "what restraineth," whereas in verse 7 it is in the masculine (*ὁ κατέχων*), "he who restrains." Verses 7, 8 are to be rendered: "For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, until he who now restrains is removed; and then shall the lawless one be revealed:" the meaning being, that so long as the restraining influence exists, the lawless one will work secretly; but whenever it is removed, he will work openly. There will be no longer the mystery of lawlessness, but the revelation of lawlessness. Verse 9: *ψεύδους* is not to be restricted, as in our version, to *τέρασι*, "lying wonders," but belongs to all the three substantives,—“in all power, and signs, and wonders of falsehood."

The apostle evidently represents *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας* as the counterpart of Christ. It is Antichrist (*ὁ ἀντίχριστος*, 1 John ii. 18) who is here described. He is the "man of sin," the personification or incarnation of iniquity; whereas Christ is the righteous One, the personification of righteousness. He is the mystery of lawlessness (*τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας*); whereas Christ is the mystery of godliness (*τὸ*

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μυστήριον τῆς εὐσεβείας). His coming (ἡ παρουσία) is described by the same word as the coming of Christ. He is represented as sitting in the temple of God, which is the proper seat of Christ. He shows or exhibits himself as God; whereas Christ is the true manifestation of the Godhead. His coming is after the working of Satan; whereas Christ's coming is in the power of the Holy Ghost. He, under the influence of Satan, performs signs and wonders, but they are miracles of falsehood, the counterpart of the real miracles which Christ performed. In short, the kingdom of light which Christ has established has its counterpart in the kingdom of darkness.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is this the only passage in which the doctrine of Antichrist is taught. Paul elsewhere alludes to it when describing the apostasy of the latter days: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. iv. 1-3). But especially there is a remarkable resemblance between this passage of Paul and the prophecy of Daniel concerning Antichrist (Dan. xi.). That prophecy may refer primarily to Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews, but the concluding portion is applicable to Antichrist, of whom that monarch was a type, and finds its complete fulfilment in him. The imagery employed by the prophet and the apostle is the same. Paul predicts an apostasy; and Daniel tells us that the king shall have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant (Dan. xi. 30). Paul tells us that the man of sin shall sit in the temple of God, displaying himself as God; and Daniel, in a passage quoted by our Lord, speaks of the abomination of desolation being set up in the holy place (Dan. xi. 31). Paul foretells that the man of sin shall oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God, or is an object of worship; and Daniel tells us that the king shall exalt and magnify himself above every

<sup>1</sup> See Ewald's *Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus*, p. 28.



god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished (Dan. xi. 36).<sup>1</sup> And so also this doctrine of Antichrist is unfolded at great length by St. John in the Apocalypse, as the beast coming out of the sea to whom the dragon gave his power, and his seat, and great authority (Rev. xiii. 2). And in his Epistle, St. John speaks of Antichrist as a person involving a plurality: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18).<sup>2</sup>

There was comparative unanimity among the early fathers concerning this prediction of Paul in all its chief points. In general, they considered that the fulfilment of the prediction was future; that the man of sin, or Antichrist, was an individual; and that the restraining influence was the Roman empire,—τὸ κατέχον denoting the empire, and ὁ κατέχων the succession of emperors.<sup>3</sup> "We Christians," observes Tertullian, "are under a peculiar necessity of praying for the emperors, and for the complete stability of the empire, because we know that dreadful power which hangs over the world, and the conclusion of the age, which threatens the most horrible evils, is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire. This is what we would not experience. And while we pray that it may be deferred, we hereby show our good-will to the perpetuity of the Roman state."<sup>4</sup> There was a diversity of opinion regarding the meaning of "the temple of God" in which Antichrist was to seat himself.

<sup>1</sup> For the resemblance between this prediction of Paul and the prophecy of Daniel, see Jowett *On St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 183 ff.; Ellicott *On the Thessalonians*, p. 110 (third edition); Hofmann's *Schriftbeweis*, vol. ii. p. 614 ff. Such also was the opinion of the fathers: Irenæus, *adv. hæc.* v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> The Antichrist in St. John's Epistle is, however, differently characterized. The error consisted in denying that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John iv. 3), consequently it consisted in Gnosticism; and hence the reason why some commentators connected the man of sin with the errors of the Gnostics. It is also to be observed that the term ἀντίχριστος is in Scripture only employed by St. John in his Epistles.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus, *adv. hæc.* v. 25, 1; Tertullian, *d. Resurr.* c. 24; Justin Martyr, *dial. cum Tryph.* c. 110. 3, 4; Origen, *contr. Cels.* vi. 64; Chrysostom, *in loc.*; Augustine, *de civit. Dei*, 20, 19; Theodoret, *in loc.*

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 32. So also Laetantius, *Divin. Instit.* vii. 25.

Some of the fathers (Chrysostom, Augustine) interpreted the expression figuratively, as denoting the Christian Church; whilst others (Irenæus, Cyril) took it literally, and referred it to the temple of Jerusalem, supposing that Antichrist would rebuild the temple. It was a prevalent opinion, continued even to the close of the fourth century, that Nero was Antichrist. He was the first emperor who persecuted the Christians, and was therefore held in abhorrence. After his death, there was a general impression that he was not really dead, but was in concealment in Parthia, and that he would return to regain his kingdom. With this notion the early Christians connected the idea of Antichrist. And as time went on, the notion took the shape of a return of Nero to life.<sup>1</sup> This strange opinion appears to have received its support from a misinterpretation of Rev. xvii. 10, 11: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth to perdition." By the five kings they understood the five emperors who had already reigned; by the sixth, Vespasian, the reigning emperor;<sup>2</sup> by the seventh, Titus, his son and successor; and the eighth, who was also one of the seven, was Antichrist, or Nero restored to life.<sup>3</sup>

The opponents of Romanism regarded the pope as Antichrist, and considered the passage as a prediction of the origin and growth of the papacy. This view was entertained before the Reformation by the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Wickliffites, the Hussites, and all those sects who were in opposition to the Roman hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> The reformers in general adopted this opinion. Such was the view of Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Melancthon, and Beza. According to them, the apostasy is the falling away from evangelical doctrine to the

<sup>1</sup> See Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 94; Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.*, vol. ii. p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were omitted, as their reigns were short.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek considers that this is not a misinterpretation, but the meaning which the author of the Apocalypse intended to convey.—*Introduction to N. T.*, vol. ii. p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> See Hurd *On Prophecy*, Sermon vii., where a history is given of the doctrine of Antichrist.

traditions of men—the corruptions of popery. “The man of sin,” or Antichrist, is not, as the fathers conceived, an individual, but the succession of popes: it is to be understood of a *series et successio hominum*, just as “he who restraineth,” ὁ κατέχων, is understood to be the succession of Roman emperors. And the restraining power, τὸ κατέχων, is the Roman empire, out of whose ruins the papacy arose.

The Romanists, on the other hand, were naturally led by opposition to consider the passage as a prediction of the rise and growth of Protestantism. The apostasy was the falling away from the Romish Church by the doctrines of the Reformation. “The man of sin,” or Antichrist, denoted the heretics generally, but especially Luther, the chief of the reformers. “That which restraineth” was the German empire, considered as the continuation of the Roman empire.”<sup>1</sup>

The Greek Church was naturally led to regard the prophecy as a prediction of Mahometanism. The apostasy was the falling off of many Greek and Oriental churches to Mahometanism; the man of sin was Mahomet; and the restraining influence the power of the Roman empire. Some of the reformers (Melancthon, Bucer) considered that there were two antichrists, one belonging to the Eastern Church, and the other to the Western. The Eastern Antichrist was Mahomet, and the Western was the pope. It is to be observed that all three—the Protestants, the Romanists, and the Greek Church—were at one as regards the restraining influence (τὸ κατέχων): this they regarded as the imperial influence,—the Roman empire either in itself, or as continued in the Greek or German empire.

The modern views concerning the “man of sin” are chiefly four: those who consider that there is here no prediction; the Præterists, who consider the prophecy as already fulfilled; the Futurists, who regard the fulfilment as still future; and those who, like the reformers, consider popery to be the fulfilment of the prophecy.

<sup>1</sup> See Estius. This, however, was the opinion only of some of the Roman theologians: the common opinion in the Church of Rome is that Antichrist was an individual who should flourish for three years and a half, and then be destroyed. Newman supposes that the rationalism of the Protestant Churches is Antichrist.

1. Some (De Wette, Lünemann, Jowett, Davidson) regard all the usual interpretations as proceeding upon a mistaken view of the passage as if it were a prediction, whereas in reality there is no prophecy at all: the apostle is only stating his impressions of what might be the future state of the Church, from a consideration of the circumstances of the time in which he lived. Thus De Wette observes: "He goes altogether wrong who finds here any more than the apostle's subjective anticipation, from his own historical position, of the future of the Christian Church."<sup>1</sup> So also Lünemann considers that Paul was so entirely engrossed by his ideas of the proximity of the advent, that, carried away by his individuality, he endeavoured to settle more exactly the circumstances and historical relations of the coming of Christ than is permitted to a man to know, even though he were an apostle filled with the Spirit of Christ.<sup>2</sup> "Such passages (Eph. vi. 12)," observes Professor Jowett, "are a much safer guide to the interpretation of the one we are considering, than the meaning of similar passages in the Old Testament. For they indicate to us the habitual thought of the apostle's mind,—'a falling away first,' suggested probably by the wavering which he saw among his own converts, the grievous wolves that were entering into the church of Ephesus (Acts xx. 29), the turning away of all them of Asia (2 Tim. i. 15). When we consider that his own converts, and his Jewish opponents, or half converts, were all the world to him,—that through them, as it were in a glass, he appeared to himself to see the workings of human nature generally,—we understand how this double image of good and evil should have presented itself to him, and the kind of necessity which he felt that Christ and Antichrist should alternate with each other. It was not that he foresaw some great conflict, decisive of the destinies of mankind. What he anticipated far more nearly resembled the spiritual combat in the seventh chapter of the Romans."<sup>3</sup> And Dr. Davidson remarks: "The passage does not contain a prophecy, but rather the writer's notions on a subject which did not

<sup>1</sup> *Einkl. Handb.* ii. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Lünemann, *Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, pp. 229, 230.

<sup>3</sup> Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 189.

concern the proper faith and duty of mankind. Those notions were shaped by the floating belief of his day, and have nothing beyond a historical interest. They belong to the past of Christianity, to its infantine state, when it was emerging out of Judaism, and assuming that independent position to which no man contributed so much as the apostle of the Gentiles."<sup>1</sup>

Such a view seems at variance with the notion of inspiration, in other words, with the supposition that the apostle was guided in writing by a higher Spirit than his own. The supernatural is entirely overlooked: the apostle writes according to his own fancies; he is led astray by his erroneous opinions. How such a view is "entirely consistent with the apostle's inspiration," is difficult to understand, even although we employ the term inspiration in a very broad sense. The power of foretelling the future, it would seem, is here denied to the sacred writers.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, evident that the apostle gives here a prediction of what shall take place; and therefore, if there were no real prediction, he was on this point mistaken and in error, and consequently uninspired. If we admit inspiration, we must receive the truths declared as the revelation of God: the Scripture contains truths to be received, and not the mere opinions of fallible men to be canvassed.

2. Others (Grotius, Wetstein, Hammond, Le Clerc, Whitby, Kern, Usteri, Wieseler) regard the prediction as already fulfilled. The views of these præterist interpreters agree in this point, that the prophecy refers to Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, although they differ widely in details.<sup>3</sup> Grotius, for example, supposed that the man of sin was Caligula, who demanded universal worship as God, and ordered his statue to be erected in the temple of Jerusalem; he who restrained was Vitellius, the proconsul of Syria, who refused

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament* (new edition), vol. i. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> "We take them," observes Dr. Davidson, "as guides to faith and practice generally, without adopting all that they propounded, or believing that they could foretell future events"—(new edition), vol. i. p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Even Professor Lightfoot appears to adopt these views. He observes: "It seems on the whole probable that the Antichrist is represented especially by Judaism. With a prophetic insight, the apostle foresaw, as he contemplated the moral and political condition of the race, the approach of a great and overwhelming catastrophe."—Article, Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, *Smith's Dictionary*.

to obey the order of Caligula ; and the lawless one was Simon Magus. This interpretation involves an anachronism, as Second Thessalonians was written after the death of Caligula. Wetstein entertained the very extraordinary opinion that the man of sin was Titus, whose army brought their idolatrous ensigns into the captured temple and offered sacrifices there ; he who restrained was Nero, whose death was necessary for the rule of Titus. Hammond imagined that by the man of sin, Simon Magus, together with the Gnostics, was meant ; the apostasy was the falling away of Christians to the heresy of the Gnostics ; and the restraining influence was the apostles, who, by still preaching to the Jews, preserved the union still subsisting between Jews and Christians.<sup>1</sup> Le Clerc supposed that the apostasy was the revolt of the Jews from the Romans ; the man of sin was the rebellious Jews, and especially their leader, Simon the son of Giora ; and the restraining power was the chiefs of the Jewish nation, who were against the revolt. Whitby considered the Jewish nation, and especially the Sanhedrim, as Antichrist ; the apostasy was the revolt of the Jews from the Roman empire, or from the faith ; he who restraineth was the Emperor Claudius, during whose reign the Jews could not rebel, as they were under great obligations to him.<sup>2</sup> Kern conceives that Antichrist is Nero ; he that restraineth is Vespasian and his son Titus ; and the apostasy is the revolt of the Jews against the Romans, or the defection of Christians. Much more ingenious is the opinion of Wieseler. He also considers the prophecy as a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. " He that restraineth " must be some good influence which delayed the destruction of Jerusalem, and this he considers to be the pious Jews then living, particularly the Christians ; and if the singular requires a particular person, then ὁ κατέχων is James the Just, the Lord's brother. Not until James was murdered, and the Christians had removed from Jerusalem, was the city destroyed. Then he that restraineth was taken out of the way.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hammond on the *N. T.*, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Whitby's Commentary, pp. 813-818, London, Thomas Tegg, 1842. So Hitzig ; see Lünemann's Commentary, pp. 225-227 ; and Newton *On the Prophecies*, Diss. xxii., from which the above list of opinions is chiefly taken.

<sup>3</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 263-273.

All these views are, however, inadequate as an interpretation of the prophecy. They do not satisfy the different particulars, and have only a general and fancied resemblance. It is fatal to them that the coming of Christ alluded to is evidently not His coming in spirit to destroy Jerusalem, but, as the context shows, His coming in person to establish His spiritual kingdom. Besides, the Thessalonians were too distant from Jerusalem to be much troubled by the destruction of that city.

3. A third class of interpreters (Olshausen, Alford, Ellicott) consider the fulfilment of the prediction as entirely future, so that we are not to look for any past occurrence as answering to it. Their great argument is that "the man of sin" (ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας), or the lawless one (ὁ ἄνομος), is an individual, and that no individual has yet lived to whom all the characteristics mentioned in this prediction belong, although there may frequently have been types and examples of him. The restraining principle, according to them, is moral order or government. Thus, according to Olshausen, Antichrist is undoubtedly a person. All the manifestations of evil, the revolt of the Jews from the Romans, Nero, Mahomet, the development of popery, the French Revolution with the abolition of Christianity in 1789, and the present diffusion of infidelity and atheism, are the prefigurations of Antichrist; but they are only some of the characteristics, not all: the union of all the characteristics in one person will constitute Antichrist.<sup>1</sup> "The ἄνομος," observes Dean Alford, "in the full prophetic sense, is not yet come. Though 1800 years later, we stand with regard to him where the apostle stood,—the day of the Lord not present, and not to arrive until this man of sin be manifested; the μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας still working, and much advanced in its working; the κατέχον still hindering it. And let us ask ourselves, what does this represent to us? Is it not indicative of a state in which the ἀνομία is working on, so to speak, underground, under the surface of things, gaining, throughout these many ages, more expansive force, more accumulated power, but still hidden and unconcentrated? And might we not look, in the progress of such a state of

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen *On the Thessalonians*, pp. 488, 489, Clark's translation.

things, for repeated minor embodiments of this *ἀνομία*—*ἀνομοι* and *ἀντίχριστοι πολλοί* (1 John ii. 18) springing up here and there in different ages and countries,—the *ἀποστασία* going onward and growing, just as there were of Christ Himself frequent types and minor embodiments before He came in the flesh? Thus in the papacy, where so many of the prophetic features are combined, we see as it were a standing embodiment and type of the final Antichrist—in the remarkable words of Gregory the Great, the *præcursor Antichristi*; and in Nero, and every persecutor as he arose, and Mahomet, and Napoleon, and many other forms and agencies of evil, other more transient types and examples of him.”<sup>1</sup> And Bishop Ellicott remarks: “The adversary, *ὁ ἀντικείμενος*, though assimilating one of the distinctive features of Satan, is clearly not to be confounded with him, whose agent and emissary he is, but, in accordance with the almost universal tradition of the ancient Church, is Antichrist,—no mere set of principles or succession of opponents, but one single person, being as truly man as He whom he impiously opposes.” And he observes, “The restraining principle is the power of well-ordered human rule, the principles of legality as opposed to those of *ἀνομία*, of which the Roman empire was the then embodiment and manifestation.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course, according to this notion, the fulfilment being yet future, we cannot apply to its truth or falsehood the features given us in the prophecy itself. But the ground on which it is founded, that the “man of sin” is an individual, is by no means certain. There is no reason why he may not be a corporate body. Thus the restraining power, which is at one time in the neuter and at another time in the masculine gender, is, as is almost universally supposed, not a person, but either the Roman empire or the succession of emperors. So in like manner the “man of sin” may be a succession of individuals; at least there is no necessity, arising from the terms of the prophecy, to regard him as a person, especially as he is called *μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας*.

4. The fourth opinion is that of the reformers, that we

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ellicott, *in loco*.



have here a prediction of popery. Besides the early reformers, this opinion is also advocated by Hooker, Hurd, Newton, Turretin, Benson, Bengel, Doddridge, Macknight, Michaelis, and Wordsworth.

According to these interpreters, ὁ κατέχων is the Roman emperor, and τὸ κατέχων the Roman empire. This opinion was that of the early fathers,<sup>1</sup> and was generally adopted with various modifications by Romanists and Protestants. Now, in the Protestant view of the subject, the prediction was verified. No sooner was the restrainer removed, than Antichrist was revealed. As long as the Roman emperor continued heathen and resided at Rome, no ecclesiastical power was permitted to exalt itself; but no sooner did the emperor remove from Rome to Constantinople, than popery arose; and after the dissolution of the Western Empire, the power of the pope mightily increased.<sup>2</sup> If ὁ κατέχων be the Roman emperor, we may understand the reason of the reserve of the apostle. Paul refers to a conversation which he had on this point with the Thessalonians, and appeals to their previous knowledge. If he had directly stated that the restraining power was the Roman emperor, he would have been regarded as an enemy to the Roman government, because he taught the destruction of the empire, and would have involved the Christians in persecution. Prudence required a discreet silence on this point. This reason for reserve was recognised by the early fathers. "If St. Paul," observes Chrysostom, "had said that the Roman empire will soon be dissolved, the heathen would have destroyed him as a rebel, and all the faithful with him, as persons who took up arms against the state. But St. Paul means the Roman empire; and when that shall have been taken away, then the "man of sin" will come."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quis nisi Romanus status?—Tertullian, *De Resurr.* c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen has a singular observation on the relation of ὁ κατέχων to the Roman empire. His objection to this is, that the Roman or Germanic empire was destroyed by Napoleon in 1806, and that, as Antichrist and the advent were to arise immediately after this dissolution, ὁ κατέχων cannot be the empire, unless the German, that is, Roman empire, would be again restored, as it was restored by Charlemagne in 800, after the destruction of the Western Roman empire in 476. —*Commentary on the Thessalonians*, pp. 492, 496, Clark's translation.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom, *in loco*.

But the great point is: Is there a sufficient resemblance between this prophecy and Romanism, so that we may conclude that they are related to each other as prediction and fulfilment? Now, certainly the points of resemblance are both numerous and striking. An apostasy is predicted, and there is in Romanism a falling away from the pure gospel to the traditions of men. The man of sin is represented as opposing and exalting himself against all that is called God or is an object of worship; and this is considered as receiving its fulfilment in the pope exalting himself above all human and divine authority, claiming the title of "king of kings and lord of lords," and asserting his power to dispose of the kingdoms of the earth.<sup>1</sup> It is further said that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing or exhibiting himself as God. The temple of God is here understood to be the Christian Church, and the pope places himself in it as its supreme head. He shows himself as God by claiming divine attributes, as holiness and infallibility, assuming divine prerogatives, as the power of pardoning sins, and using such blasphemous titles as "our Lord God the pope," "another God on earth."<sup>2</sup> Every pope, on his election, is placed on the high altar of St. Peter, and receives the adoration of the cardinals. It is further observed that the coming of Antichrist is after the working of Satan in all power, and signs, and wonders of falsehood; and this is considered to find its fulfilment in the false miracles of popery, in the impositions of relics, indulgences, and purgatory, in the substitution of angels and saints as mediators in the place of Christ, and in the pretended power of working miracles which the Church of Rome still claims. God is represented as punishing sin by sin,—“sending to them the working of error that they might believe the lie.” The popish legends, which have gained such credit as

<sup>1</sup> In the remarkable words of Gregory the Great, in opposition to the patriarch of Constantinople: "Whoever calls himself universal bishop is the precursor of Antichrist."

<sup>2</sup> Dominus Deus noster papa; Alter Deus in terra. These and such like titles are quoted in Jewel's *Apology*, Poole's *Annotations*, Newton *On the Prophecies*. See also Barrow's *Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy*; Stillingfleet *On Popery*, chap. xviii.; and Luthardt's *Saving Truths of Christianity*, pp. 395, 396 (second edition), translation, T. & T. Clark.

to be admitted among their ceremonies, and especially the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, are regarded as the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy.<sup>1</sup> And besides, in the other passage, where Paul predicts the apostasy of the latter times, the marks which he gives find their counterpart in the corruption of popery: "Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypoerisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" (1 Tim. iv. 1-3).

Paul represents the system as working in his days. "For the mystery of lawlessness already worketh" (2 Thess. ii. 7). It worketh secretly (*ἐνεργεῖται*); it is a mystery (*μυστήριον*), something concealed and unknown until it is revealed. According to Paul, the germs of the antichristian system were already in the Christian Church: the leaven of corruption was at work. And we find both in the Acts (Acts xx. 29) and in Paul's epistles frequent allusions to false doctrines and superstitious practices. Now it is to be observed that there is a close resemblance between those false doctrines and superstitious practices and the doctrines and practices of Romanism,—as, for example, the worship of angels (Col. ii. 8), the abstinence from certain foods (1 Cor. viii. 8), bodily mortification (Col. ii. 23), the traditions and doctrines and commandments of men (Col. ii. 8, 22); so that, as Bishop Newton observes, "the foundations of popery were laid indeed in the apostle's days, but the superstructure was raised by degrees, and several ages passed before the building was completed, and the man of sin was revealed in full perfection."<sup>2</sup>

The complete fulfilment of the prophecy, on this view of the subject, is still future. The destruction of Antichrist, that is, of Romanism, is also predicted: "Whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the spirit of His mouth, and annihilate by the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8). Various explanations of these words have been attempted. "The spirit" or breath "of His mouth" has been understood to

<sup>1</sup> See Macknight's *Commentary*, and Wordsworth's *Greek Testament* in *loc.*; comp. also Bishop Newton's *Dissertation on the Man of Sin*.

<sup>2</sup> Newton *On the Prophecies*, Dissertation xxii.

denote the preaching of the pure gospel, the diffusion of the word of God by the Reformation, and the revival of evangelical doctrines, which will gradually undermine popery, and lessen its hold on the minds of men; and by "the brightness of His coming" is meant the lustre with which Christ will cause the true doctrine to shine, or rather the final destruction of popery by the coming of Christ to judgment. As this portion of the prophecy is unfulfilled, it would be better not to hazard any explanations. The interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is probably beyond the powers of the human mind: the fulfilment is the only correct interpretation.

To this view of the subject various objections have been raised. There are two which merit consideration. 1. Even admitting all the striking coincidences, yet the idea of popery does not and never did fulfil the prophecy in ver. 4. So far from the pope opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or is an object of worship, his abject adoration of and submission to *λεγόμενοι Θεοί* and *σεβάσματα* has ever been one of his most notable peculiarities.<sup>1</sup> But to this it may be replied, that the arrogance of the pope, his maintenance of superiority above all the kings of the earth, his assertion that he is as God on the earth, his claim of infallibility, which has lately been conceded to him, are a distinct fulfilment of the prediction. 2. If the papacy be Antichrist, then has the manifestation been made, and endured now for nearly 1500 years, and yet that day of the Lord has not come, which by the terms of our prophecy such manifestation is immediately to precede.<sup>2</sup> But it is not asserted that the day of the Lord follows directly on the advent of Antichrist, but merely that Antichrist will precede. Besides, it may be that there is a development of Antichrist, and that his final destruction by the coming of the Lord will not occur until his full development. Thus, for example, the spiritual power of popery may be unfolding itself: the mystery of lawlessness may be still working, as was lately seen in the introduction of two new dogmas into the Romish Church,—the immaculate conception of the Virgin, and the personal infallibility of the pope. The career of Antichrist has not yet run.

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

Upon the whole, the points of resemblance between this prophecy of Paul and popery are numerous, varied, and striking; so that, although a positive conclusion on such a subject may appear to many unwarranted, yet the presumption is that the prophecy of "the man of sin" is a prediction of popery. Such an opinion may be considered as uncharitable and unjust, when popery is viewed as it presently exists, divested of its power to persecute, and as it is seen in the culture, refinement, and piety of many of its adherents; but when the wickedness and horrible atrocities of the popes and their agents before and at the time of the Reformation, and the general corruption of the whole system, are taken into consideration, such an opinion may be founded on truth, and so be neither uncharitable nor unjust.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

IT is unnecessary to discuss at any length the authenticity of this Epistle, as this is almost universally admitted. The only one who has called it in question is Bruno Bauer (1850); whilst Baur himself and the other writers of the Tübingen school assert its Pauline origin.<sup>1</sup> The allusions to it by the apostolic fathers, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, given by Lardner and Kirchhofer, are somewhat obscure.<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) probably refers to it when he uses the expression, "Be ye as I am; for I am as ye are" (Gal. iv. 12); and this probability is increased by the words "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, and such like" (Gal. v. 20, 21), following in the same sentence;<sup>3</sup> so that it is almost certain that Justin knew and used the Epistle. The Epistle is expressly ascribed to Paul by Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian. Thus Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "And again in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul says, 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive adoption'" (Gal. iv. 4, 5).<sup>4</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D.

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 280-287. Hilgenfeld has written a commentary on the Galatians.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens, *Ep. i. ad Corinth.* c. 49. Ignatius, *ad Philadelph.* c. 1; *ad Magnes.* c. 8. Polycarp, *ad Philippens.* c. 12; *ibid.* c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Cohort. ad Græc.* p. 40. By some critics the genuineness of this work is questioned.

<sup>4</sup> *Adv. hæres.* iii. 16, 3. Et iterum in epistola, quæ est ad Galatas, ait Paulus: Cum autem venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus filium suum, factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret, ut adoptionem percipiamus.

190) says: "Wherefore Paul, also writing to the Galatians, says, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you'" (Gal. iv. 19).<sup>1</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) writes: "Of this we need say no more, if it be the same Paul who, writing to the Galatians, reckons heresy among the works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 20).<sup>2</sup> Besides, the Epistle to the Galatians is contained in the catalogue of Marcion (A.D. 140) and in the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170), and is recognised by such heretics as Tatian (A.D. 172)<sup>3</sup> and the Valentinians (A.D. 170).<sup>4</sup>

The internal evidence is even stronger than the external. The Epistle bears throughout the impress of the character of Paul. The vehemence of temper, the earnest longings for the spiritual welfare of the Galatians, the desire to be present among them, the mixture of severity and tenderness in the censures, and the uncompromising maintenance of the great principle of Christian liberty which pervade the Epistle, all remind us of Paul, and are all beyond the art of a forger of the second century. So also the numerous apparent discrepancies between the Epistle and the Acts, especially in the number and order of Paul's visits to Jerusalem, and in his interview when there with the Apostles James, Peter, and John, are proofs that these are two independent narratives, and that the Epistle could not have been taken from the history, nor the history fabricated from the Epistle.<sup>5</sup> The narrative of the relation of Paul to the other apostles, and especially of his dispute with Peter, is such as would never have been invented by any Christian writer; and the attempts of the early fathers to explain away that dispute<sup>6</sup> are proofs how distasteful it was to the Christian Church, and how utterly improbable was its invention. "Nor," as Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.* iii. 15. Διὸ καὶ Παῦλος Γαλαταῖαις ἐπιστέλλων, φησί· τέκνιά μου, οἷς πάλιν ὠδίνω, ἄχρις οὗ μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν.

<sup>2</sup> *De præscript. hæret.* c. 6. Nec diutius de isto, si idem est Paulus, qui et alibi hæreses inter carnalia crimina numerat, scribens ad Galatas.

<sup>3</sup> Hieron. *Comment. in Gal.* vi. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Iren. *adv. hæres.* i. 3, 5.

<sup>5</sup> These apparent discrepancies are treated of in the author's *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. ii. section vi.

<sup>6</sup> Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theodoret suppose that there was a collusion between the apostles; Clemens Alexandrinus, that the Cephas mentioned in the Epistle was not the Apostle Peter, but some obscure disciple.

Lightfoot remarks, "would it serve any conceivable purpose which a forger might be supposed to entertain. The Gnostic, who wished to advance his antipathy to Judaism under cover of St. Paul's name, would have avoided every expression of deference to the apostles of the circumcision. The Ebionite would have shrunk with loathing from any seeming depreciation of the cherished customs or the acknowledged leaders of his race, as the tone of the author of the Clementines shows. The Catholic writer, forging with a view to "conciliation," would be more unlikely than either to invent such a narrative, anxious as he would be to avoid any appearance of conflict between the two great teachers of the Church."<sup>1</sup> And the style of the Epistle is eminently Pauline: it abounds in Pauline words and phrases, in anacolutha and involved constructions (Gal. ii. 3, 4), in digressions (Gal. ii. 2-8), in vigour and fervour (Gal. vi. 14), in tenderness (Gal. iv. 19), and in references to the Old Testament, some of them of an allegorical nature (Gal. iii. 16, iv. 22-31).<sup>2</sup>

## II. THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA.

Galatia, or Gallogræcia, was a district of country bounded on the north by Bithynia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia, on the south by Pamphylia and Cilicia, and on the west by Proconsular Asia. Although mountainous, it was highly fertile, particularly along the banks of the river Halys. Its principal cities were Ancyra, Pessinus, Tavium, and Gordium.

The Galatians were the descendants of the Gauls who in the third century before Christ (B.C. 280) invaded Greece and Asia.<sup>3</sup> The Gallic tribes the Troemi and the Tolistobogii, together with the Tectosagi, supposed by some to be a Germanic tribe, under the leadership of Lutarius and Leonnarius, invaded Thrace, and, on the invitation of Nicomedes king of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> For a clear statement of the internal evidences, see Jowett *On St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 245-247.

<sup>3</sup> The Galli of the Romans are the same as the Galatæ of the Greeks. The Romans also borrowed the Greek name Galatæ, but they restricted its use to denote the Asiatic Gauls.



Bithynia, crossed the Hellespont to Asia (Strabo, xii. 5, 1). Here they extended their conquests, and were for many years a scourge to the various provinces of Asia Minor (Liv. xxxviii. 16). They were at length defeated by Antiochus Soter king of Syria and Attalus king of Pergamus (B.C. 238), and were restricted to a district of Phrygia, to which they gave the name of Galatia. In B.C. 189 they were reduced to a nominal dependence on the Romans by Cneius Manlius (Liv. xxxviii. 12; 1 Macc. viii. 2), but were ruled by their own chiefs. According to Strabo, each of the three tribes was divided into four portions called tetrarchies, and had its own tetrarchs, and the whole country was governed by a council of three hundred (Strabo, xii. 5, 1). Afterwards they were ruled by kings, the first of whom, Deiotarus,<sup>1</sup> received his crown from Pompey. Their last king, Amyntas, was rewarded by Augustus for his desertion of Antony with a large extension of territory, comprehending Pisidia and the greater part of Lycaonia (Dio Cass. xlix. 32). On his murder (B.C. 26), Augustus converted his kingdom into the Roman province of Galatia (Dio Cass. liii. 26).<sup>2</sup>

Galatia, when Paul visited it, was inhabited by a mixed population. The majority were Galatians, or the descendants of those ancient Gauls who, more than three hundred years before, had passed over into Asia. Mingled with them were the relics of the original inhabitants of the country, the ancient Phrygians, celebrated for the peculiarities of their religious rites and for the worship of Cybele.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks were such an important element, that it was their language which was chiefly spoken, and hence the inhabitants were called Gallo-Grecians. The Romans also, the last conquerors, left the impress of their nationality, as is seen in the monuments and works which still remain. And along with these nations there was a considerable colony of Jews, who were attracted to the commercial cities of Galatia. Antiochus the

<sup>1</sup> The same whom Cicero defended. Cicero *pro rege Deiotaro*.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of Galatia, see Winer's *Wörterbuch*; Lange's *apostolisches Zeitalter*; Smith's *Dictionary*; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*; Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*; Lightfoot *On the Galatians*; Davidson's *Introduction*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The Galatians adopted the Phrygian religion.

Great settled two thousand Jewish families in Lydia and Phrygia (Jos. *Ant.* xii. 3, 4); and Augustus granted special privileges to the Jews resident in Ancyra, the capital of the Roman province of Galatia (Jos. *Ant.* xvi. 6, 2). And it is evident from this Epistle that the influence of the Jews and of the Jewish religion was very considerable among the Galatians.<sup>1</sup>

The language of the Galatians proper was at first Celtic, or, as others think, Teutonic, but they soon learned Greek. But along with Greek they retained their original language. Jerome tells us that even in his time a dialect was spoken at Ancyra which bore some resemblance to that spoken at Trèves;<sup>2</sup> and Jerome was a competent judge, as he had visited both Trèves and Galatia. Perhaps there may be some relation between this Galatian dialect and the speech of the Lycaonians (Acts xiv. 11).<sup>3</sup>

Fickleness was a striking feature in the character of the Galatian converts. No country embraced the gospel so readily and cordially. They received Paul with such gratitude and respect, as if he were an angel of God, yea, as if he were Jesus Christ Himself; and they were willing, if it would have benefited the apostle, to have plucked out their own eyes and to have given them to him (Gal. iv. 14, 15). But no church fell so quickly from the faith. Soon converted, they soon relapsed into Judaism. Impulsive and easily acted upon by the apostle, they were as easily acted upon by false teachers. The apostle had to express his surprise that they were so soon removed from the gospel (Gal. i. 6). He regarded them as persons under some strange fascination (Gal. iii. 1); and him,

<sup>1</sup> See Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, pp. 8–11.

<sup>2</sup> Hieron. *ad Epist. ad Gal.* lib. ii. præf. : Galatas excepto sermone Græco, quo omnis Oriens loquitur, propriam linguam eandem pene habere quam Treveros. Trèves is now in Rhenish Prussia, and the language there spoken is German; and hence some infer that it was also the case in the days of Jerome; so that the original language of the Galatians was Teutonic, not Celtic. "Some think," says Luther, "that we Germans are descended from the Galatians." "The conversion of the Galatians," observes Meyer, "is the beginning of German Church history." But the Treveri are expressly called by Cæsar Belgians or Gauls.—*B. G.* ii. 4, 24. See Lightfoot's dissertation: "Were the Galatians Celts or Teutons?"

<sup>3</sup> Jablonsky, *de lingua Lycaon.* p. 23.

whom formerly they considered as an angel of God, they now looked upon as an enemy (Gal. iv. 16). Their conduct was in some respects similar to that of the Lystrians, who first worshipped Paul as a god, and then stoned him, until they thought he was dead (Acts xiv. 12, 19). In this fickleness of disposition, commentators recognise the same character which distinguished their race (Cæsar, *B. G.* ii. 1, iii. 19, iv. 5).<sup>1</sup>

Galatia is a term of indefinite signification: it may either denote the original district of Galatia, or it may be used in a wider sense to signify the Roman province, including, besides Galatia proper, the districts of Pisidia and Lycaonia, and therefore comprehending the cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Derbe, and Lystra, but not Iconium. It is of importance to determine the meaning of the term in Scripture; for on this depends the date of the introduction of Christianity into Galatia, and also the date of the Epistle to the Galatians. Some (Paulus, Ulrich, Thiersch, Böttger) suppose that the Roman province is here meant, and that accordingly the Epistle was not addressed to the Galatians properly so called, but to the inhabitants of Pisidian Antioch, Derbe, and Lystra, whom Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. But in the Acts the term Galatia is not used politically to denote the Roman province, but ethnologically to denote the district inhabited by the Galatians. Antioch is expressly said to be in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 14), and Lystra and Derbe to be cities of Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 6), although at the time these cities were in the Roman province of Galatia, and there were no such political provinces as Pisidia and Lycaonia. Besides, Lycaonia is distinguished from Galatia; for after the history had mentioned that Paul preached the gospel in Derbe and Lystra (in Lycaonia), it is added that he went throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia (Acts xvi. 1-6).<sup>2</sup> And generally throughout the Acts the names of countries are given as mere geographical districts, without respect to their

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 284, 285; Meyer's *Brief an die Galater* on Gal. i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 127; Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*, pp. 2, 3; Wieseler's *Chronologie d. apost. Zeital.* pp. 281, 282.

variable political significance, as Mysia, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia ; so that it is now almost universally admitted that the term Galatia is to be restricted to the district properly so called, exclusive of the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Derbe, and Lystra.

We have only a summary account in the Acts of the planting of Christianity in Galatia by Paul. We are informed that after the council of Jerusalem, he proceeded on his second missionary journey, accompanied by Silas. After visiting the churches which he had formerly planted, he passed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia (Acts xvi. 6). From the narrative of the Acts, it would seem that he made merely a passing visit ; but this brief notice has to be supplemented by what we read in the Epistle. There we are informed that Paul preached the gospel to them at the first through (or "on account of") infirmity of the flesh (δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός, Gal. iv. 13), which would seem to imply that he was detained in Galatia by some bodily affliction.<sup>1</sup> What cities he visited, and how long he remained in the district, is not mentioned ; but it is evident that his labours were eminently successful, and that flourishing churches were planted in several cities of Galatia. "My temptation," he writes, "which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected ; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. iv. 14). About two or three years after this, he paid a second visit to Galatia. At the commencement of his third missionary journey, when proceeding from Antioch in Syria to Ephesus, we are informed that he "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts xviii. 23). Some (Paulus, Böttger, Macknight) suppose that he paid a visit to Galatia prior to these two, on his first missionary journey. It is said that Paul and Barnabas fled from Pisidian Antioch to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about (τὴν περίχωρον, Acts xiv. 6). By "the region that lieth round about" Galatia is supposed to be meant.<sup>2</sup> But περίχωρος evidently denotes the places in the vicinity of

<sup>1</sup> Jowett renders the expression "amid infirmity of the flesh," *in loc.* ; but the other translation, as he himself admits, is the more literal. See Winer's *Grammar of the N. T.*, p. 418 ; Meyer's *Commentary*, *in loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Macknight's *Introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians*.

Lystra and Derbe, hence the adjacent parts of Lycaonia, and not Galatia proper, which was situated on the other side of Lycaonia.

The names of the cities in which the churches of Galatia (Gal. i. 2) were planted, are not given us. If the importance of the Galatian cities is a ground of judgment, we may suppose Ancyra, the capital of the Roman province, inhabited by numerous Jews, and a city of great commercial importance; Pessinus, celebrated for the worship of Cybele and of the image which fell down from Jupiter, as Ephesus was for the worship of Diana (Strabo, xii. 5, 3); Gordium, the ancient capital of Phrygia, and situated in the centre of the country; and Tavium, the ancient capital of the Trocmi.<sup>1</sup> The Epistle is not directed to one particular church, as the Epistles to the Thessalonians and Philippians, but to the churches of a district, as the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which is inscribed to the churches of Achaia as well as to the church of Corinth.

Paul would doubtless, according to his usual custom, preach the gospel first to the Jews, who were very numerous in Galatia;<sup>2</sup> still it is evident from the Epistle that the great majority of his converts consisted of Gentiles. He speaks of them as formerly ignorant of God, and doing service to them which by nature are no gods (Gal. iv. 8),—a description applicable only to the Gentiles. It would also appear that they were uncircumcised (Gal. vi. 14); and the danger to which they were exposed was their becoming converts to Judaism, suffering themselves to be circumcised, and so mixing up the Jewish with the Christian religion. The frequent references to the Old Testament, however, prove that they had been accustomed to Jewish teaching, and were familiarized with the Jewish Scriptures. This is accounted for by the numerous Jews resident in the district, by the probability that many of the converts before they had embraced Christianity had been

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Galatians*, p. 20; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 320, 321.

<sup>2</sup> So Neander, De Wette, and Wieseler. Schneckenburger, Baur, and Hilgenfeld take an opposite view. They suppose that there were no Jewish converts among the Galatians.—Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 280.

attracted to Judaism (the so-called proselytes of the gate), and by the proselytizing activity of the Judaizing teachers.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish religion, at the time of the entrance of Christianity, exercised a powerful influence upon the Gentiles, especially upon the female part of the community, and thus formed in some respects a bridge of connection between heathenism and Christianity.<sup>2</sup> But although the churches of Galatia were chiefly composed of Gentile Christians, yet there were not wanting among them Jews and proselytes who believed on Jesus as the Christ.<sup>3</sup>

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Galatians is eminently controversial, being directed against the Judaizing tendencies in the churches. Paul's opponents consisted chiefly of Judaizing teachers who came from without, perhaps from Palestine, inculcating the necessity of circumcision and the observance of Jewish rites, without which, in their view, Christianity was imperfect and without benefit,—in short, asserting that the Gentiles could only be converted to Christianity through the medium of Judaism. Probably also these Judaizing teachers were joined by several of the Jewish Christians in Galatia, and by some of the Gentile Christians whom they had persuaded to become converts to Judaism (Gal. vi. 13).<sup>4</sup> The views which they propagated were the extreme Judaistic views which had already been repudiated at the council of Jerusalem. Thus a systematic opposition was set up to the teaching of Paul. His opponents attempted to undermine his authority, and to destroy his influence among the Galatians. They affirmed that he was not an apostle chosen by Christ, and that therefore he occupied an inferior position to the apostles of Jerusalem; that the gospel which he taught was different from that of the twelve, that it was defective and required to be supplemented;

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*, p. 4; Jowett *On St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 232-235.

<sup>2</sup> According to Josephus, almost all the married women in Damascus were attached to the Jewish religion (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 20, 2).

<sup>3</sup> This against Hilgenfeld.

<sup>4</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. 220, note.

that he was inconsistent in his teaching, perhaps appealing to the fact of his having circumcised Timothy ; and that in teaching the freedom of the Gentiles from the Jewish law, he was in reality undervaluing the revelation from God.

These Judaizing teachers were only too successful in leading the Galatians astray. Their fickle and impressible disposition was shown in forsaking the teaching of Paul, and in embracing that of his opponents. "I marvel," writes the apostle, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. i. 6, 7). Not that they had actually embraced Judaism to the extent of being circumcised, but they were in imminent danger of doing so,—they were drifting away from the pure gospel of Christ. Some (Credner, Rückert, Reuss, Wieseler) suppose that the change had come over the Galatians before Paul's second visit to them (Acts xviii. 23). On his first visit they received him as an angel from heaven, but on his second visit he had to speak sharply with them: he had to testify against their Judaizing practices, and to tell them that if they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing; he had become their enemy, because he then told them the truth.<sup>1</sup> But, on the other hand, the information of the relapse of the Galatians into Judaism was a surprise to the apostle (Gal. i. 6, iii. 1). Assuming that this epistle was written after Paul's second visit, as was likely the case, the probability is that the false teachers had commenced their work before Paul's second visit; that he had discerned the germs of false doctrine; that the danger was not yet present, but only threatened; and that in "confirming the churches" he had to warn and admonish them;<sup>2</sup> and consequently his surprise would be the greater, when, shortly after his departure, he learned that they had fallen into that very danger against which he had warned them.

The design of the apostle in writing this Epistle was to correct the Judaizing errors into which the Galatians had

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 278; Reuss, *Geschichte N. T.*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Lechler's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, p. 383.

fallen, and to bring them back to the simple faith of the gospel. For this purpose he was obliged to vindicate his apostolic character, and to assert his equality with the twelve. He draws a broad line of distinction between the law and the gospel, proclaims the great doctrine of justification by faith, and asserts and maintains the liberty of the Gentiles from legal observances.

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle may be conveniently divided into three parts, although the distinction between them is not constantly kept. The first part is *apologetic*, and contains the apostle's vindication of himself in the form of a narrative (chap. i. ii.). The second part is *dogmatic*, and contains the statement of the relation of the law to the gospel (chap. iii.-v. 12). And the third part is *practical*, and contains observations on the necessity of a holy life (chap. v. 13-vi.). In the first part, the apostle, after the usual salutation, but without the usual commendation,<sup>1</sup> proceeds at once to vindicate his apostolic authority in opposition to the depreciatory assertions of the Judaizers. He asserts that he had received his gospel by a direct revelation from heaven; that he did not owe it to the original apostles; that they recognised its truth and his independence; and that, when Peter came to Antioch, so far from relinquishing his apostolic authority, he rebuked that apostle because he was guilty of temporizing. In the second part, he maintains the doctrine of justification by faith, and the freedom of the Galatians from the Jewish law; he warns them of the danger of mixing up faith with works, expresses his earnest desire to be again present with them that he might regain their confidence, and earnestly beseeches them to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel. In the third part, he exhorts them not to abuse their liberty, to guard against party spirit, to avoid the works of the flesh, to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, to deal gently with the erring, and to be active in the performance of good works. He again adverts to the great question

<sup>1</sup> This is the only epistle which wants the thanksgiving of the apostle for the spiritual welfare of his converts: even the Epistles to the Corinthians have it.



in dispute, asserts the indifference of circumcision or uncircumcision, and the supreme importance of the new creation, and closes the Epistle with his apostolic benediction.

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

It is a matter of considerable difficulty to fix upon the time when this Epistle was written, and consequently a great diversity of opinion on this point exists. Some suppose it to be the earliest of all Paul's epistles, and others the last. Marcion places it the first on his catalogue.<sup>1</sup> So also Michaelis, Böttger, Paulus, Ulrich, and Macknight think that it is the first of Paul's extant epistles.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Schrader and Köhler suppose it to be the last,—Schrader dating it in A.D. 64, at the close of Paul's Roman imprisonment, and Köhler in A.D. 69, two years after the death of Nero. All these are untenable suppositions. Some (Baumgarten, Wordsworth) place its composition between Paul's two visits to Galatia (that is, between Acts xvi. 6 and Acts xviii. 23), and suppose it to have been composed either during Paul's journey through Macedonia, or during his residence of a year and a half at Corinth (Acts xviii. 11), and thus to be contemporaneous with the Epistles to the Thessalonians.<sup>3</sup>

We can only approximate to a determination of the exact time. The Epistle was certainly written after the council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), as it is now generally agreed that this is the meeting with the apostles alluded to in Gal. ii. 2.<sup>4</sup> Whether it was composed after the apostle's second visit (Acts xviii. 23) is a more difficult question. There are in the Epistle

<sup>1</sup> It is not evident, however, that Marcion's catalogue is arranged in a chronological order.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction* by Marsh, vol. vi. p. 8. Macknight *On the Epistles*, p. 319. Macknight thinks that it was written from Antioch after the council, and before Paul set out on his second missionary journey. Michaelis dates it from Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth *On St. Paul's Epistles*, pp. 36–41. He gives, as the result of his observations, that the Epistle was written at Corinth on Paul's first visit to Greece, A.D. 53 or A.D. 54.

<sup>4</sup> For the discussion of the identity of Paul's visit at the council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 1–21) with the visit mentioned in Gal. ii. 1–10, see the author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. pp. 80–85.

itself some slight intimations of a second visit. The following expressions—"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 9); "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. v. 21)—seem to point to a second visit, as such warnings and admonitions would not be so necessary at the first visit, when the Galatians so gladly received the gospel. And the words, "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first" (εὐαγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, Gal. iv. 13), would seem to indicate two visits, as τὸ πρότερον properly denotes the "former occasion;" and if there is a "former occasion," there must also be a "latter occasion."<sup>1</sup> Besides, time must be given to the Judaizing teachers to propagate their doctrines so successfully as they seem to have done among the Galatians. And therefore, although on this point certainty is unattainable, the strong probability is that the Epistle was written after Paul's second visit to Galatia.

As Paul repaired directly from Galatia to Ephesus, the earliest time at which this Epistle could have been written was during the apostle's three years' residence in Ephesus. This is the most prevalent opinion, and is adopted by Eichhorn, Winer, Neander, Olshausen, Wieseler, Reuss, Ewald, Meyer, Guericke, Baur, Alford, and Ellicott. The great argument which they employ is that the Galatians *soon* fell from the faith: "I marvel that ye are so soon (οὕτω ταχέως) removed from him that called you" (Gal. i. 6),—that is, either so soon after their conversion to Christianity (Meyer, Olshausen, Alford), or so soon after Paul's visit to them (Wieseler, Bengel). This falling away, then, must have occurred not long after Paul's second visit, and consequently during his three years' residence at Ephesus. The apostle would quickly

<sup>1</sup> See Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*, p. 5; Jowett on *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 248; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 89, last edition. It is admitted that the expression may only denote a time antecedent to that in which he now wrote, but the other interpretation is the more probable. See Alford on Gal. iv. 16.

receive information, as the communication between Galatia and Ephesus was comparatively easy. And doubtless, whenever the apostle became aware of this declension of the Galatians, he would lose no time in writing this Epistle. Those who adopt this opinion fix the date of the Epistle between the years 54–56, and on Ephesus as the place of its composition.

Others (Bleek, Conybeare, Lightfoot, Davidson, 2d ed.) suppose that the Epistle was written during Paul's winter residence at Corinth (Acts xx. 3), and hence fix its date at A.D. 57.<sup>1</sup> They found this opinion on the striking resemblance between this Epistle and the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and especially the Epistle to the Romans,—a resemblance which they consider goes to prove that it was written after the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and before that to the Romans. But we know from other sources that the Epistle to the Romans was written during that residence of Paul at Corinth. As the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians are, from their resemblance, regarded as contemporaneous, so it is argued the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans are on the same account to be also considered as contemporaneous.<sup>2</sup>

It is certainly an undeniable fact that there is a remarkable resemblance between the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans,—the same great doctrine of justification insisted on, the same illustration of Abraham's faith employed, the same privilege of adoption affirmed, the same contest between the flesh and the spirit described, the same distinction between the law and the gospel traced,<sup>3</sup>—so that there is certainly a probability that these epistles were written about the same time. But, on the other hand, this probability is balanced by the reason given for an earlier composition, namely, that the Galatians had quickly departed from the faith, and that the apostle would write immediately on information of their relapse.

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 2; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 95 (new edition).

<sup>2</sup> This point is discussed at great length and with great ability by Professor Lightfoot in his commentary, pp. 36–56. His arguments, if not entirely convincing, go the length of leaving the question a matter of doubt.

<sup>3</sup> For the points of resemblance between the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, See Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, pp. 45–48, and Davidson's *Introduction to N. T.*, vol. i. pp. 91–93 (new edition).

It can hardly be supposed that οὕτω ταχέως extended over a period of five years.<sup>1</sup> Although, then, it is admitted that the close resemblance of this Epistle to the Epistle to the Romans leaves the question open to doubt, yet that fact is not sufficient to overthrow the usual opinion, that the Epistle was written from Ephesus. According to this opinion, the Epistle to the Galatians immediately succeeds the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and the order is, First and Second Thessalonians, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans. Whereas, according to the other view, the Epistles to the Corinthians intervene, and the order is, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Romans.

#### VI. PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

This Epistle resembles in spirit the Epistles to the Corinthians. There is the same mixture of tenderness and severity. The mental character of the apostle is strongly impressed upon it. At one time he sternly rebukes them as the foolish Galatians, who had suffered themselves to be bewitched; at another time he affectionately beseeches them as his little children, of whom he travailed in birth again until Christ was formed in them. At one time he threatens them with being accursed from Christ; but more frequently he entreats them as a father does his erring children. The heart of Paul is disclosed to us,—stern against sin and error, but full of tenderness and pity toward the sinful and erring.

But whilst this Epistle resembles in spirit the Epistles to the Corinthians, it resembles in doctrine that to the Romans. Both epistles are eminently dogmatic; in both the train of thought is similar; in both Christian liberty is asserted and maintained. But yet, with these points of agreement, there are also notable points of difference. In the Romans there is a general statement of doctrine without reference to particular circumstances, whereas in the Galatians there is an immediate reference to the special errors of the Judaizers. The one re-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Lightfoot endeavours, but without success, to evade the force of this by rendering ταχέως "readily, rashly," i.e. quickly after the opportunity is offered. See *in loc.*

sembles a treatise rather than an epistle; the other is an epistle called forth by the particular and pressing wants of those addressed. Both are highly dogmatic. But whereas the Romans is purely doctrinal, the Galatians is also controversial.<sup>1</sup>

As Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, wrote this Epistle in opposition to the doctrinal views of the Judaizers, the pharisaical and ritualistic portion of the Church, so Luther, the apostle of Protestantism, made use chiefly of this Epistle in his attacks upon the doctrinal views of the Romanists, who may be regarded as the pharisaical and ritualistic portion of the Christian Church in our times. The great reformer entered thoroughly into the spirit of the Epistle; and his commentary upon it, though not at all critical, is eminently polemical.<sup>2</sup> In the monks and doctors of the Romish Church he saw the antitypes of the Judaizing teachers, and in their ceremonies the return to the beggarly elements of the law; and here also he found clearly revealed his favourite doctrine of justification. This Epistle may be distinguished among all the other epistles of Paul as the epistle of Protestantism.

Another peculiarity belonging to this Epistle, is that there is some ground for believing that it was written by the apostle's own hand. All the other epistles to the churches were written by the aid of an amanuensis, the apostle adding the concluding salutation as a mark of its authenticity. But in this Epistle we have the following words: "Ἰδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ (Gal. vi. 11), which we translate, "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand." It is admitted that the translation is faulty: it ought to be, "See with what large letters I have written unto you with my own hand."<sup>3</sup> But still, admitting this alteration, the question remains, Does it apply to the whole epistle? or, Is it restricted only to the words which follow? The opinions

<sup>1</sup> On the points of resemblance and difference between the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, see Jowett's *Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 240, 241.

<sup>2</sup> "The Epistle to the Galatians," says Luther, "is my epistle; I have betrothed myself to it; it is my wife."

<sup>3</sup> *γράμμα* is never used by Paul for *πιστολή*; and even if it did admit of this meaning, yet its being in the dative plural, *γράμμασι*, proves that it must be translated, not "I have written a letter," but "I have written with letters."

of critics are divided. Some (Chrysostom, Theophylact, Theodoret, Calvin, Olshausen, Neander, Lardner, Ewald, Bleek, Kirehhofer, Wieseler, Hilgenfeld, Hofmann, Davidson, Alford, Wordsworth) refer it to the whole epistle. Others (Jerome, Theodore, Grotius, Meyer, Conybeare, Lightfoot, Jowett) suppose that the epistle was written to dictation, and that the apostle added only the last words, writing them in large letters in order to make them emphatic.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the words is certainly obscure. The past tense of the verb ἔγραψα instead of the present γράφω, as in 2 Thess. iii. 19, would seem to indicate that the words apply to what the apostle had written, and not to what he was about to write; whilst at the same time the other interpretation gives a better explanation to the words πηλικοίς γράμμασιν.<sup>2</sup>

The Epistle to the Galatians has been often commented on. The most important commentaries are those of Winer (Leipzig, first edition, 1821; fourth edition, 1859), Rückert (Leipzig, 1833), Olshausen (Königsberg, 1848), De Wette (Leipzig, 1845; third edition, 1864), Meyer (Göttingen, 1851; fifth edition, 1870),<sup>3</sup> Hilgenfeld (Leipzig, 1852), Wieseler (Göttingen, 1860); and in our own country, Ellicott (London, 1854; fourth edition, 1867), Jowett (London, second edition, 1859), Lightfoot (London, 1865; third edition, 1869), Eadie (Edinburgh, 1869),—besides the notes contained in the Greek Testaments of Alford and Wordsworth.

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### ST. PAUL'S RELATION TO JUDAISM.<sup>4</sup>

The Epistle to the Galatians is distinguished among Paul's epistles by its controversial nature. False teachers had

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Alford, after advocating the opinion that Paul wrote the whole epistle with his own hand, adds: "And he wrote it, whether from weakness of his eyes, or from choice, in large characters."—Alford on Gal. vi. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's commentary excels all others in fulness and critical acumen. He who studies and masters it requires no other critical commentary on the Galatians. Since the above was written, a translation of this commentary has been published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> For discussions on this subject, see Lechler's *das apostolische Zeitalter*;

entered in among the Galatian converts, and had seduced them from the simplicity of the gospel. These persons were not, as Michaelis supposes,<sup>1</sup> unbelieving Jews who took advantage of the diffusion of Christianity to make proselytes among the Gentiles, but Jewish Christians, who were zealous for the law and the prerogatives of Judaism. They entertained the same views as those did who formerly disturbed the peace of the church of Antioch, and "who taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1); and who, we are informed, were "certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed" (Acts xv. 5). It is to be observed that these men did not object to the conversion of the Gentiles: they did not think that the blessings of the Messianic salvation should be restricted to the Jews; on the contrary, they accepted our Lord's command that the gospel should be preached to the whole world. Their principles arose from a reaction of Judaism against Paulinism. They held strong anti-Pauline views on the perpetuity of the law of Moses, and asserted that the Gentiles could only be converted to Christianity through the medium of Judaism,—that they must first be Jews before they could be Christians. Hence they taught the necessity of circumcision, as the initiatory rite of the Jewish religion, for salvation; for with circumcision they included the observance of the whole law (Gal. v. 3). These views had before this been repudiated by the apostles and the Christian Church at the council of Jerusalem, and the liberty of the Gentiles affirmed; but they were now reasserted in a similar form by the Judaizing teachers in Galatia.

Such extreme Judaistic views were then more plausible than they now appear to us, especially when we take into consideration that those teachers before conversion belonged to the Pharisees, the strictest sect of the Jewish religion. Judaism was of God; circumcision was the sign of the covenant

Lange's *das apostolische Zeitalter*; Baur's *Apostel Paulus*; Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. section ii.; Jowett on *St. Paul's Epistles*; Essay on "St. Paul and the Twelve;" Lightfoot *On the Galatians*; Essay on "St. Paul and the Three;" Ritschl's *Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*, pp. 108-152.

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. vi. p. 17.

which God made with their fathers : and hence it was not easy for these strict Jews to admit that its observance was to be abrogated, or at least rendered unnecessary. It was one of the hardest things for them to understand that Christianity was ultimately designed to abolish Judaism, the religion divinely communicated to their fathers. All the attachment of a Jew to his national religion, all his pride in his peculiar privileges as the favourite of Heaven, and all his hopes that the Gentiles would ultimately embrace his faith, were opposed to this notion. This was the great obstacle which stood in the way of the conversion of the Jews to Christianity ; and this lay at the foundation of the principles of the Judaizers, who, although they believed in Jesus as the Messiah, yet clung with tenacity to their Jewish faith. The apostles themselves could with difficulty be brought to embrace the opinion that the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves,—that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished by the gospel ; and therefore we are not to wonder at the extreme conservatism of a section of the Jewish converts.

The point in dispute was one of supreme importance. It was not the mere question of the freedom of the Gentiles, whether they should be burdened with all the impositions of the Jewish law—though that in itself was a matter of moment—but whether Christianity was to become a universal religion, free from the restrictions of Judaism, or whether it was to be confined within the narrow circle of a Jewish sect, and to exist only, if it could under these restrictions exist at all, as a modified and extended Judaism.<sup>1</sup> If the views of the Judaizing teachers prevailed, the whole purpose of Christianity would be frustrated : the freedom of the gospel would be lost. Salvation would then depend not simply on faith in Christ, but, along with this, on the observance of the institutions of the Mosaic law ; and the spirituality of the gospel would necessarily be transformed into the performance of certain formal rites and ceremonies. According to Paul's liberal views, circumcision and uncircumcision were matters of indifference (1 Cor. vii. 19 ; Gal. v. 6, vi. 15). Abstractly considered, it

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 283.



mattered not whether a man were circumcised or remained uncircumcised; but to regard circumcision as essential to salvation, would be to overthrow Christianity, to substitute works for faith, the law for the gospel, and thus to render nugatory the death of Christ and the salvation which He had procured. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 2-4).

In several of Paul's epistles we meet with traces of an opposition between him and these Judaizing teachers. In the two Epistles to the Thessalonians there is no mention of it, probably because it had not so early developed itself, or at least had not extended itself to the churches of Macedonia. It is found not only in the Epistle to the Galatians, but equally strongly expressed in the Epistles to the Corinthians, in a form somewhat modified in the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians, and is traceable even in the last epistle which Paul wrote, the Second Epistle to Timothy. These Judaizing teachers appear designedly to have followed the footsteps of the apostle; to have exerted themselves in opposing his doctrine and counteracting his influence; to have called in question his apostolic authority; and to have endeavoured to alienate the minds of his converts. They do not appear to have acted as missionaries among the heathen, or to have endeavoured to convert them to Christianity, but rather, animated by a sectarian bitterness, to have gone among those who were already Christians, and attempted to convert them to Judaism.<sup>1</sup> And as they thus opposed Paul, so they met with the most determined opposition from him. He showed them no forbearance, no compliance. His epistles are full of attacks upon them and denunciations against them. "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the

<sup>1</sup> "This systematic hatred of St. Paul by the Judaizing party," observes Professor Lightfoot, "is an important fact, which we are too apt to overlook, but without which the whole history of the apostolic age will be misread and misunderstood."—*Commentary on the Galatians*, p. 300.

apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 13).<sup>1</sup> It would appear as if it were his great mission to be the apostle of freedom,—to stand up in opposition to the narrowness, bigotry, and intolerance of the Judaizing faction of the Jewish-Christian Church.

But whilst the relation of Paul to the Judaizers, who wished to impose Judaism on the Gentiles, was one of decided antagonism, it was different with regard to the Jewish Christians in general. The decree of the council of Jerusalem, whilst it guaranteed the freedom of the Gentiles, with certain restrictions in the way of compromise (Acts xv. 28, 29), did not refer to the Jewish Christians,—it did not touch upon the question of their relation to the Mosaic law, nor determine whether obedience to it was absolutely indispensable, or whether they also were released from its requirements. This was a point which was as yet unsettled.<sup>2</sup> Now it would appear that, in Jerusalem at least, a large proportion of Jewish Christians, although baptized and acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, clung to the Mosaic law. They diligently observed its peculiar rites, circumcised their children, kept up the distinction between clean and unclean meats, attended the daily worship in the temple, and strictly observed the Jewish Sabbath,—indeed, were to all appearance a Jewish sect, who differed from other Jews only in the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. "Thou seest, brother," said James to Paul, "how many thousands of Jews there are who believe; and they are all zealots of the law" (ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου, Acts xxi. 20). And indeed it could hardly be otherwise in Jerusalem. Christians there would not come in contact with the Gentiles, and the question of the obligation of the Jewish law would not arise; besides, if they forsook the law, they would have been persecuted by the Sanhedrim as apostates. And the same observance of the

<sup>1</sup> The pernicious nature of the opinions these teachers inculcated, the greatness of the principle involved, and the bad character of several among them, justified these strong assertions of the apostle. At the same time, it is not necessary to suppose that all the Judaizers were designing men. See Lechler's *Apost. Zeital.* p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> See on the non-reference of the apostolic decrees to the Jewish Christians, Lechler's *das apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 418; Reuss' *History of Christian Theology*, vol. i. pp. 278 ff.

law would be practised in a greater or less degree by the Jewish Christians in the cities of the Gentiles. It was not to be expected that they could free themselves all at once from their peculiar habits and practices, especially as the temple of Jerusalem yet stood in all its glory, the great Jewish festivals were still frequented, and the ordinances of Judaism observed. At the same time, the legal restrictions, especially as regards the use of food, must have been a great obstacle to communion and social intercourse between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and must have given rise to unbrotherly feelings, even although there was no wish on the part of the Jewish Christians to impose these observances on the Gentiles.

Now the attitude of Paul toward these Jewish Christians—those zealots of the law, who united the practice of the rites of Judaism with Christianity—was one of forbearance. He regarded their distinctions between clean and unclean meats as needless scruples (1 Cor. viii. 8). In his view all meats were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and all distinctions between Jew and Gentile were abolished; yet he respected these scruples. He was perfectly at one with the apostles at Jerusalem in thinking that the Gentiles should “abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled,” out of deference to the opinions or prejudices of the Jewish Christians; and he strongly inculcated this principle of Christian forbearance in his Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians. He enunciates the grand principle of Christian love and sacrifice—reverence for the scruples of our ill-instructed brethren,—a principle unknown in heathen morality. “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh whilst the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor. viii. 13).

But it is asked: What was Paul's own personal relation to Judaism? Did he observe its rites, or had he freed himself from them, and did he live in all respects like a Gentile Christian? Was the statement of James concerning him, that he walked in the observance of the law (Acts xxi. 24), a fact or an exaggeration? It would appear that Paul acted in conformity to the maxim, that in things indifferent he might become all things to all men, in order to promote the cause of

the gospel. He preserved to himself liberty of action ; and, as he regarded the legal distinctions as things indifferent, lived as a Gentile among the Gentiles, and as a Jew among the Jews. "Though," says he, "I am free from all men, yet I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews ; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law ; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 19-21). Hence, then, he did not inculcate among the Jewish Christians, as the Judaizing teachers represented him, apostasy from Judaism (*ἀποστασία ἀπὸ Μωϋσεώς*), that "they should forsake the law, and cease to circumcise their children" (Acts xxi. 21);<sup>1</sup> he left this to the influence of the spirit of the gospel. On the contrary, he inculcated a mild conservatism : "Is any called being circumcised ? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. vii. 18-20). His opposition to circumcision in the Epistle to the Galatians did not refer to the continuance of that rite among the Jewish converts, but to its imposition on the Gentiles. And in his own conduct he often showed the example of keeping the law, as when he shaved his head at Cenchrea because he had a vow ; circumcised Timothy, one of his companions in the mission ; attended several of the great Jewish festivals ;<sup>2</sup> came up to Jerusalem with alms and offerings ; assented to the proposal of James to partake in the purifica-

<sup>1</sup> Certainly, however, he would not inculcate the opposite, that a Jewish Christian was bound, as necessary to salvation, to continue to observe the Mosaic law.—See Reuss' *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, book iii. chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> During the whole of his ministry, which lasted twenty years, Paul appears to have gone up only four or five times to Jerusalem ; so that he very seldom attended the great national feasts.

tions and sacrifices of the Nazarites; and with the Jews lived as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews. It would then appear that he himself did not absolutely renounce Judaism,—that he kept, though perhaps with no great strictness, the ceremonies of the law, and that he felt himself at liberty to accommodate himself to others in those matters which he considered indifferent.

This conduct of Paul—at one time living as a Jew, and at another time as a Gentile—gave rise to the plausible charge of inconsistency with which the Judaizing teachers taunted him, as if he himself once preached circumcision (Gal. v. 11). And this difference of conduct is especially seen in two memorable instances, in one of which he did of his own accord what he resolutely refused to do in the other,—he circumcised Timothy, whilst he refused to permit the circumcision of Titus. But the circumstances of the two cases made all the difference: in the one case he acted on a principle of forbearance to the Jews,<sup>1</sup> and in the other case on a principle of antagonism to the Judaizers. With regard to the circumcision of Timothy, we are informed that Paul, wishing him to be his companion on his missionary journey, “took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they all knew that his father was a Greek” (Acts xvi. 3), and therefore knew that he was uncircumcised. It is easy to see how the want of circumcision in Timothy would have hindered the entrance of the gospel among the Jews, whilst his circumcision would promote that object. There was no principle involved here, but merely a question as to the best method of contributing to the success of the gospel. Paul acted on the principle which Luther promulgated when he says, “Just as I myself in the present day, if I were to go among the Jews, and had to preach the gospel, but saw that they were weak, should be willing and ready to submit to circumcision, and to eat and abstain as they did. For in whatever respect I did not adapt myself to them, I should shut the door against myself, and against the gospel that I preached.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not to the Jewish Christians, but to the unbelieving Jews.

<sup>2</sup> For discussions on this question, see Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 119;

The case of Titus was entirely different,—here a question of principle was involved. The Judaizers demanded the circumcision of Titus as a sign of the subjection of the Gentiles to the Jewish law. Here Paul's position was not compliance, but antagonism. "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us to bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. ii. 3–5). Rückert, indeed, strangely imagines that Titus was actually circumcised; and that the meaning of the passage is, that though there was no question of compulsion, yet, on account of the weaknesses of the false brethren, Paul had voluntarily circumcised Titus, without, however, relinquishing his principles.<sup>1</sup> It is admitted that the construction of the passage is irregular;<sup>2</sup> but if this were its meaning, the whole question would be given up,—the liberty of the Gentiles would not only be imperilled, but surrendered. This was not a time for compliance, but for resolute resistance. Besides, the words, "to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour,"<sup>3</sup> would be unmeaning. The reason of Paul's refusal to permit the circumcision of Titus is obvious: it was to preserve the freedom of the Gentiles,—“that the truth of the gospel might continue among them.” But though there is a difference of conduct in these two cases, there is no moral inconsistency. Under other circumstances, for the sake of charity, and in order to conciliate enemies, Paul would have circumcised Titus even as he did Timothy; but the false brethren with their demands pre-

Lekebusch's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, p. 273; Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 322; Biscoe *On the Acts*, pp. 566–577; Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 147.

<sup>1</sup> So also Tertullian, *adv. Marcion*, v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Rückert supplies, “because of false brethren I allowed Titus to be circumcised.” See the excellent note of Meyer on the passage, Meyer's *Brief an die Galater*, pp. 64–69.

<sup>3</sup> In D<sup>1</sup> and certain fathers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Victorin, the words *οὐκ ἐβουλόμην* are omitted; and if this is the correct reading, then the sense would be: “Titus was not indeed compelled to be circumcised, but I yielded for a time on account of false brethren.” Such a reading, however, is not sufficiently attested, and is evidently only made to evade the difficulty of the construction.

vented him doing so. In the case of Timothy, Christian charity and forbearance were exercised; in the case of Titus, Christian courage and opposition to deadly error were displayed.

A recent school of critics hold that not only was there an antagonism between Paul and the Judaizers, but that also the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians shows that there was an opposition between Paul and the Jewish apostles. Baur and his school suppose that the other apostles had really adopted these Judaistic principles which were afterwards developed outside the Christian Church by the Ebionites.<sup>1</sup> According to Baur, it was not individual pharisaical Christians who agitated the question, but we have here a conflict between Pauline and Jewish Christianity. The original apostles, so far from remaining neutral, took part rather with the Judaizing teachers than with Paul: they also had adopted the opinion that circumcision and the Jewish law should be imposed upon the Gentiles. Those who were regarded as false brethren were so only in the church of Antioch, but not in the church of Jerusalem. The constraint which was attempted to be put upon Paul to circumcise Titus was by the original apostles; and when Paul resisted them, the dispute ended with a compromise or concession,—that each should be allowed to propagate his own views,—that the gospel of the uncircumcision should be committed to Paul and Barnabas, whilst the gospel of the circumcision should be committed to Peter and the other apostles. The Jewish apostles yielded because they could not withstand the power of circumstances and the force of Paul's character.<sup>2</sup> "There was," observes Baur, "inside of Jewish Christianity a stricter and a milder party. The stricter party wished to see the principle, common

<sup>1</sup> According to Baur, Ebionism was primitive Christianity, and this was supplanted by Paulinism. In his *Kirchengeschichte* he mentions three stages of development: 1. The state of conflict between Judaism and Paulinism—*die Gegensätze*. 2. The attempts at conciliation or mediation—*die Vermittelung*. 3. Catholicism—*das johanneische Christenthum*. Such speculations, however, belong to the department of Church history.—*Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i., Zweiter Abschnitt.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 137-144; Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. pp. 49-51.

to all Jewish Christians, that no one could be saved without Judaism, extended in all its consequences to the Gentile Christians. This class of Jewish Christians could not be indifferent to Pauline Christianity,—they must ever oppose and resist it. . . . The milder party agreed entirely with the stricter party in principle, and yet, after the concession made by the Jewish apostles to the Apostle Paul, they could not oppose him in the same manner,—they dispensed with carrying out their principle, and limited themselves to Judaism with the application of their principle. We cannot think otherwise than that the Jewish apostles stood at the head of this party. But the other party, which, as the strict and consistent party, could not permit themselves to be restrained by half measures, must become, in the nature of things, historically the more important.”<sup>1</sup>

In the account of the council of Jerusalem given us in the Acts of the Apostles, there is not the least semblance of opposition between Paul and the other apostles. James and Peter are at one with Paul as to the freedom of the Gentiles from the Jewish law. The church of Jerusalem is almost unanimous. The only dissentients are certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed. This is admitted by Baur.<sup>2</sup> His whole argument rests on the narrative given in the Epistle to the Galatians. But here also an evident distinction is made between the Judaizers and the three Jewish apostles. The one are called “false brethren;” of the other it is said that “they were of reputation,” and “seemed to be pillars of the Church.” Nor is it in any way indicated that it was the Jewish apostles who wished to compel Titus to be circum-

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 145. Professor Jowett's view may be regarded as in some respects a modification of Baur's. He represents the relation of Paul to the twelve as consisting in “independence of each other in their ministry and apostleship; antagonism of the followers, and on one or two occasions of the leaders also; some difference of spirit, together with great personal hostility on the part of the Judaizers to St. Paul, but not of St. Paul to the twelve.” And he describes it as similar to the relation of Wesley to Whitfield, or of Luther to Calvin.

<sup>2</sup> According to Baur, the Acts is a work of “conciliation,” written in the beginning of the second century, with a view to reconcile Pauline and Jewish or Petrine Christianity. See this view examined in the author's *Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles*.



cised: the most natural and obvious meaning is that this demand was made by the false brethren,<sup>1</sup>—the Judaizing party of the Church. And when Paul speaks of the apostles as “those who seemed to be somewhat” (οἱ δεκοῦντες εἶναι τι, Gal. ii. 6), he does not use these words in any depreciatory or ironical sense, but merely asserts in strong terms that however exalted the apostles might be, yet they communicated nothing to him, he derived no advantage from their instructions, his gospel was independent of them.<sup>2</sup>

According to Baur, there is mention here of two different gospels. Although the Jewish apostles yielded to Paul, yet this did not destroy the difference between them. “There is a εὐαγγέλιον τῆς περιτομῆς, and a εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας, an ἀποστολή εἰς τὴν περιτομήν, and an ἀποστολή εἰς τὰ ἔθνη: in the one the Mosaic law is valid, and in the other it is not, but both exist together as yet unreconciled.”<sup>3</sup> But such a view has no foundation in the passage. It is evident from the connection that by the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision are not meant two different doctrinal systems, as if there was a Christianity adapted to the Gentiles and a different kind of Christianity adapted to the Jews, but the same gospel addressed to two different classes of hearers,—that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles, and the other apostles to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9). And, as Meyer not too strongly expresses it, the passage could not have been more grossly misunderstood than it is by Baur.<sup>4</sup> The statement that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto Paul, and the gospel of the circumcision unto Peter (Gal. ii. 7), contradicts neither Paul’s ministry to the Jews, nor Peter’s to the Gentiles, but merely asserts that

<sup>1</sup> Professor Lightfoot takes an opposite view. He thinks that the original apostles recommended St. Paul to yield the point as a charitable concession to the prejudices of the Jewish converts; but convinced at length by his representations that such a concession at such a time would be fatal, they withdrew their counsel and gave him their support.—*Commentary on the Galatians*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> For answers to Baur, see especially Lechler’s *Apostolisches Zeitalter* passim, and Wieseler’s *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 189–198.

<sup>3</sup> Baur’s *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 143; Baur’s *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer on Gal. ii. 7, *Brief an die Galater*, p. 77. See also Ritschl, *Entstehung d. altkath. K.*, pp. 127, 128.

Paul's ministry was chiefly confined to the Gentiles, and Peter's to the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

But it is strongly insisted that this opposition between Paul and the Jewish apostles broke out in the encounter between Peter and Paul at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11-14).<sup>2</sup> According to the narrative given us in the Epistle, Peter came from Jerusalem to Antioch. He lived for some time freely among the Gentiles, undeterred by any legal scruples. Shortly afterwards, some Christian Jews came from James, and Peter, out of deference to them, and for fear of giving offence, withdrew from the society of the Gentile converts, and again observed the legal distinctions of clean and unclean meats. It is to be observed that Peter did not here, as Baur assumes, wish to impose circumcision on the Gentiles: the question was entirely as to eating or associating with the Gentiles. And further, there was here no difference of opinion between the two apostles, but an inconsistency in conduct on the part of Peter,—a sinful compliance with the prejudices of the Jews. Paul accuses him of dissimulation (*ὑπόκρισις*), and says that he was condemned (*ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν*).<sup>3</sup> His previous conduct condemned him; and he was especially to be blamed, seeing that he had been taught by special revelation the abolition of legal distinctions (Acts x. 8-16). The opinions of Paul and Peter regarding the gospel were one: on this occasion Peter acted against his convictions. And this is entirely in conformity with the character of that apostle, as it appears in the Gospels,—at one time bold, and at another time timid and wavering,—impulsive, and susceptible of impressions from without. The same apostle who asserted his readiness to go to prison and to death with his Master, and

<sup>1</sup> The agreement made could not long be carried out, as Peter and John soon left Jerusalem. Professor Lightfoot strangely imagines that the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians was kept up at Rome,—that there was a Jewish Christian Church presided over by St. Peter, and a Gentile Christian Church presided over by St. Paul; and that it was not until the death of these apostles that these two sections of the Christian Church were united under the presidency of Clement.—Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, pp. 322, 323.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Not because he was to be blamed (*reprehensibilis*: Vulgate, Calvin, Beza); but *quia condemnatus erat*, namely, by the Christians of Antioch. See Meyer *in loc.*

afterwards in the hour of danger denied Him, acted in a similar manner at Antioch. In Jerusalem he advocated the freedom of the Gentiles; but at Antioch, for fear of offending his Jewish brethren, he was chargeable with temporizing. This conduct of Peter is in many points instructive; but we are not at liberty to infer from it that he entertained an opposite view of the gospel from that of the Apostle Paul. There is certainly an opposition between these two apostles, but it is an opposition not of opinion, but of practice.<sup>1</sup>

James, however, rather than Peter, is regarded as the head of the Jewish Christian Church. Whether he was one of the original apostles is a point which is undetermined; but he was certainly a person of great importance in the early Church. He is known in ecclesiastical history as the bishop of Jerusalem, and appears after the dispersion of the apostles to have continued his residence in that city. He presided at the council of Jerusalem; he is reckoned along with Peter and John as one of the pillars of the Church; and he was at the head of the church in Jerusalem at Paul's last visit. From the advice which he gave to Paul, it is evident that he had not relinquished Jewish ceremonies (Acts xxi. 20, 24): living entirely among the Jews, he had no inducement nor call to do so. He is described in ecclesiastical history as having strong legal sympathies, being a strict observer of the Mosaic law. "He was consecrated," says Hegesippus, "from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, and abstained from animal food. No razor ever touched his head; he did not anoint himself with oil; he did not use the bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary (*εἰς τὰ ἄρτια*). He wore no wool, but fine linen. He was in the habit of entering the temple (*ναόν*) alone, and was found upon his bended knees interceding for the forgiveness of the people, so that his knees became as hard as camels' in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before God."<sup>2</sup> The account is in many respects untrustworthy and legendary,

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *On the Galatians*, p. 41; Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. i. p. 304; Lechler's *apost. Zeitalter*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 23.

but there may be a substratum of truth in its representation of the legal character of that apostle.

Now in the account of the dispute at Antioch, there is a passage which is considered to indicate a connection between James and the Judaizing party.<sup>1</sup> The persons who were the occasion of the disturbance are said to have been certain who came from James (τινες ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, Gal. ii. 12). Who were those persons? Were they sent by James, or did they come of their own accord? And if sent, for what purpose? Was it to enforce the decrees,—to promote reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile Christians (Hensen), or was it to admonish the Jewish converts of their obligations from which the Gentiles were free (Alford)? The passage is obscure, and no answer can be afforded to these and such like questions. We are as ignorant of the reason why these Jewish Christians came from James, as we are of the reason why Peter came to Antioch (Meyer). The supposition that they belonged to the Judaizing party (Winer, Schott) is opposed to the fact that they came from James; for at the council of Jerusalem that apostle had plainly shown that he had no sympathy with that party. Some translate the words, “certain followers of James”—“persons who gave themselves out as belonging to the party of James” (Usteri, Zeller); others, “those who pretended to have been sent by James” (Olshausen); and others, “those who came from Jerusalem, where James presided” (Beza, Grotius). Probably they resembled those who formerly troubled the church of Antioch, who went out from the apostles at Jerusalem, but to whom no injunctions were given (Acts xv. 24).<sup>2</sup> They seem to have been Jewish Christians, zealous of the law, and who took offence at Peter and the other Jews at Antioch for disregarding the distinction of meats, and freely eating with the Gentiles.

It was certainly Paul's mission to be the apostle of freedom. He was placed in a different position from the other three apostles, Peter, James, and John. Their mission was as yet chiefly confined to the Jews: they were the apostles of the circumcision. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles; and hence

<sup>1</sup> Renan's *Saint Paul*, pp. 78–86.

<sup>2</sup> See Meyer's excellent note on Gal. ii. 12.

in the course of his ministry he had to encounter continued opposition from the Judaizing teachers. It was he chiefly whom they attacked. It was against him chiefly that the Jewish nation were incensed. The other apostles appear for a time to have remained undisturbed in Jerusalem; but whenever Paul made his appearance, the whole city was in an uproar. This arose chiefly from the peculiarity of his position.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time it was also the case that the Pauline phase of Christianity was more antagonistic to the views of the Judaizers than the Jacobean, the Johannean, or the Petrine. There was no such antagonism between Paul and these three apostles as that which existed between Paul and the Judaizers; but whilst there was a perfect harmony in their opinions, each apostle regarded Christianity from his own point of view. Now the grand peculiar doctrine of Paul is justification by faith, and this doctrine was specially opposed to the legal views of the Judaizers. It may be also that Paul, from his continual contact with the Gentile Christians, and it may be from a greater breadth of character, was more liberal in his views than the other apostles, and saw more clearly the end of that dispensation which was soon to be abolished.

In the next age the opposition between the Judaizers and Paulinism was pushed to extremes; and two heretical sects, whose views are opposite, are mentioned in ecclesiastical history,—the Ebionites and the Marcionites. The Ebionites were the successors of the Judaizing Christians. There are said to have been two classes among them,—the Nazarenes, who observed the Jewish law, but did not wish to impose it upon the Gentiles, answering to the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem; and the Ebionites proper, who still held that the law was binding on the Gentiles, answering to the Judaizers.<sup>2</sup> The strict class of Ebionites regarded Paul as a false teacher, and rejected his writings. In the Clementine Homilies he is

<sup>1</sup> We are, however, comparatively ignorant of the history of the other apostles, and so cannot tell what opposition they also encountered from the Judaizers. James at least, we know, was put to death by the Jews shortly before the outbreak of the Jewish war.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dial. c. Tryph.* 47; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 27.

covertly attacked under the name of Simon Magus, as the opponent of Peter.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Marcionites carried Paulinism to excess. They depreciated the other apostles and exalted Paul. They rejected all the books of the New Testament except the Gospel of Luke and ten epistles of Paul. They not only held that the Jewish law was abolished, but considered that the God of the Old Testament was an inferior being to the God of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Both Ebionism and Marcionism were alike condemned by the Christian Church, and both have long since disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Ebionites and their antagonism to St. Paul, see Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, pp. 305-322; Ritschl's *Entstehung d. altkat. Kirche*, p. 152 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 129-150, Bohn's edition.

<sup>3</sup> Both sects continued even unto the fourth century.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THE authenticity of the First Epistle to the Corinthians has been almost universally admitted.<sup>1</sup> None of Paul's epistles is so strongly attested by external evidence. The allusions to it by the apostolic fathers are direct and incontrovertible. Thus Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96), the earliest extra-canonical Christian writer whose works have survived, in an epistle addressed to the Corinthians themselves, directly ascribes this epistle to Paul: "Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he at first write to you in the beginning of the gospel? Of a truth he wrote to you by the Spirit concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, for even then you formed factions."<sup>2</sup> So also Ignatius (A.D. 115) quotes from this epistle when he says: "It becomes you therefore in everything to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ who has glorified you, that in one obedience you may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment, and may all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. i. 10).<sup>3</sup> Polycarp (A.D. 116) writes: "Know you not that the saints shall judge the world? as Paul teaches" (1 Cor. vi. 2).<sup>4</sup> Justin Martyr (A.D. 140),

<sup>1</sup> Called in question only by Bruno Bauer, 1851.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. ad Corinth.* c. 47. Ἀναλάβετε τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ μακαρίου Παύλου τοῦ ἀποστόλου. Τί πρῶτον ὑμῖν ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἔγραψεν; ἐπ' ἀληθείας πνευματικῶς ἐπίστειλεν ὑμῖν, περὶ αὐτοῦ τι, καὶ Κηφᾶ τι, καὶ Ἀπόλλω, διὰ τὸ καὶ τότε προσκλίσαις ὑμᾶς πεποιῆσθαι.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. ad Ephes.* c. 2. Πρίσπον οὖν ἐστιν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον δοξάζειν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν δοξάσαντα ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν μιᾷ ὑποταγῇ ᾗτε κατηρτισμένοι τῷ αὐτῷ νοί καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. ad Philippens*, c. 11: "An nescimus, quia sancti mundum judicabunt? sicut Paulus docet."

who seldom directly quotes from Scripture, probably refers to this epistle when he says: "Christ was the passover, who was afterwards sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).<sup>1</sup> Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "This also the Apostle (Paul), in the Epistle to the Corinthians, manifestly declares: 'I would not have you to be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea'" (1 Cor. x. 1, 2).<sup>2</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) says: "Therefore the blessed Paul has most manifestly solved this problem in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, writing thus: 'Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye perfect'" (1 Cor. xiv. 20).<sup>3</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) writes: "Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, mentions those who denied or doubted a resurrection" (1 Cor. xv. 12).<sup>4</sup>

Nor is the internal evidence less convincing. Paul's character is distinctly impressed upon this Epistle. The severity and vehemence with which sin is rebuked, the tenderness at the same time shown toward the erring, the earnest longings for the reformation of offenders, the Christian liberty asserted and maintained, the restraints which nevertheless charity puts upon that liberty, the pre-eminence given to love, the self-denying spirit exhibited, the reluctance with which the writer alludes to himself, and the calmness, wisdom, and soberness of the answers given to questions propounded, are all highly characteristic of Paul, and are traits of character beyond the skill of a forger to invent. The undesigned coincidences between this Epistle and the Acts are numerous, varied, striking, and convincing. Thus in the Epistle we are informed that Apollos watered the church which Paul had planted (1 Cor. iii. 6); and in the history we are told that

<sup>1</sup> *Dial. cum Tryph.*: 'Ἦν γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ τυθεὶς ὑπερτον.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* iv. 27, 3: Et hoc autem apostolum in epistola, quæ est ad Corinthios, manifestissime ostendisse, dicentem: "Noli enim vos ignorare, fratres, quoniam patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes in Mose baptizati sunt in nube, et in mari."

<sup>3</sup> *Pædagog.* i. 6: Ζαφίστατα γοῦν ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ἀπέλλαξεν ἡμᾶς τῆς ζητήσεως ἐν τῇ προτέρᾳ πρὸς Κορινθίους, ἐπιστολῇ ᾧδὲ πως γράφων· Ἀδελφοὶ μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζεσθε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειαι γίνεσθε.

<sup>4</sup> *De præscription.* c. 33: Paulus in prima ad Corinthios notat negatores et dubitatores resurrectionis.



Apollos passed over from Ephesus to Achaia, the province of which Corinth was the capital, and helped the disciples much who had believed through grace (Acts xviii. 27). In the Epistle the Corinthians are informed of a mission of Timothy to Corinth (1 Cor. iv. 17); and in the history we are told that Paul, purposing to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, sent before him into Macedonia Timothy and Erastus (Acts xix. 21, 22); and although Achaia is not here directly mentioned, yet it is included, as Timothy was sent before Paul, and Achaia was one of the countries which Paul intended to visit. In the Epistle, written from Ephesus, salutations are sent from Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor. xvi. 19); and we learn from the history that these two persons were then with Paul at Ephesus (Acts xviii. 24-27). In the Epistle Paul states his purpose of journeying through Macedonia to Corinth, and there wintering (1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6); and in the history we learn that this purpose was carried into effect (Acts xx. 1-3). In the Epistle we are informed that Paul baptized Crispus,—an exception to his general custom (1 Cor. i. 14); and the history gives us the reason of this exception, stating that Crispus was distinguished as one of Paul's first converts, and as the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue (Acts xviii. 8). In short, the coincidences are so varied and numerous as to form an almost irresistible proof of the genuineness of the Epistle.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE CHURCH OF CORINTH.

Corinth, originally called Ephyra, was situated on the isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the rest of Greece, and separates the Ægean from the Ionian sea. It lay at the foot of a hill called the Acrocorinthus, rising to the height of 2000 feet, so difficult of ascent as to be deemed impregnable. This hill formed the citadel, and was to Corinth what the Acropolis was to Athens. On account of its situation,

<sup>1</sup> For the coincidences between First Corinthians and the Acts, see Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. iii. Professor Jowett observes: "The ingenuity of Paley's arguments, the minuteness of the intimations discovered by him, the remoteness and complexity of his combinations, leave the impression on the mind of absolute certainty in reference to the great Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians."—*St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. p. 204.

Corinth was in a military point of view of great importance, as it commanded the entrance into the peninsula; and hence it was called by Xenophon "the gate of the Peloponnesus." It was equally favourably situated for the commerce both of the East and West. It had two ports, the western, Lechæum, about a mile and a half from the city, and the eastern, Cenchrea, about eight miles distant,—the former destined for the Italian, and the latter for the Asiatic commerce. Corinth did not rise to eminence until the later days of Grecian history, when it became the head of the Achæan league. It was then one of the richest cities of the world; arts and sciences flourished; it was the abode of learning and philosophy; and was regarded as "the light of all Greece" (*totius Græciæ lumen*). The glory of Greek Corinth was of short duration: the town was totally destroyed by the Romans under Lucius Mummius, B.C. 146, and its works of genius and art were burned by those who knew not their value.<sup>1</sup> After lying in ruins for about a hundred years, Corinth was rebuilt by Julius Cæsar, and converted into a Roman colony. Roman Corinth soon became a populous and flourishing city. It was constituted the capital of the province of Achaia, and the commerce of the East and West again flowed into it. It was celebrated for its wealth and magnificence, as well as for the refinement of its inhabitants. It was, however, infamous for its licentiousness. Venus, whose temple adorned the Acrocorinthus, was its favourite goddess; and sensuality took the form of a religious rite. "The temple of Venus at Corinth," observes Strabo, "was so rich, that it had more than a thousand courtesans consecrated to the service of the goddess. The city was frequented and enriched by multitudes who resorted thither on that account."<sup>2</sup> So infamous did Corinth become, that Dio Chrysostom terms it "a city the most licentious of all that are or ever have been."<sup>3</sup> This is a feature which has to be borne in mind when we read Paul's Epistles, as it explains

<sup>1</sup> We are informed that the historian Polybius saw pictures thrown upon the ground, and soldiers playing at dice upon them.—Strabo, viii. 6, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, viii. 6, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Impurity prevailed to such an extent, that *κορινθιάζειν*, "to live like a Corinthian," was equivalent to *ἐταπεινῶναι*, "to commit fornication."

the cause of the extreme corruption of the Corinthian church, and the vehemence of the apostle's rebukes. The inhabitants of Roman Corinth were a mixed race. The Greek element was the prevailing one, and Greek was the language spoken. But, along with the Greeks, there were numerous Romans, chiefly the descendants of free men who had been settled there by Julius Cæsar. People from all countries were drawn thither by trade; and the Jews were numerous, being attracted to this rich commercial city.<sup>1</sup>

Paul visited Corinth during his second missionary journey. It would appear that he came alone from Athens, unaccompanied by any of his fellow-workers, a stranger in the heart of this great cosmopolitan city. He was fortunate enough to find friends, perhaps even Christians. A pious Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla, expelled from Rome by the decree of Claudius, had lately come to Corinth; and because they and the apostle were of the same trade, they associated together.<sup>2</sup> Paul, according to his usual custom, repaired on the Sabbath to the Jewish synagogue, and for several weeks preached Jesus as the Messiah to his fellow-countrymen and to the Greeks. Shortly after this he was joined by Silas and Timothy; and the presence and encouragement of these fellow-labourers served to increase his zeal. In consequence of this, a crisis took place: many Jews and Greeks believed, and among others Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue. Expelled from the synagogue by the unbelieving Jews, Paul betook himself to the adjoining house of one Justus, and there, encouraged by a vision from the Lord, he continued a year and a half preaching the gospel to all who came to him. The Jews, moved with envy, raised a tumult against him, and dragged him before Gallio, the Roman governor; but their designs were frustrated by the wisdom and inflexible determination of that enlightened judge, who refused to take up

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's *Wörterbuch*; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, chap. xiii.; Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, pp. 233, 234; Kuinoel's *Novi Testamenti libri historici*, vol. iii. p. 275; Renan's *St. Paul*, pp. 212-214.

<sup>2</sup> It is a disputed point whether Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians when Paul met them. Meyer, De Wette, and Lechler consider they were not; whilst Neander, Wieseler, and Ewald adopt the opposite opinion.—See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. p. 168.

the matter, as not falling under his jurisdiction. After this, Paul continued for some time longer; and then, leaving behind him Silas and Timothy,<sup>1</sup> he departed for Ephesus. The result of Paul's labours at Corinth was that a large and flourishing church was formed, composed of Jews and Gentiles. "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."

After Paul's departure, the work so successfully begun was carried on by Apollos. This remarkable man was a Jew of Alexandria, probably educated in the school of Philo; an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. He had come to Ephesus after Paul's departure, and taught in the synagogue. His knowledge of Christianity was then imperfect, but he received further instruction from Paul's fellow-workers, Aquila and Priscilla. Receiving from them letters of recommendation, he repaired to Corinth, and, as we read, "helped them much who had believed through grace; for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts xviii. 27, 28). And to his successful labours the apostle alludes when he says, "I have planted, Apollos watered" (1 Cor. iii. 6).

Some suppose, from certain expressions contained in the Second Epistle, that Paul, before he wrote this First Epistle, paid another visit to Corinth, not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This opinion is adopted with various modifications by Chrysostom, Calvin, Macknight, Anger, Michaelis, Bleek, Billroth, Neander, Meyer, Wieseler, Credner, Rückert, Reuss, Neudecker, Olshausen, Schaff, Alford, Ellicott, Conybeare and Howson, and Davidson (second edition). In the Second Epistle, Paul writes in such a manner as would lead us to infer that the visit which he intended to make to Corinth was not a second but a third visit: "Behold," he says, "the third time I am ready to come unto you, and I will not be burdensome unto you; for I seek not yours, but you" (2 Cor. xii. 14). And again: "This is the third time I am coming unto you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. xiii. 1). And indications of

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of Silas and Timothy accompanying the apostle from Corinth to Ephesus. Timothy afterwards rejoined Paul at Ephesus (Acts xix. 22); Silas' name does not again occur in the Acts.

this second visit are supposed to be contained in other portions of that epistle, as when the apostle says, "I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness" (ἐν λύπῃ, 2 Cor. ii. 1), which, it is argued, can refer only to a second visit, for in his first visit the apostle did not come in heaviness.<sup>1</sup> Now such a visit cannot be placed in the interval between the First and Second Epistles, as Ewald supposes,<sup>2</sup> for the statements in the Second Epistle (2 Cor. i. 15, 16, 23) exclude such a visit; and, besides, as we shall afterwards see, the First Epistle was written toward the close of the apostle's sojourn at Ephesus, and the Second soon after, during his journey through Macedonia, on which he set out from Ephesus. Those who adopt the hypothesis of a second visit, vary in their opinions as to the time of its occurrence. Some (Mac-knight, Anger, Schott) suppose that the apostle, during his residence of eighteen months at Corinth, made an excursion from that city into Achaia, and that his return from that excursion formed the second visit. Neander thinks that it occurred in the interval between the apostle's departure from Antioch (Acts xviii. 22, 23) and his settlement at Ephesus (Acts xix. 1).<sup>3</sup> The most common and plausible opinion is that it occurred during the apostle's three years' residence at Ephesus; for we are not to suppose that this residence was continuous: it might have been interrupted by a short excursion to Corinth. No great stress is put on Luke's omission of this journey, as the narrative in the Acts is defective, omitting entirely Paul's residence in Arabia, and mentioning only in a few words his important journey when the churches of Galatia were founded (Acts xvi. 6).

An opposite opinion is adopted by other critics, who suppose that Paul visited Corinth only once before he wrote his Epistles, namely, when he founded the church in that city (Acts xviii. 1-18). This view is held by Beza, Grotius, Paley, De Wette, Baur, Whitby, Doddridge, Davidson (1st edition), Stanley, and Wordsworth. There are, it is asserted, passages

<sup>1</sup> See Bleek's *Introduction N. T.*, vol. i. p. 424; Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 232-235.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus*, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 253-255.

in the Second Epistle which counteract the impression made by those other passages adduced in favour of a second visit. Of such a nature is the following: "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way towards Judea" (2 Cor. i. 15, 16). If, it is argued, Paul had been twice in Corinth, he would have spoken of a third benefit. But to this it has been replied, that the apostle here means that he had intended to see them twice,—once by sailing directly from Ephesus to Corinth, and a second time on his return from Macedonia; and this certainly appears to be the meaning of the passage. Another argument is derived from 2 Cor. xiii. 2, where the apostle says, "I have said before, and foretell, as if I were present, the second time (ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον), and now being absent to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all others, that, if I come again, I will not spare."<sup>1</sup> It is affirmed that the natural meaning of these words is that the apostle now tells them what he would have said and done had he been present with them a second time, and consequently that he had been only once in Corinth.<sup>2</sup> It is also against the notion of a second visit, that there is no mention or allusion to it in the First Epistle. "If," as De Wette observes, "the condition of the Corinthian church at the time of this visit was such as to give uneasiness to the apostle, as is inferred from 2 Cor. xii. 21, ii. 1, it is not easy to understand how in the First Epistle he should have avoided all mention of that visit, and of his efforts to counteract the disorders which he witnessed. If the condition of the church was not then disordered, the explanation of the passages referred to<sup>3</sup> falls to the ground; and it is not easy to understand how the church should have become in so short a time so disordered, as the (supposed) visit of the apostle occurred

<sup>1</sup> γράφω in the *textus receptus* is by the best critics omitted from the text. See Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 216, 217 (old edition).

<sup>2</sup> Alford avoids this objection by translating the words: "I have said already, and now say beforehand, as when I was present the second time." But the translation given in the text appears to be more correct.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1, xii. 21, ii. 1, on which the advocates of a second visit ground their opinion.

not long before he wrote the First Epistle.<sup>1</sup> Besides, it is to be observed that the apostle speaks of these disorders not from personal experience of what he saw during his supposed second visit, but from information received from others (1 Cor. i. 11, v. 1, xi. 18). As to the two passages which seem to establish a second visit, it is asserted that they admit of another interpretation. When the apostle says, *ἰδοὺ τρίτον ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς* ("Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you," 2 Cor. xii. 14), *τρίτον* may refer to *ἐτοίμως ἔχω* as well as to *ἐλθεῖν*, and thus may allude to the readiness or intention of the apostle to come; and we know that the apostle once altered his intention, and was accused of fickleness on that account (2 Cor. i. 15–17); so that what he means may be: "This is the third time that I have intended to come to you."<sup>2</sup> And the other passage wherein he says, *τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς* ("This is the third time I am coming to you," 2 Cor. xiii. 1), may also be similarly explained of a threefold intention to come, especially as the verse which follows, "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time" (*ὥς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον*), rather seems to favour only one visit. He had come once; he had intended to come a second time, but had altered his plans; and now a third time he was again intending to come to them.<sup>3</sup> The language of the apostle is certainly somewhat ambiguous; but as there is no mention of a second visit in the Acts, and no allusion to it in the First Epistle, the probability is that it did not take place, although otherwise there is nothing objectionable in the supposition that it occurred during the three years' residence at Ephesus. The matter is invested with more importance than it really deserves, as it has only a remote reference to the interpretation of the Epistle.

The Corinthian Church was composed both of Jews and Gentiles; but the Gentile element decidedly preponderated. Paul was expelled the synagogue only a few weeks after his

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 289. Wieseler replies to this objection by a reference to the lost epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, in which Paul probably alluded to his visit.—*Chronologie*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth's *Commentary*, note on 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 215–217 (old edition).

arrival; and during the greater part of the eighteen months spent by him at Corinth, he taught in the house of Justus. The greater part of the Epistle has reference to questions which would naturally arise among Gentile converts; and Paul could say of the church collectively, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols even as ye were led" (1 Cor. xii. 2).<sup>1</sup> It would also appear that few of the rich and noble in Corinth embraced the gospel. The church was poor, and this was perhaps one reason why it did not contribute to the apostle's support. "Ye see your calling, brethren," writes the apostle, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. i. 26). To this, however, there were exceptions. Mention is made of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, and Gaius, who is represented as the host of the apostle and of the whole church (Rom. xvi. 23).

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The church of Corinth, which Paul had left in such a flourishing condition, and which had been privileged with the labours of Silas, Timothy, and Apollos, had fallen into a state of great disorder. This seems to have arisen from Judaizing teachers who intruded into the church from without. These restless opponents of Paul came to Corinth with letters of recommendation (2 Cor. iii. 1), perhaps from Judea. They endeavoured to alienate the affections of the Corinthians from the apostle. They, however, adopted a different course from that attempted in Galatia. They did not insist on circumcision and the strict observance of the law. These views would not have succeeded among the free-minded Corinthians. They rather attempted to undermine the authority of Paul, knowing that if they succeeded in this, they would soon subvert his doctrines.<sup>2</sup> They represented him as inferior to the other apostles, as inculcating an erroneous gospel, as fostering a spirit of licentiousness. Their efforts were not without

<sup>1</sup> But see, on the other hand, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> See the character of these Corinthian Judaizing teachers well described in Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 297.



success, at least among the Jewish portion of the church; and it would appear that a faction was formed who called themselves the Petrine party, appealing to the authority of Peter as the chief of the apostles. The followers of Paul also carried matters to an extreme, and formed in opposition the Pauline party. Michaelis supposes that these disorders were caused by a single teacher, who appeared as a rival to the apostle, and gave himself out as his superior.<sup>1</sup> This, however, does not seem to have been the case. The opponents of Paul—the false apostles—are represented in this Epistle as many.

The apostle received information of the disorders of the Corinthian church from certain persons who had come from Corinth to Ephesus. Perhaps the information received from Apollos on his return was not altogether satisfactory; but the news were brought to him chiefly by certain members of the household of Chloe<sup>2</sup> (1 Cor. i. 11). It represented a sad state of things. The church was split up into factions: one party called themselves by the name of Peter, the apostle of the circumcision; another by the name of Paul, the founder of the Corinthian church; and a third by the name of Apollos, the most eloquent preacher. Sins of uncleanness, so prevalent and regarded with indifference at Corinth, had polluted the Corinthian church; the Christians had not completely cast off the old man; and especially an offence of this nature of a peculiarly aggravated description had occurred, and the offender had not been expelled from the Christian community. A litigious spirit had arisen. Disputes had been carried to such an extent, that Christian arbitration was rejected, and brother went to law with brother, and that before unbelievers. The religious assemblies of the church frequently exhibited scenes of confusion: several prophesied at once; others spake with tongues, when there was no interpreter; women appeared in these assemblies in unbecoming attire; and even the Agapæ and the Lord's Supper were so profaned, that excess in eating

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 46–48. So also Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 111; and Ewald, *Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus*, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> We are entirely ignorant about this Chloe,—whether she was a Corinthian, or, as Meyer supposes, an Ephesian having friends residing in Corinth.

and drinking was not infrequent at their celebration. Several Christians, also, making a parade of their liberty, seem to have attended the sacrificial banquets held in the heathen temples. And there were some who went the length of denying or calling in question the doctrine of a resurrection,—perhaps even the idea of a future life.

Besides this information brought by those of the house of Chloe, it would also appear that the Corinthians had written a letter to the apostle, perhaps in reply to one (which is now lost) sent by him (1 Cor. v. 9).<sup>1</sup> This letter from the Corinthians has not been preserved, but from this Epistle we may easily discover the points to which it referred. In it they asked the apostle's advice on certain matters which caused dispute and difficulty. One of these points referred to marriage (1 Cor. vii. 1). On this subject various perplexing questions would necessarily arise,—as, for example, in the case where one of the parties was converted to Christianity and the other remained a heathen, or where the unbeliever refused to dwell with his Christian wife.<sup>2</sup> Another important point of inquiry referred to eating things offered in sacrifice to idols (1 Cor. viii. 1). What was the proper duty of Christians in reference to this? Were they to eat all things without restriction? Or if not, what restrictions did Christianity necessitate? If, for example, they were asked by an unbeliever to a feast, were they at liberty to accept his hospitality, and to eat whatever was set before them? (1 Cor. x. 27). A third question related to the exercise of spiritual gifts in their public assemblies (1 Cor. xii. 1). Here some restrictions to the exercise of these gifts seemed absolutely necessary,—their assemblies were falling into a state of spiritual excitement and disorder. But what restrictions were to be imposed? Was the Spirit of God who spoke by the prophets to be restrained? These questions were not trifling, but matters of great importance to the infant Church, and required for their solution all the wisdom of the inspired apostle. They were questions which naturally

<sup>1</sup> On this lost epistle of Paul to the Corinthians see pp. 27-30.

<sup>2</sup> The difficulty in the case of polygamy, where a man before his conversion had several wives, had not then occurred; it has arisen in the later days of Christian missions.

arose from the new state of things introduced by Christianity.

Accordingly the design of this First Epistle to the Corinthians was twofold,—first, to correct those disorders which had arisen in the church; and, secondly, to answer the inquiries proposed by the Corinthians. Perhaps a third and subordinate object was to promote the collection which the apostle was making throughout the churches of the Gentiles for the poor saints at Jerusalem (1 Cor. xvi. 1-3).

The bearer of this Epistle was not, as the subscription indicates, Timothy. That evangelist was not with the apostle when he wrote the Epistle. He had been sent previously to Macedonia and Achaia (Acts xix. 22), probably to promote the collections for the saints in these districts, and perhaps also to correct the abuses which had arisen in the church of Corinth. The Corinthians were informed of this mission of Timothy to Corinth: "For this cause I have sent to you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. iv. 17). "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear" (1 Cor. xvi. 10). Timothy had left before the Epistle was written, but Paul did not expect him to arrive at Corinth until after the Corinthians had received the Epistle, because, instead of sailing directly from Ephesus to Corinth, he went through Macedonia.<sup>1</sup> Some suppose that Timothy did not reach Corinth on this occasion, because there is no mention of his visit in the Second Epistle (2 Cor. xii. 18);<sup>2</sup> but the omission probably arose from the fact that the Second Epistle is written in the names of Paul and Timothy conjointly.

Titus seems to have been the bearer of this Epistle.<sup>3</sup> Paul sent him, along with another fellow-labourer whose name is unknown, in company with the three individuals, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who had brought the epistle from the

<sup>1</sup> We have here an undesigned coincidence between the Epistle and the Acts; see Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. iii. No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 25 and 103; Neander's *Planting*, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley *On the Corinthians*, p. 19.

Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 17). Thus in the Second Epistle the apostle writes: "I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother" (2 Cor. xii. 18). It was necessary in such a critical state of matters that some influential person should be sent; and as Timothy was absent, Titus supplied his place. It would appear that Paul wished Apollos to go to Corinth, but that evangelist declined, probably because he thought that his presence might only increase the factious spirit which prevailed: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come to you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have a convenient time" (1 Cor. xvi. 12).

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The contents of this Epistle are, from the nature of the case, more varied than any other of Paul's letters. Nor does there seem to be any regular method pursued. The apostle first deals with the disorders of the church, then answers the inquiries of the Corinthians, and then returns to the former subject. After the usual salutation and thanksgiving (chap. i. 1-9), Paul proceeds to find fault with the Corinthians for the party divisions which existed among them, and for preferring a false philosophy to the simple preaching of the cross of Christ (chap. i. 10-iv. 16). After referring to the mission of Timothy and his own intended visit (chap. iv. 17-21), he next reproves them for the immorality which prevailed, and especially that flagrant case of the incestuous marriage which had occurred among them (chap. v. 1-13). He censures them for their litigious spirit, in prosecuting their brethren before heathen tribunals, instead of settling their disputes among themselves (chap. vi. 1-8). He again urges them to guard against that vice of uncleanness which was so prevalent in Corinth (chap. vi. 9-20). Having thus endeavoured to correct some of their disorders, he proceeds to answer the questions which had been proposed to him. He first discusses the questions referring to marriage (chap. vii. 1-40), and then those referring to meats offered to idols, treating at great length, in connection with these, the subject of Christian

liberty (chap. viii.-xi. 1). Having thus reprimanded them for their faults, and answered their inquiries, he next proceeds to reform the irregularities which existed in their mode of conducting public worship,—such as the behaviour of women in overstepping the modesty of their sex (chap. xi. 2-16); the improper mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper (chap. xi. 17-34); the abuse of spiritual gifts, especially those of prophesying and speaking with tongues, pronouncing an eulogium on charity as the greatest of all spiritual gifts, and as that which solves all difficulties and corrects all disorders (chap. xii.-xiv.). He then proceeds to discuss the doctrine of the resurrection, which some of the Corinthians doubted or denied (chap. xv.). And he concludes the Epistle with directions about the collection for the saints, information regarding his coming to Corinth, and salutations from those friends who were with him (chap. xvi.).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The date of this Epistle is easily determined. It was written from Ephesus. "I will," says the apostle, "tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost" (1 Cor. xvi. 8). And salutations are sent from the churches of Asia (1 Cor. xvi. 19). But it could not have been written before Paul's second residence at Ephesus (Acts xix. 1), because Apollos had already preached at Corinth, and that was subsequent to Paul's first visit (Acts xviii. 26, 27). It was also toward the close of Paul's second residence that this Epistle was written; for the apostle was already forming his plans of departure from Ephesus to Macedonia, and had already sent Timothy and Erastus before him (Acts xix. 22). Some suppose that there are intimations in the Epistle that it was written at Easter, from the allusions to the Passover (1 Cor. v. 6-8);<sup>1</sup> but such intimations are slight, although it may be probable that the celebration of the Passover suggested these allusions to the apostle. It may then with considerable certainty be affirmed that the date of the Epistle was shortly before the Pentecost of the year 57, but whether before or after the tumult at Ephesus

<sup>1</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 291.

must remain undetermined. This opinion has been adopted by all critics, with two exceptions. Köhler supposes that it was written after the first Roman imprisonment, toward the end of the year 64;<sup>1</sup> and Böttger thinks that it was written in Achaia on a voyage which the apostle made from Ephesus, without touching at Corinth.<sup>2</sup> It follows that the subscription to the Epistle, stating that it was written from Philippi, is erroneous. Probably this arose from a mistaken inference drawn from the words, "Now I will come to you when I pass through (διέρχουμαι) Macedonia; for I do pass through Macedonia" (1 Cor. xvi. 5); as if the apostle was actually on his journey through Macedonia.

#### VI. PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

This Epistle is eminently practical. Especially it gives us an insight into the manner in which Paul dealt with questions belonging to Christian casuistry. Questions of conscience had been proposed to him for solution, as, for example, the lawfulness or unlawfulness of eating things offered in sacrifice to idols. Paul gives two rules for determining these and such like questions,—rules of universal application. The one, "Let all things be done with charity,"—beware of casting a stumblingblock in the way of others; the other, "Be fully persuaded in your own mind,"—beware of violating your own conscience.

An insight is given us in this Epistle into the state of the primitive Church. The church of Corinth was highly favoured. Paul had planted it, and laboured in Corinth for the space of eighteen months. He had left behind him Silas and Timothy. And Apollos had carried on that work which Paul and his fellow-workers had commenced. And yet the view given of the church of Corinth is by no means flattering. There is little appearance of that high-toned piety, purity of conduct, fervour of love, and heavenly-mindedness which we are apt to attribute to the early Church. On the contrary, the

<sup>1</sup> The reason why Köhler adopts this view is because he supposes that the second (supposed) visit of Paul to Corinth is that recorded in Acts xx. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 321.

church is polluted by heinous sins; its public assemblies are often scenes of disorder; and the Lord's Supper is converted into an occasion of excess. Even our worst congregations might stand a comparison with the Corinthian church. And yet Paul never thinks of denying its claims to be a true church of Christ; nor does he omit in his Epistles to thank God for the grace which was given them by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. i. 4). When the abominations of heathenism, and especially those practised in the city of Corinth, are considered, it is hardly to be expected that the Christian converts could all on a sudden divorce themselves from these abominations: the old nature was not so easily destroyed. Perhaps, however, the church of Corinth was not a fair specimen of other churches; and certainly, in reading the Epistle to the Philippians, the impression left upon us is that the church of Corinth was far inferior in purity to the church of Philippi.<sup>1</sup>

But this Epistle to the Corinthians not merely gives an insight into the state of the primitive Church, but also reveals at the same time the noble character of the great apostle. Here he is exhibited as a watchful shepherd of the flock of Christ. He has for every error of conduct a stern reproof, for every perversion of the gospel a strong rebuke, but also for every human weakness a tender care and helping hand. There is in his character a wonderful mixture of tenderness and severity. At one time he rebukes with impassioned and vehement severity; at another time he entreats with the tenderness of a loving mother mourning over her erring children.<sup>2</sup> Here also the varied gifts of the apostle are displayed,—the wisdom with which he solves questions of casuistry; the insight which he has into the spiritual world; and the largeness and breadth of character, rising above all littlenesses, and yet everywhere regulated by love and forbearance. Nor is this Epistle less a monument of his eloquence. There are in it some of the most eloquent passages found in his writings,—as, for example, his application of the Isthmian foot-race to our

<sup>1</sup> And yet in none of Paul's Epistles have we such minute particulars of the internal condition of a Christian church as in these Epistles to the Corinthians.

<sup>2</sup> See Reuss, *Geschichte der heiligen Schriften N. T.*, p. 87; Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 303; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 56.

Christian life and calling (1 Cor. ix. 24-27); his contrast between the gospel and the philosophy of the Greeks (1 Cor. i. 18-25); and the reference to his own labours, and the claims which, as their spiritual father, he had upon the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 8-15). Especially the personification of love in the thirteenth chapter, and the statement of the doctrine of the resurrection in the fifteenth, are pieces of composition which will bear no unfavourable comparison with the sublimest writings of ancient or modern times.

### THE FACTIONS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.<sup>1</sup>

The chief cause of the disorders which prevailed in the church of Corinth was the existence of parties or factions. There was no controlling central power to regulate the worship and maintain the discipline of the church. "Now I beseech you, brethren," writes the apostle, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (*σχίσματα*) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions (*ἔριδες*) among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (1 Cor. i. 10-12). No blame can be attached to the teachers, who are here named as the leaders or heads of these factions. Paul indignantly repudiates such a leadership, and severely censures the Corinthians for their divisions; Apollos entertained the same views with Paul, and would never have allowed his name to be used as the head of a rival sect; and Peter not only preached the same gospel, but had no personal connection with the

<sup>1</sup> This subject is discussed in Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. chap. xiii.; Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 223-238; Neander's *Planting of Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 226-240; Olshausen's *Commentary on the Corinthians*, pp. 2-10; Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 289-326; Schaff's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. pp. 334-341; Stanley *On the Corinthians*, pp. 26-30; Billroth *On the Corinthians*, Introduction; Schenkel's *de ecclesia Corinthiaca*, etc.



Corinthians. The leaders were innocent: their admirers or followers were alone to blame for these schisms and strifes.

It does not appear that these factions in the Corinthian church ever proceeded to such an extent as to cause actual separation, as Eichhorn supposes, so that there were at Corinth three or four different Christian communities. Certainly the expressions which the apostle employs are strong: he speaks of divisions (*σχίσματα*) and heresies (*αἱρέσεις*) as existing in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19); but neither of these terms necessarily denotes actual separation,—they appear rather to signify dissensions within the church.<sup>1</sup> The parties met together in the church (*ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, 1 Cor. xi. 18). There was in the apostolic Church nothing similar to our modern sects,—dissentient communities outside of the Church; these did not arise until after the days of the apostles. But although there was no separation from the Church, yet there was dissension within it: there were belonging to it persons holding very different views on the nature, obligation, and perpetuity of the Jewish law; and this dissension appears to have taken a specially definite shape and form in the church of Corinth.

There is an uncertainty concerning the number of factions in the Corinthian church. Some, taking the words in their obvious sense, suppose that there were four factions, calling themselves by the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. Others suppose that there were only three,—the Christ-party being the orthodox members of the church, who called themselves by no human name. And others think that there were only two great divisions,—the Pauline and the Petrine; that the parties who ranged themselves under the names of Paul and Apollos were substantially one; and so also were the parties who called themselves by the names of Cephas and Christ.

There can be little dubiety about the Petrine party. Those who belonged to it constituted the Judaizing faction of the Corinthian church,—the great opponents of Paul and his teaching. They called themselves by the name of Peter, not

<sup>1</sup> See a valuable dissertation on the meaning of the terms *σχίσματα* and *αἱρέσεις* in Campbell *On the Gospels*, vol. i. Dissertation x.

because that apostle sympathised with them, or indeed had any communication with them, but because he was regarded as the chief of the apostles of the circumcision. They appear, as has already been observed, to have intruded themselves into the church of Corinth from without (2 Cor. iii. 1). The views of the Judaizing party were definite, although they might be variously maintained. They insisted on the importance of the law of Moses. Some of them asserted, notwithstanding the decree of the council of Jerusalem to the contrary, that the Mosaic law should be imposed upon the Gentiles; others maintained that although not precisely obligatory, yet it was advisable as a symbol of perfection; and all insisted on its perpetual obligation on the Jewish Christians. They regarded themselves as superior to the Gentile Christians, and thus perpetuated the divisions which the law made between Jews and Gentiles. In Corinth, they appear not so much to have inculcated their peculiar Jewish views, as to have attacked the authority of Paul. They represented him as inferior to Peter and the apostles of the circumcision; as having never, like them, seen the Lord Jesus, nor been instructed by Him; as entertaining doubts about his own apostleship, seeing that he did not dare to claim the right of maintenance; and as inculcating an erroneous or at least a defective gospel. They were the weak brethren, to whom the apostle alludes when discussing the eating of things offered in sacrifice to idols, as they still maintained the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean meats. And it is against them chiefly that the apostle's severe rebukes are directed in the Second Epistle, when he defends his apostleship against their unjust aspersions. He denounces the leaders of this faction as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 13). In this faction we see the germ of Ebionism,—a species of Jewish Christianity.

The views of the Pauline party were directly opposed to those of the Petrine or Judaistic party. As the Petrine party were chiefly composed of Jewish Christians, so the Pauline party were chiefly composed of Gentile Christians. Those who belonged to it were the converts and admirers of Paul,

and doubtless constituted the majority of the Corinthian church, in which the Gentile element was predominant.<sup>1</sup> Probably, in the spirit of antagonism to the Judaistic teachers and their narrow views, the Pauline party carried the opinions of their master to an extreme. They were the liberal party of the Corinthian church. In their opposition to the Judaizers, they exhibited too much bitterness of sentiment and feeling. They appear to have made a boast of their Christian liberty, and to have carried it to a most unwarrantable extent. Not only did they not hesitate to shock the feelings of their Jewish brethren, by openly eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, but some of them seem actually to have partaken of the sacrificial banquets in the heathen temples (1 Cor. viii. 10). Liberty was with some but another name for licentiousness. Paul severely rebukes them for their divisions, uncharitableness, and extreme liberalism. He thanks God that although he had converted them to Christianity, yet he had baptized few of them; he indignantly repudiates the party name; and asserts that they are not the disciples of any human teacher, but of Christ, into whose name they were baptized. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 13). As in the Petrine faction we see the germ of Ebionism, so in the Pauline faction we see the germ of Marcionism,—a species of anti-Judaistic Christianity.

A third faction called themselves by the name of Apollos. Apollos succeeded Paul in Corinth; he confirmed the disciples in the faith, and, being mighty in the Scriptures, confuted the objections of the unbelieving Jews. His labours are honourably mentioned by Paul, who considered him as having watered that church which he had planted. In truth he was one of Paul's fellow-workers (Tit. iii. 13), and was with him at Ephesus when he wrote this Epistle (1 Cor. xvi. 12). There was no difference in the views of these two great preachers,—even their phase of Christianity was the same, namely, the Pauline. Still there may have been a difference

<sup>1</sup> "The Corinthians," observes Baur, "had not apostatized from the apostle: they had formed factions; and the members of the church who remained faithful to the apostle formed always, as is evident from the contents of both epistles, the overwhelming majority."—*Apostel Paulus*, p. 289.

in their mode of teaching. Paul purposely renounced all excellency of speech and wisdom (1 Cor. ii. 1)—all the arts of human oratory—when he preached the gospel at Corinth. “My speech and my preaching,” he observes, “was not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5). But Apollos, being an Alexandrian Jew, and an eloquent man, may have employed his eloquence and Alexandrian wisdom in preaching the gospel, and thus have in some measure adapted it to the Grecian mind and taste.<sup>1</sup> It is not improbable that his admirers carried matters further, and mixed Grecian philosophy with the teachings of revelation, and thus in a certain degree corrupted with their false wisdom the gospel of Christ. Accordingly the Apolline party would consist of those who embraced a philosophical Christianity.<sup>2</sup> It is against this party that the three first chapters of this Epistle are directed. In them the apostle contrasts the false wisdom of the world with the simple preaching of the cross of Christ. Not that Paul attributed this false wisdom to Apollos himself, but to his self-styled followers. This intermixture of philosophy with the gospel was pregnant with evil consequences, and was the cause of those numberless heresies which distracted the Church during the second and third centuries. In the Apolline faction we see an early phase of Gnosticism,—a species of philosophic Christianity.

Hitherto there has been some definite ground to go upon; but the real difficulty of the discussion is the consideration of the fourth party, who called themselves by the name of Christ (ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, 1 Cor. i. 12). Some (Estius, etc.) avoid the difficulty by supposing that such a party had no existence,—that three, and not four parties are here specified. They accordingly read the words, “And I of Christ,” as if they were an observation of the apostle himself,—as if the meaning were, “Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas: but I say I am of Christ.” And it is supposed

<sup>1</sup> Neander’s *Planting of Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 230–232.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, on the other hand, considers the Apolline party to consist of those who had been converted and instructed by Apollos.—*Einleitung*, p. 237.

that this view is favoured by 1 Cor. iii. 22, where only Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are mentioned. But the words will not bear this meaning,—*ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ*, is as much a party name as any of the other three. If it had been intended to place these words in opposition, Paul would have required to have written, *ἐγὼ δὲ Παῦλος Χριστοῦ*, or some similar expression. The supposition that Paul wrote *Κρίσπου*, which was mistaken by the transcribers for *Χριστοῦ*, is a mere critical conjecture, without the slightest external authority to justify it.

In other parts of the Epistles to the Corinthians, there are, it is supposed, allusions to this Christ-party. Thus Paul, in maintaining his apostolic authority, writes: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1),—as if his opponents asserted that having seen Christ and been instructed by Him was essential to constitute a true apostle. So also he observes: "If any man trust in himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's" (2 Cor. x. 7). Here the allusion to the Christ-party appears more manifest: they asserted that in a peculiar sense they were Christ's (*Χριστοῦ εἶναι*); and the apostle here claims a similar relation. It is also possible, where Paul speaks of "knowing Christ after the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 16), that there is an allusion to the Christ-party, who may have prided themselves on their personal relationship to Christ.

A variety of views have been entertained concerning the opinions of this fourth faction or the Christ-party in the Corinthian church. All these views are liable to objections, arising from the uncertainty which rests upon the subject, and the scantiness of our information. The most important and plausible are here noticed.

Eichhorn supposes that by the Christ-party are meant the neutrals, who, in distinction from the other contending parties, maintained that they belonged neither to Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any other human teacher, but only to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. iii. p. 107. "Whilst," he observes, "the parties of Paul, of Apollos, and of Cephas were contending with each other, there was formed a party of *neutrals*, who maintained that they held neither with Paul, nor Apollos, nor Peter, but only with Christ."

They would call no man master upon earth, seeing that Christ was their only master. This opinion, with various modifications, has been adopted by Pott, Schott, Rückert, Meyer, and Bleek.<sup>1</sup> The Christ-party is thus no definite faction, but consisted of the orthodox members of the church who repudiated all these divisions and party names. But if this view be correct, they merited the commendation of the apostle, as being the true promoters of unity.<sup>2</sup> Instead of this, however, it would seem that they also as well as the other parties are censured as being the promoters of division; for the words which follow the enumeration of parties, "Is Christ divided?" apply to all the four without distinction.

Storr<sup>3</sup> supposes that the Christ-party were those members of the Corinthian church who were the followers of James the Lord's brother, and who, on account of his relationship to the Lord, called themselves by the name of Christ. The apostle is supposed to allude to this assumption of a carnal relationship to Christ in the expression, to "know Christ after the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 16); and with similar reference to the same party to have mentioned "the brethren of the Lord" (2 Cor. ix. 5). A similar opinion is adopted by Bertholdt, Hug, Heidenreich, and Dean Stanley.<sup>4</sup> But the scriptural allusions here adduced are far-fetched. Besides, the followers of James are supposed to have been extreme legalists, who insisted on circumcision and the strict observance of the law; whereas it does not appear that the Judaizing teachers did so at Corinth, nor is there any refutation of such notions in the Epistles to the Corinthians as there is in the Epistle to the Galatians. Moreover, such a party would hardly have styled themselves *οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, but rather *οἱ τοῦ Κυρίου*, or, in conformity

<sup>1</sup> Pott's *Commentary*; Schott's *Isagogik*, p. 233; Rückert and Meyer's *Commentaries*; Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.*, p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Unless, indeed, we are to suppose that this party prided themselves on their superior sanctity, and looked down upon all the other members of the church as their inferiors in piety.

<sup>3</sup> *Notitiæ historicæ epistolarum P. ad Cor. interpretationi servientes: Opuscula Academica*, vol. ii. p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> Bertholdt, *Hist. krit. Einl.*; Hug's *Einleitung in die Schriften des N. T.*; Heidenreich, *Commentary on First Cor.*, vol. i. p. 31; Stanley *On First Corinthians*, p. 30.

with the other parties, after the name of their leader, οἱ τοῦ Ἰακώβου (Gal. ii. 12).

Neander's view is very ingenious. He supposes that the Christ-party were those who not only renounced the names of all human teachers, but all human authority; who rejected the teaching of the apostles, and formed a Christianity for themselves, according to their own subjective notions. "There were those," he observes, "who, while they renounced the apostles, professed to adhere to Christ alone, to acknowledge Him only as their Teacher, and to receive what He announced as truth from Himself without the intervention of any other person. This was such a manifestation of self-will, such an arrogant departure from the historical process of development ordained by God in the appropriation of divine revelation, as would in the issue lead to arbitrary conduct respecting the contents of Christian doctrine; for the apostles were the organs ordained and formed by God, by whom the doctrine of Christ was to be propagated, and its meaning communicated to all men. But it might easily happen, while some were disposed to adhere to Paul alone, others to Apollos, and a third party to Peter, at last some persons appeared who were averse to acknowledge any of these party names, and professed to adhere to Christ alone, yet with an arrogant self-will which set aside all human instrumentality ordained by God."<sup>1</sup> According to Neander, this party, desirous of attaching themselves to Christ alone independently of the apostles, might construct a Christianity derived from their own minds either in a mystical or in a rational manner. Neander himself considered the rational method as the predominant, and referred the origin of such a party to a Grecian element. These persons were impressed with the sublimity and spirituality of the gospel, and thus believed on Christ as the great Reformer of the religious condition of mankind. It may be, also, that they had a document containing a collection of the memorable actions and discourses of Jesus, and thus by means of it they might construct a peculiar form of Christian doctrine, modelled according to their Grecian subjectivity.<sup>2</sup> A similar opinion

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 241.

was formerly adopted by Beza and Bengel, who considered the Christ-party as consisting of philosophical Christians who adapted Christianity to the philosophy of the Grecian schools. Olshausen and Guericke also maintained a similar opinion.<sup>1</sup> The views of this party, according to Neander, were rationalistic: it was they who doubted the resurrection of the dead. There is a plausibility in the idea that such a party would arise, especially in a city so famous for its philosophy as Corinth. But, on the other hand, we know that few of the wise men in Corinth were converted to Christianity (1 Cor. i. 26); and although the apostle assails those who questioned his own personal authority, there is no allusion to such a universal rejection of apostolic authority generally as this theory supposes.

An important modification of the theory of Neander is made by Schenkel.<sup>2</sup> He supposes that the mystical element was the predominant one. He considers the Christ-party as consisting of mystics and visionaries, who spiritualized the truths and facts of religion. They gloried in their internal union with Christ, by means of which they held themselves to be independent of all apostolic authority, and considered themselves to be equally inspired as those admired teachers, Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. They explained the resurrection as spiritual and already past. To this view of the Christ-party Schenkel refers what the apostle says in 2 Cor. xii. 1 of his visions and revelations, to which he felt himself constrained to allude, as his opponents boasted of their visions and revelations of Christ, on account of which they had rejected all apostolic authority. This opinion is adopted by De Wette.<sup>3</sup> He considers this party as somewhat similar in their views to the false teachers in the church of Colosse, and whom he supposes to have been Judaizing Gnostics. It is not improbable that there were such mystics in the apostolic Church, as indeed there have been in the Christian Church in

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen's *Commentary on First Corinthians*, pp. 2-10; Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> In his tract *De ecclesia Corinthiaca primæva factionibus turbata*, Basil 1838.

<sup>3</sup> *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 287, 288, and also in his *Commentary on First Corinthians*.



all ages,—men who allowed their imagination to get the better of their judgment in matters of religion, and who would naturally designate themselves by the name of Christ.<sup>1</sup> But the reasons are too precarious to induce us to identify the representation of such views with the Christ-party here mentioned by the apostle.

Another opinion has been advanced and maintained with much logical acumen by Baur.<sup>2</sup> He maintains that there are substantially only two parties mentioned, who took opposite views of the great controversy which agitated the apostolic Church—the relation of Judaism to Christianity. The factions of Paul and Apollos formed the Pauline party; and the factions of Cephas and Christ the Petrine party. “The apostle’s object,” he observes, “in accumulating so many names might be to depict the party spirit prevalent in the Corinthian church, which showed itself in their delighting in the multiplication of sectarian names, which denoted various tints and shades, but not absolutely distinct parties.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the Petrine party called themselves by the name of Cephas, because Peter was the chief of the Jewish apostles; and by the name of Christ, because they considered direct connection with Him as the chief sign of genuine apostolic authority. This opinion of Baur has been modified by dividing the Judaistic faction into two distinct classes,—the Petrine party, or the more moderate portion, who, whilst they retained their opinions of the superiority of Jewish Christianity, were not decidedly antagonistic to Paul; and the Christ-party, or the extreme section, who insisted on the imposition of Judaism upon the Gentiles, and did all that they could to oppose and counteract Pauline Christianity.<sup>4</sup> “The same individuals,” observes Billroth, “did not call themselves at one time ‘of Cephas,’ and at another ‘of Christ;’ but each one of those who had been led astray by the false teachers, in speaking of his party,

<sup>1</sup> As in our days a mystical sect call themselves the Church of Christ, in opposition to all party names.

<sup>2</sup> Baur’s opinion is stated at great length, and with great learning and ingenuity.—*Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 289–326.

<sup>3</sup> *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> Baur himself, in another portion of his work, distinguishes between a stricter and a milder party among the Judaistic Christians.—*Apostel Paulus*, p. 145.

applied to it that name which best suited his own views."<sup>1</sup> This opinion of Baur, with various modifications, has been adopted by Billroth, Credner, Schwegeler, Thiersch, Reuss, Davidson, and Conybeare and Howson.<sup>2</sup> It certainly recommends itself as the simplest solution of the difficulty, resolving the factions into different views of the great controversy of the apostolic age; and it also imparts a symmetry to the enumeration given by the apostle,—there being two subdivisions of the Pauline party, and in like manner two of the Petrine.

Such are the chief theories which have been formed concerning the Christ-party. It is difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at any definite conclusion on the subject. We can form tolerably definite views concerning the other three parties, and discern the development of their opinions in the Ebionism, Marcionism, and Gnosticism of the succeeding age; but our views concerning the Christ-party are obscure and indefinite. To the Corinthians the apostle's allusion to the factions which disturbed their peace was perfectly plain,—they required no information as to what he meant by the Christ-party; but to us this is one of those portions in Paul's Epistles which is obscure for the want of that information which the first readers of the Epistle possessed. We cannot now restore the state of matters at Corinth. It is to be acknowledged that there is considerable plausibility in the modification of Baur's view proposed by Billroth, who considers the Christ-party as an extreme section of Judaizing Christians, though the reason is not obvious why such a party should designate themselves by the name of Christ. But there is also an equal if not greater plausibility in the modification of Eichhorn's view proposed by Rückert,<sup>3</sup> who considers them as asserting, in opposition to the other factions, who called themselves by human names, that they belonged to Christ, but yet in a somewhat arrogant

<sup>1</sup> Billroth's *Commentary on the Corinthians*, vol. i. p. 16 (English translation).

<sup>2</sup> Billroth's *Commentary*, vol. i. pp. 12–16; Credner's *Einleitung in's N. T.*; Schwegeler, *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, vol. i. p. 162; Thiersch, *die Kirche im apostolischen Zeitalter*, p. 143; Reuss' *Geschichte d. Schrif. N. T.*, p. 86; Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 40, 41; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 524–526.

<sup>3</sup> Rückert, *der erste Brief Pauli an die Korinther*, Leipzig 1836.

and self-righteous spirit,—not remaining as neutrals merely, but forming themselves into a party. In the former case the Christ-party were the worst and the most blameworthy of the four ; in the latter case they were the best, and almost excusable in their antagonism to the other factions.

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### THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE AGAPÆ.<sup>1</sup>

The perversion of the Lord's Supper by the Corinthians, and the disorders which occurred at its celebration, as recorded in this Epistle, were of so extraordinary and monstrous a nature, that it is difficult to realize them. Taken in its plain sense, the description would seem to imply that the Corinthians actually transformed the Lord's Supper into a scene of excess ; that acts of intemperance occurred at its celebration ; in short, that it somewhat resembled the sacrificial banquets of the heathen. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper : and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What ! have ye not houses to eat and drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not ?" (1 Cor. xi. 20–22). Some attempt to modify the representation here given, by supposing that ὅς δὲ μεθύει (and another is drunken) does not mean actual intoxication, but is used in opposition to ὅς μὲν πεινᾷ (one is hungry) ; so that the sense of the passage is, "one," that is, the poor, "is hungry,"—has not sufficient ; "another," that is, the rich, "is drunken,"—has more than enough.<sup>2</sup> But even this modification, if allowable, still exhibits a strange state of matters. It is utterly impossible that the Lord's Supper should be similarly profaned in our days. From the manner in which it is now celebrated, no amount of wickedness and

<sup>1</sup> This subject is discussed in Stanley's *Commentary on the Corinthians*, pp. 205–209 ; Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 242–244 ; Neander's *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 450–460 ; Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xv. chap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Such a rendering, however, is hardly allowable : the words of Scripture are not to be softened. As Meyer observes, "Paul draws the picture in strong colours, and who can say that the reality was less strong ?"

no degree of extravagance could possibly convert it into a scene of excess. In order to account for the disorders in the Corinthian church, there must have been some essential difference in their mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper from that practised among us.

The institution of the Agapæ or love-feasts, and their connection with the Lord's Supper, explain these abuses among the Corinthians. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, He and His apostles partook of it after the Passover; and perhaps, in imitation of this, a supper or evening meal frequently accompanied the communion in the primitive Church. Both were regarded as one religious service; and hence the name here given by the apostle to the ordinance, *δέιπνον κυριακόν*, as it was a real supper. It was a social Christian feast of love, and hence the name Agape (*ἀγάπη*). The rich brought to it provisions for the entertainment of their poorer brethren. All partook together: the rich and the poor, masters and slaves, bearing the same relation to Christ, their common Master, sat down as brethren at one common table.<sup>1</sup> There appear to be allusions to this practice in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus we are informed that "the disciples continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers;" and that "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts ii. 42, 46). This breaking of bread (*κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου*) was evidently some act of religious service, and is generally supposed<sup>2</sup> to have been a meal similar to the Agapæ, accompanied by the celebration of the Lord's Supper; for with evident reference to the Lord's Supper Paul uses the expression, "The bread which we break" (1 Cor. x. 16). And it is undoubtedly certain that the Agapæ existed in the apostolic times. They are directly mentioned by the Apostle Jude when he says, "These are spots in your feasts of charity (*ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν*—in your Agapæ) when they feast with you" (Jude 12); and are most probably alluded to by

<sup>1</sup> In some cases the Agapæ were preceded, and in others concluded, by the Lord's Supper.

<sup>2</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 115, 116.

Peter when he says, "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves in their own deceivings when they feast with you" <sup>1</sup> (2 Pet. ii. 13).

Pleasing descriptions of these Christian feasts are given us by the early fathers. Thus Tertullian observes: "Our feast shows its character by its name: it bears the Greek name of love; and however great may be the cost of it, still it is gain to be at cost in the name of piety, for by this refreshment we make all the poor happy. As the cause of the supper is a worthy one, estimate accordingly the propriety with which all the rest is managed: it is throughout such as its religious end demands. It admits of nothing vulgar, nothing unbecoming. No one sits down at the table till prayer has first been offered to God; we eat as much as hunger requires, we drink no more than consists with sobriety; while we satisfy our appetites, we bear in mind that the night is to be consecrated to the worship of God. The conversation is such as might be expected of men who are fully conscious that God hears them. The supper being ended, and all having washed their hands, lights are brought in, and every one is invited to sing, either from Holy Scripture, or from the prompting of his own spirit, some song of praise to God for the common edification." <sup>2</sup> So also Chrysostom observes: "The first Christians had all things in common, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; and when that ceased, this came in its room. Although the rich did not make all their substance common, yet on certain appointed days they made a common table, and when service was ended, and they had all communicated in the holy mysteries, they met at a common feast, the rich bringing provisions, and the poor, and those who had nothing, being invited, they all feasted in common together." <sup>3</sup> And it is highly probable that Pliny alludes to the Agapæ in his celebrated letter to Trajan. "They (the Christians accused) affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it

<sup>1</sup> Instead of ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν, the Vatican and other mss. read ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις αὐτῶν—"in their Agapæ."

<sup>2</sup> *Apologet.* c. 39, quoted by Neander, *Church History*, vol. i. p. 451.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom, *Hom.* 27 on *First Corinthians*.

was light, and sing among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ as God; and to bind themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wickedness, not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and to come together again to a meal which they ate in common, without any disorder; but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies."<sup>1</sup>

Now it was the abuse of the Agapæ that gave rise to the disorders which prevailed in the Corinthian church at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. As the community of goods—that early apostolic institution, the earliest manifestation of the love of the youthful Church—was profaned by the falsehoods of Ananias and Sapphira, so these feasts of love were desecrated by the uncharitableness of the Corinthians. The factions which arose among them gave rise to strife and divisions; and where love was wanting, the Agapæ necessarily degenerated, and lost their true character and object. The Lord's Supper (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*) degenerated into their own supper (*ἰδίων δεῖπνον*). That which was designed to be a feast of love became an occasion of discord. The richer members of the church partook of the provisions which they had brought, before the poor were permitted to eat; and thus some wanted, and others had more than enough. It is also to be observed that the Corinthians, in their unconverted state, were accustomed to sacrificial banquets in the heathen temples, and it was perhaps by imitating these banquets that the Agapæ so far degenerated. Though converted from heathenism, yet old habits were not so easily laid aside; and especially when the abominations of such a wicked city as Corinth are considered, our wonder is lessened when we read of the disorders, or even of the immoralities, of the Corinthian church.<sup>2</sup> Conversion is not a magical work

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Epist.* lib. x. ep. 97; Lardner, vol. iv. pp. 10-43.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed it is an evidence of the divine power of Christianity, that a church, and that a numerous one, should be planted in such a corrupt city as Corinth at all.

which changes a man in a moment of time from a sinner to a saint: it is the implantation of the germ of holiness, and the whole future life of the converted is the development of that germ.

Similar abuses in other churches gave rise to changes in the mode of the observance of the Lord's Supper, to its separation from the Agapæ, and at length to the entire discontinuance of the Agapæ. When the first love of the early Church declined, these love-feasts gradually degenerated; in some instances they became mere lifeless forms, no longer animated by the spirit of brotherly love; and in other instances, as among the Corinthians, they were converted into ordinary meals to satiate the bodily appetites. Nor does the practice seem to have been universal: in some churches the Agapæ do not appear to have existed at all. The daily celebration mentioned in the Acts (Acts ii. 46) was changed into a weekly celebration. The Lord's Supper was separated from the Agapæ, and observed at a different time. Thus, from the letter of Pliny above quoted, it would appear that the Lord's Supper was partaken of in the morning of the Lord's day, and the Agapæ in the evening. By degrees the Agapæ fell into disuse, so that there is little notice taken of them in the writings of the later fathers; and in the places where they were still retained, their nature was perverted. At length, in consequence of frequent abuse, the Agapæ were forbidden to be held in churches by the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363) and other ecclesiastical councils.<sup>1</sup> Among the great majority of Christian communities of our day, there is nothing resembling these love-feasts of the early disciples.<sup>2</sup>

To some it may appear that the Agapæ are an apostolic, and therefore divine institution, and that therefore their discontinuance is wrong and unwarranted. And certainly strong arguments may be urged in favour of their apostolic origin. The breaking of bread mentioned in the Acts, if not the same, at least strikingly resembles these feasts; and they

<sup>1</sup> Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xv. chap. 7, sec. 9. In France it was prohibited by the second Council of Orleans, A.D. 541; yet we find traces of the practice in the seventh century.

<sup>2</sup> They are still observed by the Sandemanians or Glassites.

are undoubtedly adverted to by the sacred writers (Jude 12 ; 2 Pet. ii. 13). But they appear to have been ordinances suitable to the early days of Christianity, the observance of which has now ceased, in consequence of their unsuitability to our circumstances. The history of the Agapæ resembles that of the community of goods. Both in a certain sense were apostolic institutions,—at least both existed in the apostolic Church ; but neither was universally practised, and both gradually fell into disuse. Some suppose that Paul, in saying, “ One is hungry, and another is drunken. What ! have ye not houses to eat and drink in ? ” (1 Cor. xi. 21, 22) forbids the Agapæ altogether.<sup>1</sup> But this does not appear to be the case : he only condemns their abuse. He censures the practice of the Corinthians, in converting these Christian social feasts into ordinary meals, and in bringing to these feasts of love hearts filled with uncharitableness. But there does not appear to be any condemnation of the Agapæ themselves,—any apostolic authority for their abolition. But, on the other hand, there is no direct apostolic authority for their continuation. The true state of the case seems to be, that, like several other institutions in the primitive Church, the Agapæ were not strictly of apostolic origin, but arose from the peculiar circumstances of the early Church,<sup>2</sup> and were not designed for universal observance ; but when the circumstances of the Church were changed, and abuses had perverted the purpose and character of the Agapæ, their observance was no longer advisable, and in some cases no longer practicable.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Others take an opposite view, and suppose that the apostle here sanctions the Agapæ.

<sup>2</sup> A great number of those converted at Pentecost would be sojourners in Jerusalem, and these ἀγάπαι would be peculiarly serviceable to them.

<sup>3</sup> For example, where the congregations were large. For the discussion on the gift of tongues in the Corinthian church, see the author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 80-90.



## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THE Second Epistle to the Corinthians is one of those four Pauline Epistles, the genuineness of which has been acknowledged by the writers of the Tübingen school. The external evidence in its favour is indeed not so strong as that in favour of the First Epistle; but these two Epistles are so inseparably connected, that the confirmation of the one may be regarded as the confirmation of the other. The allusions to it by the apostolic fathers are few, and somewhat obscure. The most explicit is that of Polycarp (A.D. 116), who says: "He who raised Christ from the dead shall raise up us also, if we do His will"<sup>1</sup> (2 Cor. iv. 14). But it is directly and frequently quoted by other Christian writers of the second century. Thus Irenæus (A.D. 178) says: "For the apostle says in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 'Since we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life'"<sup>2</sup> (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16). And again: "Paul has said plainly in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 'In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers'"<sup>3</sup> (2 Cor.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Philippens*, c. 2: 'Ο δὲ ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐγερῇ, ἵαν ποιῶμεν αὐτοῦ τὸ εἶλημα.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* iv. 28, 3: Nam et apostolus ait in epistola secunda ad Corinthios: "Quoniam Christi suavis odor sumus Deo, et in his qui salvi fiunt, et in his qui pereunt; quibusdam quidem odor mortis in mortem, quibusdam autem odor vitæ in vitam."

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* iii. 7, 1: Quod autem dicunt, aperte Paulum in secunda ad Corinthios dixisse: "In quibus Deus sæculi hujus excecavit mentes infidelium."

iv. 4). Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) says : " These things the apostle observes concerning knowledge. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he calls the common doctrine of faith a savour of knowledge"<sup>1</sup> (2 Cor. ii. 14). And Tertulian (A.D. 200) writes : " For indeed they suppose that Paul, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, forgave the same fornicator, whom in the First he had declared should be delivered over unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."<sup>2</sup>

The internal evidence is most convincing. No one can read the two Epistles to the Corinthians with attention, without being satisfied that the writer of the First was also the writer of the Second. The character of the author is the same : there is the same combination of severity and tenderness ; at one time the stern reprover of sin, and at another time the tender parent mourning over the delinquencies of his children ; at one time threatening the Corinthians that if he should come again he would not spare (2 Cor. xiii. 2), and at another time writing unto them with many tears (2 Cor. ii. 4). The style is undoubtedly that of Paul. No one can fail to remark the digressions and repetitions, the frequent antitheses, the parenthetic clauses, the accumulation of superlatives, the hurried fervour of spirit, so that the thoughts flow faster than words can be found to express them, the extreme reluctance and delicacy with which the author alludes to himself,—features which we have already noted as the characteristics of the apostle's style.

The allusions in the Second Epistle to the First are so numerous and undesigned as to evince an unquestionable connection between them. Thus in the First Epistle the apostle announces his intention to come to them from Ephesus by way of Macedonia (1 Cor. xvi. 5) ; and in the Second Epistle we find that part of this journey was accomplished : he had already arrived at Macedonia, and was about to pass over into Achaia (2 Cor. ix. 2—4). In the First Epistle Paul reprimands the Corinthians for their connivance at the crime of the incestuous individual,

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.* lib. iv. c. 16 : Ταῦτα μὲν περὶ τῆς γνώσεως ὁ ἀπόστολος· τὴν δὲ κοινὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς πίστεως, ὅσων γνώσεως εἴρηκεν, ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ πρὸς Κορινθίους.

<sup>2</sup> *De pudicit.* c. xiii. : Revera enim suspicantur, Paulum in secunda ad Corinthios eidem fornicatori veniam dedisse, quem in prima dedendum Satanæ in interitum carnis pronuntiarit.

and commands them to expel him from their society (1 Cor. v. 1-5); and in the Second Epistle we are informed that not only this was done, but the man and the church generally were brought to repentance (2 Cor. ii. 7, 8, vii. 7-9). In the First Epistle the collection for the saints in Jerusalem is recommended (1 Cor. xvi. 1); and in the Second Epistle we learn that this collection was not only begun, but had now nearly approached its completion (2 Cor. ix. 1, 2).<sup>1</sup>

The undesigned coincidences between this Second Epistle and the Acts of the Apostles are also numerous and striking. Thus in the Epistle we are informed that the gospel had been preached at first among the Corinthians by Silas and Timotheus in concert with Paul (2 Cor. i. 19); and in the history we are told that these two fellow-labourers joined the apostle at Corinth (Acts xviii. 15). At the commencement of the Epistle, the apostle alludes to a danger to which he had been exposed in Asia, so great that he despaired even of life (2 Cor. i. 8); and we know from the history that shortly before he wrote this Epistle the great riot at Ephesus occurred, when Paul's life was, humanly speaking, saved by the interposition of certain of the chief of Asia, who would not permit him to expose himself to the multitude (Acts xix. 23-41, xx. 1). In the Epistle, Paul, enumerating the dangers through which he had passed, mentions his escape from Damascus through a window in a basket (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33); and the history, with several variations of detail, relates his escape in a similar manner, stating that "the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket" (Acts ix. 23-25). In the Epistle Paul mentions the probability of his coming to Corinth in company with certain from Macedonia (2 Cor. ix. 4); and the history relates that among others there accompanied him from Corinth into Asia, "of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus" (Acts xx. 4). In the Epistle, among other trials, Paul mentions his having once been stoned (2 Cor. xi. 25); and the history gives us an account of this stoning at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19), and also mentions a previous attempt at stoning, which failed, at Iconium (Acts xiv. 3). "Had," as Paley observes, "this assault at Iconium been completed,—had

<sup>1</sup> See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. iv. No. 1.

the history related that a stone was thrown, as it relates that preparations were made both by Jews and Gentiles to stone Paul and his companions,—or even had the account of this transaction stopped, without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were ‘aware of their danger and fled,’—a contradiction between the history and the Epistle would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it.”<sup>1</sup>

The apparent discrepancies and variations between this Epistle and the Acts are a proof that the one was written independently of the other. For example, some assert that there is mention in this Epistle of a visit to Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1) not recorded in the Acts; and although others assert that this opinion arises from a misinterpretation of the words of the Epistle, yet there is certainly an ambiguity of expression which would have been avoided had the writer of the Epistle copied from the history. So also in the accounts of the apostle’s escape from Damascus, we have a proof of the independence of the writers: in the Epistle we are told that it was the governor under Aretas the king who attempted to apprehend the apostle; whilst in the history we are informed that it was the Jews who watched the gates day and night to kill him.<sup>2</sup> Numerous trials and hardships which befell the apostle are also recorded in the Epistle (2 Cor. xi. 24, 25), of which there are no traces in the history.

But although the authenticity of the Epistle is undisputed, yet its integrity has been questioned. On account of a certain difference in tone between the first and second half, the Epistle has been divided into several parts, and is supposed to have been made up of several epistles to the Corinthians written at different times. Thus Semler divides it into three distinct epistles;<sup>3</sup> Ewald thinks that the section chap. vi. 16–vii. 7

<sup>1</sup> Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ* on 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, chap. iv. No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> For the reconciliation of this apparent discrepancy, see author’s *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 334–336.

<sup>3</sup> *De duplici appendice epistolæ ad Romanos*, Halle 1767. According to him, the real epistle is composed of chap. i.–viii. and xiii. 11–13, along with Rom. xvi. 1–20.

is an interpolation from another epistle written by some other apostolic writer ;<sup>1</sup> and Weisse supposes that it is made up of three different epistles, written at different times to the church of Corinth, of which the first part of our present Epistle (chap. i.-vii.) was the last composed.<sup>2</sup> Wieseler solves the difficulty of this diversity in the two portions of the Epistle, by supposing that the first portion (chap. i.-vii. 1) was written before the apostle had received information of the state of the church from Titus, and that the second portion (chap. vii. 2-xiii.) was written after the arrival of Titus. According to him, in the first part Paul writes from information received from Timothy, and in the second part, from subsequent information received from Titus.<sup>3</sup> All these are unwarranted conjectures: there is not the least evidence in manuscripts of any disintegration of the Epistle; and the severer tone of the later portion may be easily accounted for, by the fact that the apostle there addresses the opposing or Judaizing faction of the church. As Hug well remarks, "It would be just as reasonable to suppose the *περὶ στεφάνου* of Demosthenes to be two orations, because in the former part the orator defends himself calmly and in detail, and in the latter breaks out into fierce and bitter invective."<sup>4</sup>

## II. THE SUPPOSITION OF AN INTERMEDIATE EPISTLE.

Bleek considers that there was an intermediate epistle, written by the apostle between our First and Second Epistles, which is now lost. Mention is made in the First Epistle of the intended mission of Timothy to Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 10), and when Paul wrote the Second Epistle, Timothy had rejoined him (2 Cor. i. 1); whereas there is no account of his visit in the Second Epistle, but only of the information which was brought to the apostle, not by Timothy, but by Titus. Mention is also made in the Second Epistle of a previous visit of Titus (2 Cor. xii. 18), of which there is no account in the First Epistle, and it is considered very improbable that Titus would be sent

<sup>1</sup> *Sendschreiben des Paulus*, pp. 231 and 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosoph. Dogmatik*, vol. i. p. 145; De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 294.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronologie des ap. Zeitalter*, pp. 356-358.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Alford, *Greek Testament*, vol. ii., Prolegomena, p. 58.

by the apostle to Corinth without a letter. Bleek accordingly supposes that Paul, having received information of the disordered state of the church from Timothy, wrote a severe letter to them, which he sent by Titus.<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis, he considers, is supported by the fact that there are references in the Second which are not satisfied by the First Epistle. Bleek especially founds his argument on 2 Cor. vii. 12, where the apostle says: "Wherefore, though I wrote to you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong (τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος), nor for his cause that suffered wrong (τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος), but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you." The common interpretation of this verse is to refer the person who had done the wrong to the incestuous individual mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 1-5, and the person who suffered the wrong to his father. But such a reference Bleek considers as quite inapplicable and highly improbable; and, according to him, the passage only becomes plain if we suppose that the apostle refers to a personal adversary as the one who had done the wrong, and to himself as the one who had suffered the wrong; and consequently the letter to which the apostle alludes as being written by him about this matter was not the First Epistle, but a subsequent one now lost.<sup>2</sup> He accordingly supposes that Timothy, whom the apostle had expected from Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11), had brought unfavourable reports of the church there, especially of the opposition of an individual who called in question the apostle's authority, and that in consequence Paul sent Titus to Corinth (2 Cor. vii. 6) with a letter written in stronger and severer terms than the First Epistle.<sup>3</sup>

This ingenious hypothesis of Bleek has been adopted by Credner, Olshausen, Neander, and Ewald.<sup>4</sup> Conybeare and Howson consider it not impossible,<sup>5</sup> and Ellicott admits that it

<sup>1</sup> This would account for there being no mention of Timothy's visit in the Second Epistle, and no allusion to Titus' mission in the First Epistle.

<sup>2</sup> Other references in Second Corinthians, which, according to Bleek, do not answer to First Corinthians, are 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4, iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. pp. 432-437.

<sup>4</sup> Credner's *Einleitung*, p. 371; Olshausen *On the Corinthians*, p. 19; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 266-269, and vol. ii. pp. 132-136; Ewald's *Sendschreiben*, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 105.

has considerable plausibility.<sup>1</sup> Most critics have, however, declared against it. It has been opposed by Rückert, De Wette, Meyer, Baur, Wieseler, Reuss, and Davidson. Upon the whole, it seems an unnecessary hypothesis. There is quite enough of severity in the First Epistle, as Meyer observes, to call forth the apostle's affectionate anxiety, and to satisfy all those references in the Second Epistle which Bleek adduces. It is admitted that there is some obscurity in 2 Cor. vii. 12, especially with regard to the person who suffered wrong (τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος), for to suppose that the father of the incestuous person is here referred to is not altogether satisfactory. But this is a precarious foundation on which to build the hypothesis of another epistle.<sup>2</sup> And with respect to the visits of Timothy and Titus, it is to be observed that it is possible, as Reuss remarks,<sup>3</sup> that Timothy never came to Corinth, or that he rejoined the apostle in Macedonia in company with Titus; and, as we have seen, there is reason to suppose that the epistle with which Titus was sent to Corinth was the first canonical epistle.

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

Paul, having despatched the First Epistle with Titus, remained for a short time longer at Ephesus, probably until Pentecost (1 Cor. xvi. 8). He then journeyed to Troas. Here he evidently expected to have met Titus with tidings respecting the church of Corinth. In this, however, he was disappointed; and his anxiety was so great, that although a door was opened to him of the Lord at Troas to preach the gospel, yet he departed and hastened forward to Macedonia to meet Titus (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). Here the same anxiety followed him, accompanied, it would seem, with external opposition. "When," he writes, "we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor. vii. 5). The anxiety of

<sup>1</sup> Article on Second Corinthians in Smith's *Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning proposed by Bleek, that the apostle here refers to himself, is equally unsatisfactory.

<sup>3</sup> Reuss, *Geschichte der heil. Schriften N. T.*, p. 88.

the apostle was occasioned by the state of the Corinthian church. This church was the apostle's own planting; it was chiefly composed of Gentile converts; and yet, from the information he had obtained, it would seem on the point of apostatizing into Judaism. He had written a severe letter to them, and he was ignorant of what might be its effect,—whether the Corinthians would be led to repentance or confirmed in their opposition.<sup>1</sup>

Titus at length joined the apostle in Macedonia. The information which he brought was of a mixed description, but upon the whole it was satisfactory. Titus informed the apostle that he had been well received by the Corinthians; that the great body of the church had returned to their allegiance; that the incestuous person had not only been excommunicated, but brought to repentance; that the Corinthians mourned over their disorders, and were greatly desirous to see him; and that they were now ready to acknowledge his authority as the apostle of Christ. “Nevertheless,” writes the apostle, “God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more” (2 Cor. vii. 6, 7). And thus the apostle was enabled to express his gratitude to God for the consolation which was granted him, and especially because the severity of his former epistle had not incensed his converts, but brought them to repentance (2 Cor. vii. 8). So far his fears had been quieted, and his expectations fulfilled (2 Cor. vii. 8).

The information, however, brought by Titus was not entirely satisfactory: the majority of the Corinthian church had submitted, but there was still a restless faction who opposed the apostle. The enmity of the Judaizing party had increased: they had been brought to the point, and had now declared

<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that the Christian Church was then passing through a great crisis: the struggle was going on between Christianity and Judaism. It was to be decided whether Christianity was to be a universal religion, freed from the trammels of Judaism, or whether it was to be restricted within the narrow confines of a Jewish sect; and Corinth was the field where this battle was to be fought.



themselves openly against the apostle. The two parties in the church—the Pauline and Judaizing factions—were more separated and embittered against each other. Perhaps in the interval the Judaizing party had received an accession by the arrival of certain anti-Pauline teachers, who had come to Corinth with letters of commendation (2 Cor. iii. 1). Their animosity to the apostle was greater than when he wrote the First Epistle. They brought forward new charges. They accused Paul of lightness and irresolution,—changing his mind, purposing at one time to come and at another time resolving not to come, as if he were afraid (2 Cor. i. 16–18). They charged him with pride and arrogance,—seeking to exalt himself above them, and to exercise a dominion over their faith (2 Cor. i. 24). They insinuated that he was artful and cunning in his conduct (2 Cor. xii. 16). They openly denied his apostleship, and refused to acknowledge his authority (2 Cor. xii. 11, 12). And they contrasted the severity and boldness of his letters with the weakness and contemptible nature of his personal appearance. “His letters, say they, are powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor. x. 10). Some suppose that these opponents belonged to the Petrine, and others to the Christ faction of the Corinthian Church; but it is more probable that they are to be classed indiscriminately as the Judaizing party, those great enemies of Paul and his preaching.

In consequence of this information brought by Titus, the apostle felt constrained to write a second epistle to the Corinthians. His design was obviously twofold,—to commend and confirm the obedient portion of the church; and to refute the calumnies of his opponents, and establish his authority. Along with these, there was a subordinate object,—to promote the collection which he was making throughout the Gentile churches for the saints in Jerusalem.

The bearers of this Epistle, we are informed, were Titus and two other brethren. Titus was sent back to Corinth, apparently at his own request (2 Cor. viii. 16, 17). Along with him was sent another, of whom it is said that his “praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches,” and that he was chosen by the churches to convey their contributions to

Jerusalem (2 Cor. viii. 18, 19). The most common opinion, found even in the writings of the fathers,<sup>1</sup> is that this brother was the evangelist Luke. Some suppose that this is a mistake founded on the word gospel, as if it were Luke's written Gospel that was meant; but plausible reasons may be adduced in confirmation of it. Luke had been left behind at Philippi by Paul on his former visit (Acts xvi. 40), and must now have rejoined him; but it is not until Paul's return from Corinth that the narrative assumes the direct form (Acts xx. 5). Hence it has reasonably been inferred that during the apostle's visitation of the churches of Macedonia, and which appears to have extended to Illyricum (Rom. xv. 19), Luke was not with the apostle, but had been sent by him to Corinth in company with Titus. He also, it is to be observed, was one of the messengers of the churches who accompanied the apostle to Jerusalem. A third bearer of the Epistle is also mentioned: "And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you" (2 Cor. viii. 22). He has been identified with Sosthenes, whose name the apostle conjoins with his own in the First Epistle (1 Cor. i. 1); with Apollos, who intended to visit Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 12); and Rückert supposes him to be Paul's own brother (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν). In all probability, from the manner in which he is described, he was that unknown brother who accompanied Titus on his former mission to Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 18).

There is little information given us respecting the effects of this Epistle; but, from various indications, it may be assumed that the opposition to the apostle was destroyed, and his authority over the whole church re-established. Paul fulfilled his intention of visiting Corinth, and remained there three months (Acts xx. 2, 3). During this long visit, he would settle the disorders which still existed in the Corinthian church, and silence his opponents, if not by persuasion, yet by that power which the Lord had given him for edification and not for destruction (2 Cor. x. 8, xiii. 10). When at Corinth,

<sup>1</sup> This was the opinion of Origen and Jerome: it is found in the subscription to the epistle.

he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, and in it he mentions the contributions which were made in Achaia for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 26), and sends salutations from various members of the Corinthian church (Rom. xvi. 21-23). And in the epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, although we learn that factions still existed among them, yet Paul was regarded by them as a divine apostle, and his epistles were confidently appealed to as of unquestioned authority.

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians admits of a threefold division. The first part is *hortatory*, and is addressed chiefly, though not exclusively, to the obedient portion of the church (chap. i.-vii.). The second part is *explanatory*, and contains directions and explanations about the collection for the saints (chap. viii. ix.). And the third part is *apologetic*, and contains a defence of Paul's apostolic authority, in opposition to the Judaizers (chap. x.-xiii.).

In the first part, the apostle, after a special thanksgiving to God for the consolation granted him amid all his trials and dangers, expresses his satisfaction that the Corinthians had at length obeyed his commands regarding the incestuous person, and exhorts them, now that that individual has been brought to repentance, to forgive and restore him to the communion of the church (chap. i.-ii. 11). He informs them of the great anxiety which he experienced on their behalf, until he received information respecting them from Titus (chap. ii. 12-17). He describes the glorious nature of the gospel with which he was entrusted, and contrasts it with the law of Moses. Difficulties and distresses were encountered and welcomed in its publication; the future recompense of reward cheered and supported him; and the love of Christ was the mainspring of his life (chap. iii.-v.). He beseeches them, by his sufferings for the gospel and his love to them, to abstain from all ungodliness, to guard against all unnecessary connection with the idolatrous heathen, to avoid all impurity, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (chap. vi.-vii. 1). He again reverts to his anxiety about them, and informs them how the

good tidings which Titus brought had greatly refreshed his spirit (chap. vii. 2-16). The second part refers to the collection for the saints. The apostle informs the Corinthians of the generosity of the churches of Macedonia, urges them to a praiseworthy imitation, mentions the mission of Titus in company with two brethren for the purpose of forwarding the collection, and exhorts them to have their contributions completed before his arrival among them (chap. ix. x.). In the third part the tone of the apostle is changed: it becomes severe and threatening, showing that he now addresses the impenitent portion of the church. He asserts his apostolic authority, answers the calumnies of his opponents, and with the greatest reluctance alludes to what he himself had done and endured in the cause of the gospel, and to the visions and revelations which had been granted him (chap. xi. xii.). He announces his intended visit; threatens that then he would not spare, but would, if necessary, use sharpness, according to the apostolic power conferred upon him; and then, with a farewell exhortation and with his apostolic benediction, concludes the Epistle (chap. xiii.).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The date of this Epistle is easily determined. The apostle had left Ephesus, and crossed over from Troas to Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). It is also evident that he was still in Macedonia when he wrote the Epistle (2 Cor. ix. 2). This visit to Macedonia is recorded in the Acts in few words (Acts xx. 1, 2); but it is probable that it extended over some months, and that the apostle visited the various churches in that district, in order to promote among them the collection for the saints. It is also to this period that the preaching of the gospel in Illyricum (Rom. xv. 19) is to be assigned. Now we learn from the Epistle that the collection in Macedonia was considerably advanced (2 Cor. viii. 1-4), and that the apostle was intending soon to leave that country and to come to Corinth (2 Cor. xiii. 1). It was therefore toward the close of this visit to Macedonia that this Epistle was written. As, then, the apostle left Ephesus about Pentecost of the year

57, and spent the winter in Corinth, it may almost with certainty be affirmed that this Epistle was written in Macedonia about the end of the autumn of the year 57.

The place of writing is not mentioned. The subscription at the end of the Epistle states that "the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi." This is so far not impossible, as Philippi was a city of Macedonia; but it is improbable. Philippi was the first Macedonian city at which Paul would arrive on his route from Troas; but it is most likely that he had already left this city, seeing that he could write to the Corinthians of the generosity of the churches of Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1). His apostolic visitation of these churches would be considerably advanced before this Epistle was written. Some other Macedonian city nearer to Corinth, as Thessalonica or Berea, is more probable.<sup>1</sup>

#### VI. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

The peculiarities of this Epistle are very similar to those of the First, at least in the insight which is given us into the state of the primitive Church and into the character of the apostle. In the First Epistle, however, we see more of the condition of the church, and in the Second Epistle more of the personal character of the apostle. Indeed, this Epistle may be said to be the most egotistical of all the Pauline Epistles. Paul feels constrained to commend himself: he recounts his trials and difficulties, his visions and revelations, his works and sufferings. He discloses to us his inmost nature, so that we see into his very heart. "None of his other letters," observes Schaff, "give us so clear a view of his noble, tender heart, the sufferings and joys of his inward life, his alternations of feeling, his anxieties and struggles for the welfare of his churches. These were his daily and hourly care, as his children whom he had brought forth in travail; and the mortification their conduct had caused him, far from cooling his affection for them, only inflamed his love and his holy zeal for their eternal salvation."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. ii., Prolegomena, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. i. p. 344.

The diction of this Epistle has been severely criticised by Eichhorn and De Wette. The Greek is said to be inferior to that of Paul's other epistles. This, it has been suggested, is accounted for by the emotion felt by the apostle at the time he wrote. "That this Epistle," observes De Wette, "is written in a much harsher, more awkward, and looser style than the other epistles, is explained from the deep emotion and distraction in which the apostle appears to have been at the time of its composition."<sup>1</sup> The statement of these critics has been called in question, as at least exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, a considerable degree of fervour, and as it were impatience of style: the apostle evidently writes under deep emotion. This is especially seen in the third part of the Epistle, where he feels constrained to enter upon his self-commendatory apology. "The excitement and interchange of the affections," observes Meyer, "and probably also the haste with which Paul wrote this Epistle, certainly render the expressions often obscure and the constructions difficult; but serve only to exalt our admiration of the great oratorical delicacy, art, and power, with which this outpouring of Paul's spirit, especially interesting as a self-defensive apology, flows and streams onward, till at length in the sequel its billows completely overflow the opposition of the adversaries."<sup>3</sup> The twofold character of the Epistle—the first portion being comparatively calm and commendatory, and the last portion being fervent and threatening—is easily accounted for, on the supposition that in the first portion of the Epistle Paul has in view the body of the church, who had now returned to their obedience, and in the second portion the Judaizing faction, who yet resisted his authority.

The most important commentaries on the two Epistles to the Corinthians are those of Billroth (Leipzig 1833, translated in Clark's Biblical Cabinet), Rückert (Leipzig 1836, 1837), Olshausen (Königsberg 1840, translated in Clark's Foreign

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Other critics give a very different estimate of this Epistle. Thus Rückert views it as a masterpiece, worthy of comparison with the finest orations of Demosthenes.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Alford, *Greek Testament*, vol. ii., Prolegomena, p. 61.

Theological Library, 1869), De Wette (Leipzig 1845, Berlin 1855), Osiander (Stuttgart 1847, 1858), Meyer (Göttingen 1845, 1862); and in our own country, Stanley (London 1865, third edition), besides the commentaries in the Greek Testaments of Alford and Wordsworth. There is also an interesting and suggestive commentary—not, however, of an exegetical character—by the late F. W. Robertson of Brighton.

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### PAUL'S BODILY INFIRMITIES.<sup>1</sup>

The enumeration which Paul gives in this Epistle of his labours and journeys, his trials and persecutions (2 Cor. vi. 4–10, xi. 23–33), and the account, although very imperfect, which we have of them in the Acts of the Apostles, would naturally lead us to suppose that he possessed a Herculean frame,—that he was endowed with a body incapable of fatigue, and not liable to disease. But instead of this, there are certain statements in his epistles which assert the contrary, and intimate that he was continually oppressed with some bodily infirmity. That powerful and heroic mind was lodged in a frail tabernacle.

There are two passages in which the apostle directly adverts to his bodily infirmities. The one is in this Epistle. After enumerating his visions and revelations of the Lord, he adds: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. xii. 7). This affliction was connected in some way with the revelations which were granted to the apostle: it was in a certain sense the result of them; it was given to him, doubtless by God,<sup>2</sup> to prevent his being uplifted, and to keep him in a state of constant de-

<sup>1</sup> For discussions on this subject, see Alford's *Commentary* on 1 Cor. xii. 7; Lightfoot's dissertation on St. Paul's infirmity in the flesh, *Comm. on Gal.*, pp. 183–188; Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 213–218; Stanley *On the Corinthians*, pp. 545–552, "The Apostle's Sufferings."

<sup>2</sup> Not by Satan, as some suppose: the verb *ἐδόθη* excludes this idea.

pendence. The apostle calls it *σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί*, rendered in our version "a thorn in the flesh." *Σκόλοψ*, in classical Greek, signifies a sharpened stake or pile; and hence Dean Stanley supposes that the reference is to the punishment of impalement:<sup>1</sup> hence *σκολοπιζεῖν*, to impale. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is, however, employed in the Septuagint to signify a *thorn* (Num. xxxiii. 55; Ezek. xxviii. 24; Hos. ii. 6); and therefore it is most probable that such is its meaning in this passage, and that it has been correctly rendered in our translation. The two datives *ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί* are here used, the one to describe the person, and the other to specify the part of the person: "a thorn was given to me to (that is, *in*) my flesh."<sup>2</sup> The phrase *ἄγγελος Σατᾶν*—to be rendered, not the angel Satan or a hostile angel, but, as in our translation, a messenger of Satan<sup>3</sup>—is in apposition to *σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί*. The affliction, although given by God, was yet a messenger of Satan. Outward evils are in Scripture traceable to Satan. He was permitted to afflict Job (Job ii. 7, 8); our Lord declares that the woman whom He cured of a spirit of infirmity of eighteen years' standing had been bound by Satan (Luke xiii. 16); and Paul orders the incestuous member of the Corinthian church to be delivered over unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved (1 Cor. v. 5).<sup>4</sup>

The other passage is in the Epistle to the Galatians: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh" (or rather, on account of infirmity of the flesh, *δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός*)<sup>5</sup> "I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. iv. 13, 14).

<sup>1</sup> See Stanley's *Commentary on the Corinthians* on 2 Cor. xii. 7: *σκόλοψ*, he observes, is equivalent to *σταυρός*,—"the cross" and "the stake."

<sup>2</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Other mss. have the genitive *σατανᾶς*, the reading adopted by Stanley.

<sup>4</sup> "As 'an angel' of the Lord (*ἄγγελος Κυρίου*) is spoken of when the object is to assist God's servants, or to punish His enemies, so an angel of Satan (*ἄγγελος Σατᾶν*) is spoken of when the object is to torment God's servants."—Stanley *On the Corinthians*, p. 540.

<sup>5</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the N. T.*, p. 418.



Paul's bodily infirmity detained him in Galatia, and his first preaching the gospel to them was in consequence of this detention. There is a difference in the reading of this passage which has some bearing on the subject under discussion. The chief manuscripts—the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrian<sup>1</sup>—read, τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, “Your temptation which was in my flesh;” and this is the reading generally adopted by our best critics.<sup>2</sup> The apostle's infirmity was of such a humiliating nature that it tempted the Galatians to despise and reject him: as Hooker says, “The teacher's error is the people's trial;” and the same holds good of the teacher's infirmity. There are other incidental references to the apostle's infirmity,—as when he speaks of “being with them in weakness” (1 Cor. ii. 3), of “glorying in the things which concern his infirmities” (2 Cor. xi. 30), and when he mentions his personal appearance and speech as a matter of reproach among his opponents: “His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor. x. 10).

The nature of Paul's infirmity is concealed from us, and all hypotheses concerning it are mere conjectures. This is one of those things which were perfectly well known to those to whom the apostle wrote, and which required no explanation from him, but which, for that very reason, are now unknown to us. Such, as we have found, is also the case with the description of the man of sin (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6), and the nature of the Christ-party among the Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 12). Still, although little that is positive concerning the apostle's infirmity can be asserted, yet it may negatively be determined in what it did not consist.

The apostle does not here allude to any spiritual trial. The opinion of many theologians of the Romish Church, that Paul refers to the sensual temptations to which he was exposed, may safely be passed over as derogatory to the apostle and unworthy of examination. Such an interpretation was adopted

<sup>1</sup> So also the Vulg., Copt., Cyril, Jerome, Augustine.

<sup>2</sup> This is the reading preferred by Griesbach, and adopted by Lachmann, Meyer, and Alford. Tischendorf and Olshausen, however, retain the reading of the *textus receptus*.

by Thomas Aquinas, Bellarmine, Cornelius à Lapide, Estius, and other distinguished Romanists. But such a temptation could not be given by God, nor could the apostle glory in such infirmities. We may well say with Luther: "Ah no! blessed Paul, it was no such trial which afflicted thee!" The early Protestants, as Luther,<sup>1</sup> Calvin, Calovius, Osiander, on the other hand, supposed that the thorn in the flesh was spiritual distress,—such as blasphemous thoughts, mental struggles, temptations of Satan, the so-called "fiery darts of the devil." "The flesh," observes Calvin, "does not here mean the body, but the spiritual nature of man, so much as is not yet regenerated."<sup>2</sup> Hence, then, the apostle does not here complain of bodily infirmity, but of that carnal mind which still existed within him: it is the same struggle which is described by him in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. And certainly τῇ σαρκί may be used metaphorically; but this is not here its most obvious meaning; nor could the apostle glory in such spiritual distresses. The thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, was given to him by God, and therefore must have been wholly unconnected with personal sin or spiritual imperfection.

Others suppose that external opposition was the thorn in the flesh to which the apostle alludes. Some think the reference is to the Judaizing teachers who followed the footsteps of the apostle and opposed him wherever he went, particularly in the churches of Galatia and Corinth.<sup>3</sup> They were as thorns in his sides, torments to him, obstructions to his preaching the gospel. Others refer the allusion to his persecutors. Paul speaks of his reproaches and persecutions as his infirmities, and yet at the same time as infirmities in which he might well glory, as they were endured for the sake of Christ and His gospel (2 Cor. xii. 10); and he calls his opponents the ministers of Satan (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14). Such was the opinion eloquently advocated by Chrysostom, and also adopted by Theodore, Theophylact, and Theodoret, and in recent times by

<sup>1</sup> See Luther on Gal. iv. 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin's *Commentaries*, on 2 Cor. xii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Some think that Paul alludes to an individual opponent in Corinth, and whom he here compares to a thorn in the flesh, and calls the messenger of Satan.

Schrader in his *Apostel Paulus*.<sup>1</sup> But the infirmity to which the apostle alludes is not something external to himself,—not outward opposition; it is something personal, something inseparably connected with him,—“in the flesh.” Nor would the apostle, if it were external opposition, have so earnestly besought Christ for deliverance from it, for he well knew that such opposition was the inseparable concomitant of his ministry.

The apostle, then, undoubtedly alludes to some bodily infirmity. The infirmity on account of which he preached the gospel to the Galatians was “the infirmity of the flesh;” the temptation to which they were exposed was “in his flesh;” and the affliction which God gave to him was “a thorn in the flesh.” The words are to be taken in their most obvious and natural meaning. And so also it was his “bodily presence” that was the occasion of offence to his opponents: it was with its weakness and the contemptible nature of his speech that they upbraided him (2 Cor. x. 10).

Most probably the apostle's infirmity was the result of those visions and revelations with which he was honoured by God. Strong mental excitement through the nervous system affects the body, and often permanently injures the health; and thus “the abundance of the revelations” of the apostle may have superinduced some bodily infirmity. There are several examples in Scripture of such effects arising from supernatural visions. Thus Jacob, in consequence of the appearance of God to him at Peniel, halted on his thigh, and became permanently lame (Gen. xxxii. 32). Daniel relates that he fainted and was sick many days after one of his remarkable visions (Dan. viii. 27). And Paul himself is an example; for he was struck with blindness, which lasted for three days, in consequence of the brightness of that light which shone upon him on his way to Damascus (Acts ix. 9). And hence it is probable that this infirmity, this thorn in the flesh, was also the result of the apostle's supernatural visions. And this probability is greatly increased, and almost converted into certainty, when it is recollected that Paul alludes to it in connection with his

<sup>1</sup> Luther also wavers in his interpretation between spiritual trials and persecutions.

visions and revelations of the Lord, and especially in connection with a remarkable vision which occurred fourteen years before he wrote this Epistle, and on account of which the thorn in the flesh was given to him (2 Cor. xii. 1-7). In this vision he was caught up to paradise, and such was his mental condition that he could not tell "whether he was in the body or out of the body;" and hence we may well believe that the glories of this revelation permanently affected his bodily health,—just as our eyes would be permanently injured were we to gaze for a few moments on the sun.

There are several particulars which must be taken into account in the consideration of this subject. It was a bodily infirmity, *ἀσθένεια τῆς σαρκὸς*. It was painful. This is implied in the word *σκόλοψ*, a thorn or stake. It was permanent,—some chronic affection. Paul besought the Lord thrice that it might be removed; but, for wise reasons, his request was not granted. It was apparent to others. This is evident from the allusion to it in the Epistle to the Galatians. "Your temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected" could only be said of what was visible. It was a hindrance to his preaching the gospel: *ἄγγελος Σατᾶν, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ*. In Galatia he preached the gospel through infirmity of the flesh, and in Corinth he had to struggle against personal weakness. It was humiliating, and apt to make him an object of scorn to others. The Galatians were tempted by it to despise and reject the apostle, and their resistance of that temptation is mentioned to their praise; and his adversaries in Corinth reproached him on account of the weakness of his bodily presence. It was nevertheless the object of his glory. There was something connected with it which gave rise not merely to resignation, but to calm satisfaction on the part of the apostle. "Most gladly," he observes, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). All these conditions met in this affliction of the apostle, and therefore any interpretation which answers not these conditions must be erroneous.

A diversity of opinion exists concerning this infirmity of the apostle. Almost all the diseases to which man is heir have been ascribed to him. All are, however, mere conjectures. It

may not be uninteresting to notice a few of these opinions which are commended either by respectable authority or inherent plausibility.

An opinion very common among the fathers is that Paul's thorn in the flesh was headache (*κεφαλαλγία*). Thus Tertullian says: "It is reported that it was a pain of the ear or of the head;"<sup>1</sup> and Jerome: "The tradition is that he often suffered from a most grievous pain in the head."<sup>2</sup> Such seems to have been the favourite opinion among the fathers. The tradition was tolerably general, although its origin cannot be conjectured. And certainly such an infirmity would be a great hindrance to the mental activity of the apostle in preaching the gospel. Still the opinion is only deserving of mention on account of the authority by which it is supported, and as being a tradition which comes nearest to the time of the apostle; in other respects it completely fails. It could not have rendered the apostle contemptible to others, nor indeed could have been very visible.

A more plausible opinion is that the thorn in the flesh was a defect of utterance. This opinion, advanced by Whitby, has been adopted by Macknight, Doddridge, and Eadie. It is supposed that the view the apostle had of the celestial glories affected his nervous system in such a manner as to occasion some paralytic symptoms, and particularly a stammering in his speech, and perhaps some distortion in his countenance.<sup>3</sup> It is asserted that there are several allusions which seem to point this way. The apostle speaks of himself as "rude in speech" (*ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ*, 2 Cor. xi. 6); and it was the reproach of his opponents that his "speech was contemptible" (*ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος*, 2 Cor. x. 10). Such, it has been observed, must have been a heavy trial to the apostle, as before the attack he was so eloquent that at Lystra he was mistaken for Mercury, the god of eloquence (Acts xiv. 12). Now it must be acknowledged that such an hypothesis answers all the conditions. Although such an infirmity was a great hindrance to his

<sup>1</sup> Per dolorem, ut aiunt, auriculæ vel capitis.—Tertullian, *De Pudic.* c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Tradunt eum gravissimum capitis dolorem sæpe perpassum.—Jerome, *ad Gal.* iv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Doddridge's *Family Expositor*, in loc.

preaching the gospel, yet it was also the subject of his glory, inasmuch as it reminded him of those revelations of the Lord—those special tokens of the Saviour's love—by which it was occasioned. It was the visible evidence of his apostleship,—the mark of the Lord Jesus; and the grace of Christ vouchsafed to him was abundantly sufficient to support and strengthen him under his infirmities. But still it is a mere conjectural hypothesis, and rests on too few passages to be maintained. 'Ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ does not denote one who is not eloquent as a speaker, but one who has not learned eloquence in the rhetorical schools.<sup>1</sup> The affliction befell the apostle fourteen years before he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and therefore several years before he came to Lystra, where the inhabitants mistook him for the god of eloquence, which they would hardly have done had there been an impediment in his speech; and it cannot be supposed that the man who delivered the oration before Agrippa was defective in eloquence.

The most common opinion in recent times is that the apostle was afflicted with ophthalmia, or weakness of sight. This opinion has been maintained with much ingenuity by Alford and Lewin. It is supposed that the apostle's sight was permanently affected by the appearance of the Lord to him at his conversion (Acts ix. 9), and that the miraculous cure effected by Ananias was incomplete. "The apostle at the time of his conversion," observes Lewin, "had been subjected to the blaze of the heavenly light, and his eyes may ever afterwards have been more or less affected. For a time he was perfectly blind; the scales then fell from his eyes by the touch of Ananias, but a memento of his sinful career still remained. The climate, too, of Damascus is peculiarly injurious to the sight, and nearly all the inhabitants suffer from ophthalmia; and as Paul resided there for three years after his conversion, a permanent affection of the vision may have been contracted."<sup>2</sup> There are supposed to be several incidental allusions to this defect of vision in Scripture. Thus on two occasions it is observed in the Acts of the Apostles that Paul looked stedfastly (ἀπενίσας), as if his sight were bad,—once when he announced the punishment to

<sup>1</sup> See Wordsworth on 2 Cor. xi. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Lewin's *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 214.

be inflicted on Elymas the sorcerer (Acts xiii. 9), and another time when he rebuked the high priest Ananias (Acts xxiii. 1). So also, after alluding to the infirmity of his flesh to the Galatians, he adds, "For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal. iv. 15), as if the Galatians were willing, had it been possible, to give him their own eyes to supply his lack of vision. And his mention of the large letters (*πηλικά γράμματα*) with which he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. vi. 11) is supposed to be an allusion to his defective eyesight. But certainly these are most trivial grounds on which to build an hypothesis. All the passages adduced have no necessary connection with the apostle's weakness of eyesight. The apostle's blindness at his conversion was merely temporary, and was completely cured by the miracle performed by Ananias. And even if this were not the case, the thorn in the flesh can have no possible connection with it, as it happened to the apostle at least six years after his conversion.<sup>1</sup>

Another opinion is that Paul's thorn in the flesh was epilepsy. This opinion was adopted by Ziegler and Holsten, and is suggested as probable by Professor Lightfoot, on account of the closeness of the parallel between such an infirmity and the conditions of the problem.<sup>2</sup> It, however, derives no support from any scriptural intimations, and hence is a mere unauthorized conjecture. Several other diseases might be named which would as completely answer the particulars mentioned.

Nothing can with certainty be determined regarding the nature of the apostle's infirmity,—that thorn in the flesh which constantly troubled him. The Corinthians required no explanation, and, as we already remarked, their knowledge is the reason of our ignorance. And it is as well that we are left in ignorance. Every one who is afflicted with any ailment can refer to the case of the apostle, and derive comfort from the consolation imparted to him. Their earnest prayers for

<sup>1</sup> Second Corinthians was written A.D. 57 : fourteen years before that, the incident alluded to occurred (2 Cor. xii. 2) ; whereas the apostle's conversion occurred twenty years previously.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, p. 188.

deliverance are justified by the apostle's example ; and if their prayers are apparently unanswered, and the affliction is unremoved, they can console themselves with the thought that this is no evidence of wrath or proof that God does not hear prayer, for the experience of the apostle was the same ; and the answer of the Lord to him—the true reply to his earnest requests—is the answer to them : “ My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is perfected in weakness.” Thus the subject is of manifold application : the thorn in the flesh may be applied to every calamity which befalls us : the account of it is written for our admonition ; whereas, if we had been told wherein it consisted, we might have been tempted to restrict the consolations which the subject is so well calculated to afford, and the lessons which it teaches, to some particular bodily infirmity. It is also to be observed that, although Paul's infirmity seemed to him to be a hindrance to his preaching the gospel, yet in the result it was not so. The strength of Christ was magnified in the apostle's weakness. The gospel, preached through infirmity of the flesh, proved itself to be the power of God. “ We have,” says the apostle, “ this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” As has been well observed, “ When Paul was weakest as a teacher of the present, he was strongest as the apostle of the future.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Instances have frequently occurred of great mental activity conjoined with bodily weakness. The mind sometimes triumphs over the weakness of the body, and in spite of disease, of pain, of infirmity, performs achievements which throw all the works of ordinary men completely in the shade. There have been instances of great generals, profound philosophers, historians, and other authors, who have struggled successfully against constitutional weakness, a morbid state of body, a palsied frame, and physical pain. To this class of great men the Apostle Paul belonged. He succumbed not under his infirmity of the flesh, but asserted the superiority of mind to body. A noble example of a similar kind occurs in the great preacher Robert Hall. From the account given us by his biographer, he was a martyr to constant pain : the thorn was fixed indelibly in his flesh, and was his companion through life ; and yet that man preached the gospel with an eloquence and power never heard before, and his writings will endure as long as the English language.



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THE authenticity of the Epistle to the Romans has been generally admitted. It is, according to De Wette, raised above all doubts.<sup>1</sup> Even the destructive criticism of the Tübingen school has only ventured to question the genuineness of the two last chapters. The quotations from it by the apostolic fathers and Christian writers of the second century are numerous and unmistakeable. Thus Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96) writes: "Casting off from us all unrighteousness and iniquity, avarice, contentions, malignities, and deceits, whisperings and backbitings, hatred of God, pride, boasting, vain-glory, and ambition. For they that do such things are hateful to God; not only they who do them, but they also who have pleasure in them" (Rom. i. 29-32).<sup>2</sup> Ignatius (A.D. 115) says: "Our Lord was truly of the race of David according to the flesh, the Son of God according to the will and power of God" (Rom. i. 3, 4).<sup>3</sup> Polycarp (A.D. 118) observes: "For we are all before the eyes of the Lord and God, and must all stand before the tribunal of Christ, and every one give account of himself" (Rom. xiv. 10, 12).<sup>4</sup> In the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons (A.D. 177), we have the following quotation: "Showing indeed that the

<sup>1</sup> Die Aechtheit des Briefes ist über alle Zweifel erhaben.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* i. chap. 35: 'Απορρίψαντες ἅφ' ἑαυτῶν πᾶσαν ἀδικίαν καὶ ἀνημίαν, πλεονεξίαν, ἔρις, κακοηθείας τε καὶ δόλους, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Smyrn.* c. 1: 'Αληθῶς ὄντα ἐκ γένους Δαβὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, υἱὸν Θεοῦ κατὰ θέλημα καὶ δύναμιν Θεοῦ.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Philippens.* c. 3: 'Απέναντι γὰρ τῶν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ ἰσμὲν ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ πάντας δι' παραστήναι τῷ βήματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἕκαστος ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ λόγον δοῦναι.

sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18).<sup>1</sup> Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "The same thing Paul has explained, writing to the Romans: 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated unto the gospel of God, which He has promised by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son,' etc. And again, writing to the Romans concerning Israel, he says: 'Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever'" (Rom. i. 1, ix. 5).<sup>2</sup> Theophilus of Antioch (A.D. 181) says: "He will search all things and judge justly, rendering to all according to the desert of their actions: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for immortality, He will give eternal life: . . . but to the unbelieving, and them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish" (Rom. ii. 6-9).<sup>3</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) says: "In like manner Paul in the Epistle to the Romans writes: 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?'" (Rom. vi. 2).<sup>4</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) writes: "I will by no means say Gods and Lords; but I will follow the apostle, so that if the Father and the Son are mentioned together, I will say God the Father and Jesus Christ the Lord. But when I mention Christ only, I will call Him God, as the same apostle does: 'Of whom Christ came, who is,' says he, 'over all, God blessed for ever'" (Rom. ix. 5).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* v. 1: "Ὅντως ἐπιδεικνύμενοι, ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς."

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. heres.* iii. 16, 3: Hoc ipsum interpretatus est Paulus, scribens ad Romanos: "Paulus apostolus Jesu Christi, predestinatus in evangelium Dei, quod promisit per prophetas suos in scripturis sanctis de filio, qui factus est," etc. Et iterum ad Romanos scribens de Israel dicit: "Quorum patres et ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, qui est Deus super omnes benedictus in secula."

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Autolyc.* lib. ii. p. 79: 'Ἐξετάσει τὰ πάντα καὶ κρινεῖ τὸ δίκαιον ἀποδίδους ἐκάστῳ κατὰ ἄξiam τῶν μισθῶν, τοῖς μὲν κατ' ὑπομονὴν διὰ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν ζητοῦσι τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν, δωρήσεται ζωὴν αἰώνιον, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Stromata*, lib. iii. c. 11: "Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ Παῦλος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῇ γράφει, οἵτινες ἀπειθόντες τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ;

<sup>5</sup> *Adv. Praxeam*, c. xiii.: Itaque Deos omnino non dicam nec Dominos; sed apostolum sequar, ut si pariter nominandi fuerint pater et filius, Deum patrem appellem et Jesum Christum Dominum nominem. Solum autem Christum potero

The internal evidence is equally convincing. The style, the manner, and the matter are all undoubtedly Pauline. But especially the undesigned coincidences between this Epistle and the Acts and the other epistles of Paul are so convincing, as to amount to a demonstration of the authenticity of the Epistle. Three of these undesigned coincidences are here given as examples. 1. In the Epistle mention is made of a collection which the apostle had made in the churches of Achaia and Macedonia for the Christians in Jerusalem: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Rom. xv. 25, 26). Now we learn the circumstances here mentioned from three separate writings. In the Acts we are informed that Paul came up to Jerusalem from Achaia and Macedonia to bring alms to his nation, and offerings (Acts xxiv. 17). In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we find directions given for a contribution in the churches of Achaia for the saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. xvi. 1-3). And in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, we are informed that a similar collection was made at the same time in the churches of Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1-4). Each of these circumstances is limited to a particular time, the last journey of the apostle to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> 2. In the Epistle the apostle expressed his earnest desire and repeated endeavours to see Rome: "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come to you, but was let hitherto" (Rom. i. 13). "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey" (Rom. xv. 23, 24). In the Acts we are informed that the apostle expressed a similar desire some time before this Epistle was written: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia

Deum dicere, sicut idem apostolus: Ex quibus Christus qui est, inquit, Deus super omnia benedictus in ævum omne.—For numerous other testimonies, see Kirchofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 198-204, Lardner's *Works*, etc.

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Paulinæ*, the Romans, No. I.

and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome" (Acts xix. 21). "The conformity," observes Paley, "between the history and the Epistle is perfect. In the quotations from the Epistle, we find that a design of visiting Rome had long dwelt in the apostle's mind; in the quotation from the Acts, we find that design expressed a considerable time before the Epistle was written. In the history we find that the plan which St. Paul had formed was to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, after that to go to Jerusalem, and when he had finished his visit there, to sail for Rome. When the Epistle was written, he had executed so much of his plan as to have passed through Macedonia and Achaia, and was preparing to pursue the remainder of it, by speedily setting out towards Jerusalem; and in this point of his travels he tells his friends at Rome that, when he had completed the business which carried him to Jerusalem, he would come to them. The very inspection of the passages will satisfy us that they were not made up from one another. In the Epistle to the Romans, we are informed of Paul's intention to go to Spain. If, then, the passage in the Epistle was taken from that in the Acts, why was Spain put in? If the passage in the Acts was taken from that in the Epistle, why was Spain left out? If the two passages were unknown to each other, nothing can account for their conformity but the truth."<sup>1</sup> 3. In the Epistle Paul expresses his fears that the journey which he was about to make from Corinth to Jerusalem would be disastrous. He there beseeches the Roman Christians to strive together in their prayers to God for him, that he might be delivered from them who do not believe in Judea (Rom. xv. 30). In the history the same sense of danger in approaching Jerusalem, on the same journey, is expressed: "Behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts xx. 22, 23). The only difference is, as Paley remarks, that in the history his thoughts are more inclined to despondency than in the Epistle, which is no other alteration than might

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Paulinæ*, the Romans, No. III.

well be expected, since these prophetic intimations to which he refers when he says, "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city," had probably been received by him in the course of his journey.<sup>1</sup>

But although the authenticity of the Epistle is undisputed, yet its integrity has frequently been questioned. The two last chapters, and particularly the doxology at the close, have been specially challenged. Origen tells us that Marcion, for some unknown reason, rejected both chapters.<sup>2</sup> Heumann supposes that chap. xii.—xv. is a separate letter, written at a different time, and that chap. xvi. is the conclusion to chap. xi. Semler<sup>3</sup> supposes that the last chapter, though written by Paul, was not addressed to the Romans, but to some other church. Paulus thinks that chap. xv. is a special epistle addressed to the more enlightened members of the Roman church, and that chap. xvi. is addressed only to the bishops and deacons of the church. Schulz, Ewald, and Reuss think that chap. xvi. does not properly belong to the Epistle to the Romans, and has been attached to it by the mistake of transcribers; and that it is in reality the fragment of an epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.<sup>4</sup> But whilst these critics admit the Pauline origin of these chapters, Baur and Schwegler question their genuineness, and regard them as spurious. Dr. Davidson, in the last edition of his *Introduction*, agrees with Baur in the rejection of the last chapter only.<sup>5</sup>

The objections which Baur adduces against the fifteenth chapter are not formidable. He asserts that chap. xv. 1–13 contains nothing but what the apostle had already better expressed in former chapters, and that it is a poor dilution of Pauline views; that chap. xv. 17–20 is borrowed from 2 Cor. x. 13–18; and that the whole was written by a Pauline Christian, with a view to conciliate the Jewish Christians toward Pauline Christianity, by causing Paul to make all possible concessions to Judaism.<sup>6</sup> But these objections, which

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Paulinæ*, the Romans, No. V.      <sup>2</sup> *Comment. in Ep. ad Rom.* in loco.

<sup>3</sup> Semler, *Diss. de duplici appendice Ep. Pauli ad Romanos*.

<sup>4</sup> Schulz in *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1829; Ewald's *Sendschreiben des Paulus*, pp. 428–430; Reuss, *Geschichte der heil. Schrif. N. T.*, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (last edition), vol. i. pp. 137–139.

<sup>6</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 394–401.

arise from Baur's own subjective views, have no weight. Chap. xv. is inseparably connected with chap. xiv.,—indeed, ought not to have been separated from it. At the close of chap. xiv. the apostle is discoursing on the differences of the views of the Roman Christians concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of eating certain meats; and in chap. xv. he proceeds to exhort the liberal-minded among them to have respect to the scruples of their weaker brethren. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. xv. 1). Nor is there anything un-Pauline either in the sentiments or in the language of this chapter. The apostle's object is to draw the Jewish and Gentile Christians together: he tells the free-minded Gentile Christians not to please themselves, but to imitate the example of Christ, in pleasing and receiving others as members of the same spiritual kingdom; and he reminds the Jewish Christians that the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ was the accomplishment of their own prophecies (Rom. xv. 1–14). The remainder of the chapter contains information about his own movements, in accordance with his usual manner in other epistles.

The objections of Baur against chap. xvi., if not more convincing, are at least more plausible. The long list of persons, he observes, to whom the apostle sends salutations, is given in order to represent Paul as connected by kinship and friendship with the principal persons of the early Roman church. When the relation of Paul to the Roman community became afterwards a party question, this would easily appear to be of importance to a Paulinist. It is impossible to suppose that the apostle, who had never been at Rome, could have been acquainted with such a number. Aquila and Priscilla, who are among the number saluted (Rom. xvi. 3), are, according to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written a few months before, residents not in Rome, but in Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 9); and three of the persons saluted, as well as three of the persons from whom salutations are sent, are represented as kinsmen (*συγγενεῖς*) of the apostle (Rom. xvi. 7, 11, 21),—a circumstance which is highly improbable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 404–409.

But the fact that Paul should be acquainted with so many persons at Rome is by no means so improbable as Baur represents: Rome was then the great rendezvous of persons from all parts of the Roman empire. Paul had been preaching the gospel for several years, and therefore it is natural to suppose that he may have made the acquaintance of, and come in contact with, many who were then resident in Rome; and hence also the reason why nearly all those saluted were in some way personally related to the apostle.<sup>1</sup> There is therefore no reason, with Reuss and Ewald, to suppose, against all external evidence, that this sixteenth chapter is a fragment of an epistle to the Ephesians.<sup>2</sup> The Epistle to the Romans was written several months—at least eight—after the First Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>3</sup> so that there was ample time for Aquila and Priscilla to remove from Ephesus to Rome, which they would be naturally inclined to do, as Rome was their former place of residence (Acts xviii. 2). *Συγγενεῖς* does not necessarily denote relations by blood, but may signify fellow-countrymen (Rom. ix. 3); but even if blood-relations were its meaning, as we are ignorant of Paul's family, the improbability of his having so many relations with him and at Rome cannot be asserted.<sup>4</sup> It is, besides, to be observed that the internal evidence in favour of chapters xv. and xvi. is most convincing: of the eight undesigned coincidences mentioned by Paley, no less than six are taken from these two chapters.<sup>5</sup>

The concluding doxology (Rom. xvi. 25–27) is specially objected to, even by those who admit the genuineness of the chapter in which it is contained. There is a remarkable difference in its position, as found in different manuscripts. The principal mss.—the Sinaitic, the Vatican, the Codex

<sup>1</sup> "It is easier to conceive," observes De Wette, "that the intercourse of the East with Rome had drawn all these Christians to it, than that this chapter did not belong to the Epistle."—*Einführung*, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Reuss, *Geschichte N. T.*, p. 98; Ewald's *Sendschreiben*, p. 429.

<sup>3</sup> First Corinthians was written before Pentecost of the year 57; Romans was written in the spring of the year 58.

<sup>4</sup> Lewin makes the observation that, according to Strabo, xiv. 5, the Tarsians, inhabitants of Paul's native city, abounded at Rome.—*Life of Paul*, p. 536.

<sup>5</sup> *Horæ Paulinæ*, Romans, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Ephremi and the Codex Claromontanus, the Syriac and Vulgate versions—and the Latin fathers have it, as in our translation, at the close of the Epistle; but nearly all the cursive MSS., amounting to more than two hundred, and the Greek fathers, have it at the end of chap. xiv. In the Alexandrine MS. it is found in both places. Our greatest textual critics—Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Meyer—retain it in its present position. It is to be observed that the MSS. vary with regard to its position, but not with regard to its genuineness.<sup>1</sup> The external evidence, therefore, is decisive with regard to its being a portion of the Epistle to the Romans. Nor is the internal evidence adverse. The construction is certainly difficult; but the expressions, as is admitted even by those who question its genuineness, are Pauline.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as Fritzsche observes, “In all Paul’s writings there are no verses more Pauline than these.”<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to assign a reason why it should be found in different manuscripts occupying different places, but it may probably be explained by the Epistle having been considered as already finished by the usual apostolic benediction (Rom. xvi. 24), and the supposition that the doxology must have belonged to some earlier part. It would almost appear that Paul, after having finished the Epistle, added the concluding doxology as a postscript. Its position is undoubtedly at the close of chap. xvi.; for to place it at the close of chap. xiv. would be inappropriate, and would interrupt the apostle’s argument.

## II. THE CHURCH OF ROME.

According to ancient tradition, adopted by the Romish Church, the church of Rome was founded by the Apostle Peter.<sup>4</sup> It is asserted that Peter visited Rome in the second

<sup>1</sup> It is wanting in the Codex Augiensis and in the Codex Boernerianus; but in this last ms. there is a space left.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson’s *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Davidson (old edition), vol. ii. p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> So Döllinger, *Christenth. u. Kirche*, p. 95 ff. Several theologians of the Romish Church—as, for example, Hug and Feilmoser—however, disclaim this opinion. It is defended by Bertholdt, Thiersch, and a few other Protestant theologians.



year of Claudius, and, after filling the office of a bishop there for twenty-five years, suffered martyrdom. The earliest notice of this tradition is in the Clementine Homilies, written at the close of the second century. Eusebius informs us that in the reign of Claudius, Peter encountered and vanquished Simon Magus at Rome;<sup>1</sup> and he mentions that Dionysius of Corinth relates that Peter and Paul first planted the Christian Church both at Corinth and at Rome.<sup>2</sup> But this ancient tradition cannot by any possibility be founded on truth. Peter was thrown into prison by Herod Agrippa in Jerusalem, in the fourth year of Claudius; and he was present at the council of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of the same emperor. Besides, there is no allusion to the presence of Peter in Rome in any of Paul's Epistles. In the Epistle to the Romans, although the salutations are numerous, yet there is no salutation sent to Peter; and in the four epistles which Paul wrote during his Roman imprisonment, there is no salutation sent from Peter. Even in Paul's last epistle, the second to Timothy, written shortly before his martyrdom, Peter is unnoticed. This could hardly have been the case, if, as ancient tradition supposes, Peter were then resident at Rome.

The origin of the church of Rome is unknown. Christianity was not introduced into it by Peter, nor probably by any of the other apostles. The church existed before Paul visited it. When it is considered that Rome was a place of general resort, it is highly probable that Christianity was introduced by some unknown evangelists at an early period.<sup>3</sup> Roman sojourners were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16); and there is nothing improbable in the supposition that some of them were there converted, and on their return to Rome introduced Christianity. Or Christian preachers may have penetrated to Rome after the dispersion of the church in Jerusalem, in consequence of the persecution that arose concerning Stephen. There is reason to suppose that there were Christians at Rome when Claudius expelled

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer supposes that Christianity might have been introduced into Rome even during the lifetime of our Lord.—*Commentary on the Romans*, p. 21, translation, T. & T. Clark.

the Jews from that city, and that, as the Christians would not at that early period be distinguished from the Jews, they shared the same fate. Aquila and Priscilla, who were among the number of the banished, were in all likelihood Christians when they joined the apostle at Corinth.<sup>1</sup> The words of Suetonius, in relating this decree of expulsion, are very remarkable: "Claudius banished the Jews from Rome, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus."<sup>2</sup> It is known that Christus was often mispronounced by the Romans, Chrestus;<sup>3</sup> and hence Kuinoel and Gieseler suppose that the cause of the disturbance was a tumult raised by the Jews against the Christians, which we find from the Acts was their frequent practice, and that Claudius, without examining which party was in the wrong, banished them all from Rome. The church would be then partially broken up, but would soon be re-established by the influx of new converts, by the conversion of Gentiles, and by the return of many of those banished, as Aquila and Priscilla, after the decree of Claudius was reversed, or at least ceased to be acted upon. Some of the Roman Christians whom Paul salutes were converted before himself (Rom. xvi. 7). It would also appear that there was a strong Pauline element in the Roman church: many of the preachers, as is seen from the list of salutations, were closely related to Paul, either as his converts, or as his fellow-workers; so that some suppose, not without reason, that though the church of Rome was not directly planted by Paul, yet that it owed, if not its origin, at least its prosperity, to the converts of Paul.<sup>4</sup>

At the time Paul wrote this Epistle, the church of Rome was numerous and in a flourishing condition. Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom. i. 8). Their obedience was come abroad to all men (Rom. xvi. 19). It is true that there is no mention in the Epistle of ecclesiastical office-bearers, bishops, and deacons (Phil. i. 1), but there are allusions to three separate places of meeting (Rom. xvi. 5, 14, 15). As the church of Rome had not yet been visited

<sup>1</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Judeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit (Claudius 25).

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Apol.* 3.

<sup>4</sup> Tholuck *On the Romans*, vol. i. pp. 2, 3.

by any apostle, it may not have had, as Bleek supposes,<sup>1</sup> any regular organization. Elders had not as yet been appointed. Six years after this, the great Neronian persecution broke out; and we have the testimony of Tacitus concerning the vast numbers of Christians who were then resident in Rome. "Christus," he observes, "the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius. But the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also, whither all things horrible and disgraceful flow from all quarters as to a common receptacle, and where they are encouraged." And he informs us that a vast multitude were convicted.<sup>2</sup> And besides, the very number of salutations sent by Paul to the Romans proves that the church must have been considerable.

There is a considerable diversity of opinion among critics as to the composition of the Roman church. Some (Neander, Meyer, Rückert, De Wette, Olshausen, and Tholuck) suppose that it was chiefly composed of Gentile Christians. Others (Baur, Schweigler, Thiersch, and Wordsworth) think that the Jewish Christians constituted the majority. The determination of this point influences our opinion of the object or design of the Epistle.

That the church of Rome was, to all intents and purposes, a Gentile church, is the view supported and maintained chiefly by Neander and Olshausen. "It is not improbable," observes Neander, "that at an early period the seed of the gospel was brought by Jewish Christians to the Jews at Rome, as at that time, if we may judge from the salutations at the end of the Epistle, persons who were among the oldest Christians lived at Rome; but these certainly did not form the main body of the church, for the greater part evidently consisted of Christians of Gentile descent, to whom the gospel had been preached by men of the Pauline school, independently of the Mosaic law, to whom Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, felt himself called to write, and whom, in consequence of the relation, he could

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.*, vol. i. p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> *Annalium*, lib. xv. 44. He calls them *multitudo ingens*.

address with greater freedom.”<sup>1</sup> A number of passages in the Epistle are appealed to in proof of this opinion. Paul writes as the apostle of the Gentiles to the Romans: “By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all Gentiles,<sup>2</sup> for His name: among whom (Gentiles) are ye also the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom. i. 5, 6). The community whom he addresses is regarded by him as a Gentile community. “Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto, that I might have some fruit among you, even as among other Gentiles” (Rom. i. 13). He expressly addresses them as Gentiles: “For I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office” (Rom. xi. 13). Whereas, when he speaks of the Jews, it is in the third person, as if he were writing to the Gentiles: “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for them<sup>3</sup> is, that they might be saved” (Rom. x. 1). He declares that, as the minister of Christ to the Gentiles, he sought to offer up the Gentiles, among whom he classed the Roman Christians, unto God: “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xv. 15, 16).

It might be thought that these passages are decisive as to the Gentile character of the Roman church; but strong arguments are brought forward to prove its Jewish composition. The great advocate of this opinion is Baur. “If it is,” he observes, “correctly supposed that the part of the Roman church to whom this Epistle was directed is the majority, we must assume that Jewish Christians constituted the principal part of the Roman church, which is in itself entirely credible, as the early origin of a Roman church can only be explained from the fact that there were a great number of Jews at

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> ἔθνη, to be translated Gentiles, not *nations*.

<sup>3</sup> ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν is the true reading, not ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.

Rome.”<sup>1</sup> There are, it is admitted, only a few passages in the Epistle itself which appear to point to the Jewish character of the church. Thus the apostle speaks of Abraham as the father of those to whom he wrote: “What shall we say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?” (Rom. iv. 1, 12). And he addresses the Roman Christians as being well acquainted with the Jewish law, which, it is asserted, they could not have been unless they were Jewish Christians: “I speak to them that know the law” (Rom. vii. 1). But the principal argument in favour of the Jewish character of the church arises from the numerous quotations in the Epistle from the Old Testament. In none of Paul’s Epistles are there such numerous references to the Jewish Scriptures; and hence it must be concluded, that those to whom he wrote were thoroughly acquainted with those Scriptures. But if the Romans were directly converted from heathenism, their acquaintance with the Old Testament must have been very limited. Hence the inference is drawn that the apostle is throughout this Epistle addressing not Gentiles, but Jews.

Here then is an apparent discrepancy: the Roman church is in various parts of the Epistle asserted to be of Gentile origin, whereas it is addressed as if it were composed of Jewish Christians. Professor Jowett seeks to solve the difficulty, by supposing that the church was chiefly composed of Gentile converts who had previously been proselytes of the gate; that they were not converted directly from heathenism to Christianity, but through the medium of Judaism. “The Roman church,” he observes, “appeared to be at once Jewish and Gentile,—Jewish in feeling, Gentile in origin. Jewish, because the apostle everywhere argues with them as Jews; Gentile, because he expressly addresses them as such. In this double fact there is now seen to be nothing strange or anomalous: it typifies the general condition of the Christian Church, whether founded by St. Paul or by the apostles of the circumcision. It was not only in idea that the Old Testament prepared the way for the New, by holding up the

<sup>1</sup> Baur’s *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 370. See also Baur’s *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 63.

truth of the unity of God, but the spread of that truth among the Gentiles, and the influence of the Jewish Scriptures, were themselves actual preparatives for the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> There may be some truth in this view of the subject. Jewish proselytism, as we learn from several heathen writers, prevailed to a great extent, especially at Rome.<sup>2</sup> It is not, indeed, to be supposed that the Roman proselytes to Judaism were actually circumcised; but that, dissatisfied with their own religion, and attracted by the monotheism of the Jews, they frequented the synagogues, and so became acquainted with the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> When the gospel was preached, these devout men would be naturally disposed to embrace it; and thus the law of Moses became their schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. Probably many of the Roman converts belong to this class,—Gentiles, but not ignorant of the Jewish religion. There must also have been a considerable number of pure Jews. The origin of the church was undoubtedly Jewish, and the Jews were numerous at Rome. But notwithstanding this Jewish element, the Judaizing views do not appear at this time to have made any progress among the Roman Christians. There were no disputes among them concerning the necessity of circumcision: the only difference of opinion appears to have been about the lawfulness of eating certain kinds of meat.<sup>4</sup>

Some suppose that there is a considerable discrepancy between this view of a flourishing church at Rome given us in this Epistle, and the account in the Acts of the state of the church at Paul’s subsequent visit to Rome. The unbelieving Jews are represented as affirming that they had no knowledge of the Christian Church at Rome except from hearsay: “We desire to hear from thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning

<sup>1</sup> Jowett’s *Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 23. Similarly Beyschlag.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, *Sat.* iv. 143; Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 5; Cicero, *pro Flacco*, c. 28; Joseph. *Ant.* xiii. 9. 1; 15. 4, xviii. 3. 5.

<sup>3</sup> See some excellent remarks on this subject in Reuss’ *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, vol. i. pp. 86, 87, English translation.

<sup>4</sup> Conybeare and Howson’s *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 191. Professor Lightfoot observes: “It seems probable that the Roman Church at this time was composed of Jews and Gentiles in nearly equal portions.” The Gentiles, however, seem to have formed the more numerous portion, as Paul frequently addresses the Roman Christians as such.—See Bleek’s *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 444.

this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against" (Acts xxviii. 22). "A church," observes Baur, "which had for long so greatly attracted the attention of the Apostle Paul, that he wished to come to Rome; a church which appeared to him so important, that he wrote to it a large and weighty epistle; a church of which he himself says that its faith was known throughout the whole world; a church which must have particularly excited the interest of the Roman Jews, as consisting for the most part of their countrymen, resident with them in the same city; yet, according to the narrative of the Acts, such a church remained unknown to them, as a thing with which they had not come in contact, and knew only from report."<sup>1</sup> Different answers have been given to this objection. Olshausen thinks that since the expulsion of the Jews by Claudius, both Jews and Christians maintained a designed separation.<sup>2</sup> Neander observes that, considering the immense size of the metropolis, it is not inconceivable that the worldly Jews knew little or nothing of the Christian church, which was composed chiefly of Gentile converts.<sup>3</sup> Tholuck considers that the Jews dissimulated, and purposely concealed their better acquaintance with Christianity. Philippi supposes that the Jews were guarded in their statements for fear of bringing themselves into trouble. And Meyer thinks that there was an intentional reserve, in order that Paul might explain himself freely.<sup>4</sup> But too much seems to be made by German critics of this objection. It does not appear to be any objection at all. There is no assertion of ignorance on the part of the Jews. With full knowledge of the existence of a Christian church among them, they might with perfect truthfulness express themselves as they do: "Concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 364; see also Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte* pp. 293, 294.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen *On the Gospels and the Acts*, vol. iv. p. 505; *On the Romans* p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 518.

<sup>5</sup> Author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. pp. 445, 446.

## III. THE OBJECT OF THE EPISTLE.

The object of this Epistle must be distinguished from the occasion of its composition. The occasion arose from Paul's earnest desire to see Rome, and to impart unto the Christians there some spiritual gift (Rom. i. 7). For many years he had desired to visit Rome, but hitherto he had been prevented (Rom. i. 13-15). Paul must have been deeply conscious of the importance of the church in Rome. It was as if Christianity were established in the very heart of heathenism. No church could possibly occupy a more important position. Rome was not only one of the largest cities in the world, but the capital of civilisation and the centre of influence. The Christian religion established in it would be as a light shining in a dark place, and diffusing its influences over the world. Hence the great importance of the establishment of a pure Christianity, unmixed with Judaizing errors or philosophical notions. An opportunity presented itself of sending to the Roman Christians an epistle: Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchræa, was about to leave for Rome (Rom. xvi. 1), and to her charge Paul committed this important epistle.

The object of this Epistle was general, not special. Paul had no special errors to correct, no disorders to reform. The Roman church was not connected with him, as other churches, by direct personal visitation. The design of the Epistle was to impart to the Roman Christians a correct view of Christianity. This, with several minute variations, is the opinion adopted by De Wette, Olshausen, Tholuck, and Alford. "The Epistle to the Romans," observes De Wette, "is the only epistle of the apostle wherein he designedly represents his doctrine in its full connection, whilst in his other epistles he takes cognizance of peculiar wants, doubts, and errors, and presupposes the knowledge of his doctrine."<sup>1</sup> The theme or subject-matter of the Epistle is supposed to be expressed at its commencement; and the whole Epistle is a proof or development of that theme, namely, that "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ;

<sup>1</sup> *Erklärung des Briefs an die Römer*, Introduction.



to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. i. 16). In short, this Epistle very nearly approaches to a doctrinal treatise; so that, if a few verses at the beginning and two chapters at the end were omitted, all that is personal would be removed. But although the general object of this Epistle was to instruct the Roman Christians in Christianity, yet this does not prevent subordinate objects. The inculcation of the truth of the gospel would necessarily remove error, reconcile differences, prevent mistakes, and supply wants.<sup>1</sup>

An opposite view of this Epistle is taken by Baur. He supposes that it has a direct polemie design. It is addressed to Jewish Christians; and its object is to answer their objections, to remove their prejudices, and to inculcate a Pauline Christianity.<sup>2</sup> The Jews objected to Paul's universalism. According to them, Israel was the chosen people of God; the reception of the Gentiles into the Church of God was an act of unrighteousness toward them,—a contradiction of the promises made by God. The theocratic primacy of their nation was endangered by the inculcation of Pauline universalism. Hence the Epistle was written with a view to this state of feeling in the Roman church, and is to be regarded, if not as a defence, yet as an apology for Pauline Christianity.<sup>3</sup> According to Baur, the central idea and essence of the whole Epistle, and to which all the rest is subsidiary, is contained in chap. ix.—xi. The first eight chapters are only introductory, to prepare the Jewish Christians for the discussion of the question.<sup>4</sup> Such an extreme view is wholly inadequate to explain the Epistle. It would make the most important portion of the Epistle subsidiary to that which is evidently subordinate. It supposes a degree of variance between Jewish and Gentile converts, of which there is no trace in the Epistle.

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *On the Romans*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> According to Baur, the object of the Epistle to the Romans was the confirmation of Pauline universalism, in opposition to Jewish particularism. "This and nothing else," he observes, "is the proper theme of the epistle."—*Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Wordsworth's idea is very similar: the Epistle to the Romans, he observes, may be called an *apology* for the *gospel against Judaism*.—*St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 189. Certainly here extremes meet.

<sup>4</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. pp. 347–360.

And it proceeds upon the hypothesis, already shown to be erroneous, that the Roman church consisted almost entirely of Jewish converts.

Still there is partial truth in this hypothesis of Baur. Though the Epistle was not written to convert the Jewish Christians to Paulinism, yet the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in a universal Christianity is prominently taught. This is not the principal object of the Epistle, as Hug supposes,<sup>1</sup> but it is a subordinate object. There could not fail to be a difference in the doctrinal views of Jewish and Gentile Christians. The one would have a tendency to magnify, and the other to depreciate Judaism. And this Epistle to the Romans frequently dwells on the relations of both parties to the gospel. Moreover, although Judaizing notions do not seem as yet to have infected the church of Rome, yet there was a partial dissension between Jews and Gentiles with regard to clean and unclean food, and this seems to have given rise to unchristian feelings. Hence it is that the apostle exhorts them to mutual forbearance; to avoid all doubtful disputations; and to respect the conscientious scruples of each other (Rom. xiv. 1, 2). And hence also the reason of the warning at the close of the Epistle, lest by Judaizing errors the harmony of the church should be disturbed. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. xvi. 17).<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is divided into two well-marked portions: the first portion is *dogmatic* (chap. i.-xi.), and the second portion is *ethical* (chap. xii.-xvi.). The dogmatic portion admits of a subdivision into two parts—i.-viii., and ix.-xi.

In the dogmatic portion, the apostle, after the salutation and thanksgiving to God on behalf of the Romans, states the great theme of his Epistle, that the gospel is the power of God for salvation both to Jews and Gentiles (chap. i. 1-17).

<sup>1</sup> Hug's *Einleitung*, vol. ii. p. 361 (second edition).

<sup>2</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 174-176 (old edition).

He proves the impossibility of justification or salvation by law, first as regards the Gentiles, and then as regards the Jews; and, after answering some objections of the Jews, he draws the general inference, that by works of law there shall no flesh be justified (chap. i. 18-iii. 20). Having proved negatively that there is no salvation possible by law, he proceeds affirmatively to develope and explain the doctrine, applicable alike to Jews and Gentiles, of justification and salvation through grace and faith in Christ (chap. iii. 21-31). He points out that even in the Old Testament dispensation this doctrine was not unknown, and adduces the examples of Abraham and David (chap. iv.). He then proceeds to show the blessed consequences of justification,—peace with God, access to Him, comfort in affliction, and a happy sense of reconciliation (chap. v. 1-13). Then follows a comparison between Christ and Adam (chap. v. 16-21). The objection that such a method of salvation by faith without works would give rise to immorality, is next met and answered; its opposite tendency to inculcate holiness is shown; and the contest between the flesh and the spirit,—the lower and higher principles in our nature,—with the final victory of the spirit, is described (chap. vi. vii.). The apostle depicts at great length, and with glowing eloquence, the blessedness of being justified by faith, and ends his description with a challenge to all the powers of earth and hell to separate the believer from the love of Christ (chap. viii.). The next three chapters may be considered as an appendix. In them the apostle shows the bearing of this method of salvation chiefly upon the Jews: that their present rejection was foretold by their prophets, and was necessary for the admission of the Gentiles; that salvation was provided for them, if they would accept it; that even now the rejection was not universal,—that there was a remnant according to the election of grace; and that the time would yet arrive when all Israel would be saved, and Jew and Gentile united in one universal Church of Christ (chap. ix.-xi.).

In the ethical part, various admonitions are given, perhaps suited to the peculiar circumstances of the Roman church. The apostle enjoins universal holiness, humility, due subor-

dination to each other, unity, diligence, forbearance, subjection to magistrates, love, and watchfulness for the coming of the Lord (chap. xii. xiii.). He then adverts to the different views which they had with regard to meats; and exhorts those who were strong in the faith, and liberal in their views, not to despise those who were weak,—rather to yield than assert their independence,—and thus to live at peace among themselves (chap. xiv.—xv. 13). He apologizes for having written to a church which he had never visited, mentions his intention of soon coming to Rome, and entreats an interest in their prayers (chap. xv. 14–33). And he concludes the Epistle by sending his salutations to his acquaintances in Rome, along with the salutations of those friends who were with him; and closes with his apostolic benediction and an ascription of praise to God (chap. xvi.).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

There is no controversy concerning the time when this Epistle was written. The Epistle itself informs us that it was written after the apostle had finished the collection for the Christians of Jerusalem in Macedonia and Achaia, and when he was on the point of setting out for Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 25, 26). Now from the Acts of the Apostles and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we learn that Paul left Ephesus at Pentecost of the year 57, made a circuit through the churches of Macedonia, and wintered in Corinth; and that in early spring he left Corinth on his way to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 1–3). Hence then this Epistle was written at the close of A.D. 57, or more probably in the beginning of A.D. 58.

The place where this Epistle was written may also be determined to be Corinth. The Epistle was sent by Phœbe, a servant of the church which is at Cenchræa (Rom. xvi. 1); and Cenchræa was one of the harbours of Corinth. A salutation is sent from Erastus, who is described as “the chamberlain of the city” (*ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως*, Rom. xvi. 23), which must allude to some city known to the Romans, and which, after the mention of Cenchræa, can only be Corinth.<sup>1</sup> Another

<sup>1</sup> Erastus is mentioned as having been previously sent by the apostle, in com-

salutation is sent from Gaius, who is described as "the apostle's host, and of the whole church" (Rom. xvi. 24), and who was consequently most probably resident in the city; and, as we learn from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Gaius was one of those few Corinthians whom the apostle baptized: "I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius" (1 Cor. i. 12). The names of those who accompanied the apostle from Achaia to Asia are given in the Acts; namely, "Sopater of Berea; of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus" (Acts xx. 4); and of these seven persons, two at least, namely, Sopater (or Sosipater) and Timotheus (Rom. xvi. 21), are joined in the salutations to the church of Rome.<sup>1</sup> It may thus safely be concluded that the Epistle to the Romans was written toward the close of Paul's residence of three months at Corinth (Acts xx. 3). The subscription at the end of the Epistle, "Written to the Romans from Corinthus," is in this instance correct.

Bellarmino, Salmeron, Cornelius à Lapide, and Harduin, after the Syriac scholiast on the Peshito, assert that this Epistle was written in Latin. For this opinion there is not the slightest foundation. The Epistle was beyond all question written in Greek. The Roman church was not Latin, but Greek.<sup>2</sup> The Roman fathers for the first two centuries, as Clemens Romanus, Hermas, and Justin Martyr, wrote in Greek. The Christian apologies to the Roman emperors were written in Greek; and, as we learn from undoubted testimonies, Greek was at this time spoken at Rome almost as

pany with Timothy, to Macedonia (Acts xix. 22), and most probably to Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 10). And in the Second Epistle to Timothy, it is said of him, "Erastus abode at Corinth" (2 Tim. iv. 20), which he would naturally do if it were his native city.

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Romans, No. 2. The Gaius of the epistle and the Gaius of the history, however, seem to have been different persons,—the one a native of Corinth, and the other of Derbe in Lycaonia. Gaius is the Greek form of the Latin Caius, one of the most common names among the Romans. There are at least four persons of this name mentioned in Scripture: (1) Acts xix. 29; (2) Acts xx. 4; (3) 3 John 1; (4) Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See Westcott's *History of the Canon*, p. 215; Milman's *Latin Christianity*, vol. i. 27 ff.; and Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, p. 19 ff. See also p. 69 of this work.

much as Latin.<sup>1</sup> The Greeks were numerous in Rome. A large proportion of the lower orders and of the middle classes were of Greek origin; and it was of them that the Christian church was chiefly composed. And even the rich and noble Romans learned the language and affected the manners of the Greeks. There is nothing, then, strange in Paul writing an epistle in the Greek language to the Christians resident in Rome.

#### VI. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

This Epistle is distinguished among all the other epistles of Paul by its dogmatic character. As already observed, it might almost be regarded as a theological treatise on justification. Hence its great importance for theology.<sup>2</sup> There is no book of the New Testament which is more frequently quoted by divines of the most opposite schools in support of their respective dogmas. Here the Pauline view of Christianity, as it respects the relation of God to man, is fully developed. The condemnation of man by the law, and his salvation by faith in Christ, are the two points discussed and illustrated. It is true that there is not that systematic arrangement, that precision, and that logical exactness which we expect in a purely theological treatise. There is sometimes the freedom of epistolary composition, and an occurrence of those parenthetical clauses and digressions which characterize the apostle's style. Still, especially in the first eight chapters, there is much regularity and connection in the reasoning. The point to be proved is first announced,—that the gospel is the saving power both to the Jews and the Gentiles; this saving power is first denied with regard to the law, and then affirmed with regard to the gospel; objections are started and refuted; illustrations are drawn from the Old Testament; abuses of this doctrine are repelled, and the blessed consequences of this gospel salvation are announced. It must not, however, be

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *de Orat.* c. 29; Ovid, *de Arte Amor.* ii. 121; Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 185; Martial, *Epigr.* lib. xiv. 58.

<sup>2</sup> "This epistle," observes Luther, "is the masterpiece of the New Testament, and the purest gospel. It can never be too much read or studied; and the more is handled, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

considered that the whole of the Christian faith, or even of the Pauline conception of Christianity, is developed in this Epistle. This is only treated as it bears on the relation of God to man,—the fall of man, and his redemption through Christ. The nature of God Himself, and the high mysteries connected with the divine nature, are rather discussed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In the language of theologians, the Epistle to the Romans proceeds from an anthropological and soteriological, whilst the Epistle to the Ephesians proceeds from a christological point of view.

No epistle has been so frequently commented on. The fathers directed their special attention to it. A commentary of Origen is still extant in a Latin translation by Rufinus. Augustine, whose theological system bears the closest resemblance to it, has left only the fragments of a commentary; whereas a commentary by his great opponent Pelagius has come down to us preserved in the works of Jerome. The Epistle also was often commented on by the Reformers. Luther himself has only left an admirable preface to the Epistle; but commentaries or annotations were written by Calvin, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Beza, Bugenhagen, Bucer, and Ecolampadius, and other early Reformers.

The modern commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans are also very numerous. The most important of these are those of Tholuck (Halle, first edition, 1824; fifth edition, 1856; translated in Clark's Biblical Cabinet, 1842); Rückert (Leipzig, 1831; second edition, 1839); Reiche (Göttingen, 1834); Olshausen (Königsberg, 1835; translated in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, 1864); Meyer (Göttingen, 1836; fifth edition, 1872; translated by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1873); Fritzsche (Halle, 1836-43); De Wette (Leipzig, fourth edition, 1847); Philippi (Frankfort, second edition, 1856); Ewald (Göttingen, 1857). And in our own language, besides the general commentaries of Alford and Wordsworth, there are the special commentaries of Stuart (1832) and Hodge (1835, new edition) of America, Jowett (London, second edition, 1859), and Dr. Forbes' (of Aberdeen) Analytical Commentary (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh). There is also an important work on the doctrine of Paul by Usteri, entitled

*Entwicklung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs* (Zurich 1834). Also Baur's exposition of the Pauline doctrine in *Vorles. ü. N. T. Theologie*, sec. ii.

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### PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL TERMS.

The Epistle to the Romans surpasses the other Pauline Epistles in difficulty of comprehension. This difficulty arises in part from a certain obscurity of style.<sup>1</sup> The train of thought is often interrupted by long parentheses and digressions, and resumed without any intimation. A notable instance of this occurs in the passage containing the comparison between Christ and Adam, where, according to our version, there is a digression extending over five verses (Rom. v. 12-21). Abstract notions are personified, and the struggle of different emotions within us is described as if it were a contest of two opposing powers without us. Objections are stated and answered in a series of interrogative clauses, in such a manner that it is sometimes difficult to know whether it is the objector or the apostle who speaks.

Another cause of difficulty arises from the nature of the subjects discussed. Many of these—such as election, free-will, the relation of Adam to his posterity, the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings, and the imputation of His righteousness—surpass the limits of natural reason, or at least have never as yet been adequately explained. Others—such as the greatness of human depravity, the inefficacy of good works to atone for sin, the condemnation of the human race, the punitive justice of God, salvation the gift of God's grace, and other similar doctrines which are plainly taught—are highly unacceptable: they are so humbling to human pride, and so opposed to our natural inclinations, that the will revolts against them; and thus, instead of simple acquiescence in the statements of the apostle, attempts are made to explain them away.<sup>2</sup> Much in

<sup>1</sup> See remarks on the obscurity of the apostle's style in pp. 40, 41 of this work.

<sup>2</sup> "There is good reason," observes Archbishop Whately, "to believe that the chief objection to Paul's writings is not from the things *hard* to be understood which they contain, but from the things *easy* to be understood; from doctrines



this Epistle is the embodiment of the experience of the apostle, as is especially seen in the contest described in the seventh chapter, and can only be properly understood by those who have passed through a somewhat similar experience. In the language of the apostle, "the natural man (*ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*, man by his own unassisted powers) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

But perhaps the chief cause of the difficulty of understanding this Epistle arises from the apostle's use of words. Language must always be an imperfect instrument to express abstract ideas; and this imperfection must accompany its employment in the sacred Scriptures. But it was especially an imperfect instrument in the case before us. However perfect may have been Paul's knowledge of Greek, yet that language was itself destitute of words adequate to express his ideas. Many of the doctrines of revelation were totally unknown to the Greeks, and had never been taught in their schools of philosophy. Hence the apostle was reduced to the necessity of employing old words to express new ideas; and he often could not avoid using them in a sense differing considerably from their popular meaning. A number of words of this kind occur which appear to have been used by the apostle with some variation in their meaning, so that a very strict attention to the context is necessary to understand the ideas which they are employed to express. Such, for example, are faith, righteousness, spirit, and law. These words have become almost technical terms in Pauline theology, and yet no definition is given of them; and it is frequently only from the connection that their exact import can be ascertained.<sup>1</sup>

It is not within the scope of this work to enter upon any lengthened explanation of Paul's peculiar dogmatic views, which

humbling to the pride of the human heart and unacceptable to the natural man." —*Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul*, eighth edition, p. 57.

<sup>1</sup> See an able dissertation by Professor Jowett "On the Abstract Ideas of the New Testament," *Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 96-109. He especially directs attention to the importance of determining the sense of various expressions from the context. His remarks, however, on the looseness of Paul's language are unwarranted.

are especially unfolded in this Epistle to the Romans.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine to which especial prominence is here given is that of justification.<sup>2</sup> The chief ideas on which the apostle dwells are those expressed by the terms law, faith, atonement, and righteousness. He proceeds in a systematic manner to develop the principles of his system. He insists negatively on the fact that a man cannot be justified by the works of the law. All have broken the law. Jews and Gentiles are both under sin; therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God (Rom. iii. 20). He then unfolds God's method of justification. The righteousness of God, which is not attainable by the law, is given through Christ. Christ has made an atonement for sin; through Him we may be forgiven; if we believe on Him, if we rely on His atonement, we shall be saved. Faith, in opposition to works, is the means of salvation. "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28). Thus justification has its source in the grace of God, and not in any merit in man. But it is ever followed by a change of heart and life: new principles are implanted within the believer; the law of the spirit of life takes the place of "the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). This is briefly Paul's doctrine in the first eight chapters of this Epistle, which he labours to explain and establish, to clear from objections, and to follow out to its consequences.

Certain terms are employed in the statement and development of these views, on which it is desirable to offer a few exegetical remarks. These terms are, law, righteousness, faith, grace, the flesh, and the spirit.<sup>3</sup> All of them are em-

<sup>1</sup> See a statement of Pauline doctrine given in Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 416-531; Baur's *N. T. Theologie*, pp. 128-207; and Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 123-315. See also Usteri's *Entwicklung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffes*; Ritschl's *Entstehung des altkatholischen Kirche*, pp. 52-103.

<sup>2</sup> The Pauline doctrine of justification is well stated by Baur, *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 145-183, though exceptions may be taken to some of his statements. It is singular that the most destructive of German critics, in describing the Pauline doctrine, should approach so closely to the generally received views of the Evangelical Church. The doctrine of imputation is clearly and forcibly stated.

<sup>3</sup> The reader is referred for the signification of these terms in the Greek to Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, translated by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh. See also Robinson's *Lexicon of the New Testament*, and the various exegetical commentaries on the Romans.

ployed with a considerable latitude of meaning, often differing from their classical usage.

I. What does the apostle mean by *law* (*νόμος*), which he pronounces insufficient for justification? Does he allude to the moral or the ceremonial law? Is it the law of Moses or the law of nature? Often he appears to use the term in opposite senses: in one passage he calls it the law of sin; in another, he asserts that it is holy, just, and good. He speaks not only of the law of God, but of "the law of his members" and "the law of his mind." The term *νόμος*, which he employs, is the Greek word for custom, right, an ordinance, law. It is used in the New Testament to denote the law of Moses. It has been affirmed that *νόμος*, when used with the article, refers to the Jewish law, but when used without the article, means law in general.<sup>1</sup> This rule, however, does not hold universally: in several passages *νόμος* without the article means the Mosaic law (Rom. v. 13). Nor does there appear to be any good reason for the modern assertion that the apostle distinguishes between the moral and the ceremonial law of the Jews; nor, for all that appears, does it seem that such a distinction was made by the Jews in his day. The law of Moses was regarded as one,—moral and ceremonial requirements were united (Gal. v. 3; Phil. iii. 5, 6). But besides the Mosaic law, the apostle recognises another law,—a law written upon the consciences of the Gentiles,—a law which embraces both Jews and Gentiles. It is evidently this general law, this moral law of God, that he pronounces insufficient for justification; for he proves that both Jews and Gentiles have broken it, and therefore cannot be justified by it. *Νόμος* is also employed by him to denote any commanding principle that rules over us; hence he applies the term even to our corrupt nature: he speaks of two laws in opposition to each other,—the law in the members and the law of the mind,—the law of sin and the law of God.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the meaning

<sup>1</sup> See article "Law" in Smith's *Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> It would almost seem that the apostle calls the evil principle in our nature and the moral law by the same name,—“the law of sin,” *ὁ νόμος τῆς ἀμαρτίας* (Rom. vii. 23, 25, viii. 2).

of the term and its application in any particular instance can only be ascertained by a strict regard to the context.

The view which the apostle appears to take of the law is not so much that it is a rule of obedience, as the occasion, and in some sense the cause, of sin. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). "The strength of sin is the law" (ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος, 1 Cor. xv. 56). "The law was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). If there were no law, there could be no sin. There must be some rule to transgress, before there can be transgression. The law imparts the consciousness of sin. Without the law, sin is dead; but whenever the law is revealed in its extent and purity, then are our defections and transgressions also revealed.<sup>1</sup> "I had not known sin," says the apostle, "but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead" (Rom. vii. 7, 8). Nor is this true merely of the law of Moses, but of the law written on the consciences of the Gentiles: they, having not a revealed law, are a law unto themselves; the work of the law is written on their hearts (Rom. ii. 14, 15). Sin and the law—ἁμαρτία and νόμος—are thus, according to the apostle, inseparably connected; but this arises not from any defect in the law, but from a defect in our moral nature. The law is not sin (Rom. vii. 7), but gives rise to the consciousness of sin: it is the light which, shining into our hearts, reveals to us the impurities which lodge there; and the clearer our views of the law, so much the more conscious are we of sin.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, then, in the theology of Paul, the law possesses a condemning power. It reveals sin and condemns sin. So far from imparting life, it is the cause of death. Hence he calls

<sup>1</sup> "What," observes Baur, "imparts to sin its importance and reality, what makes it to be what it is, what causes it to be sin, is the law."—*N. T. Theologie*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> There is certainly, according to Paul, an intimate connection between sin and the consciousness of sin. But he does not regard them as identical; so that, as Baur expresses it, "where there is no consciousness of sin, there is no sin." What the apostle asserts is: Where there is no law, there is no transgression. Comp. Baur's *N. T. Theologie*, p. 150.

it "the law of sin and of death" (Rom. viii. 2), as it is the occasion both of sin and of death.<sup>1</sup> So also he uses various strong expressions, as if he depreciated the law, and regarded it as antagonistic to the gospel; whilst at other times he praises it as the rule of perfect righteousness. In short, the law may be regarded in two points of view,—as the expression of the righteousness of God, and as the cause of condemnation to the sinner; and according as it is regarded in the one point of view or in the other, different and apparently opposite qualities are assigned to it.

II. Another equally important term in the theology of Paul is *righteousness* (*δικαιοσύνη*). This word is in the New Testament often employed to signify righteousness in general, but in connection with Pauline thought and doctrine it denotes that moral perfection which the law demands. The law is the rule by which righteousness is to be measured. This righteousness of the law, if personal, consists in perfect obedience to the law,—a righteousness which, as the apostle demonstrates, no man can possess. But there is another righteousness, the righteousness of faith, which is not personal but imputed,—not in ourselves, but conferred on us by God, and which is available for our justification.<sup>2</sup> The apostle mentions these two kinds of righteousness together when he expresses his desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law (*ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ νόμου*), but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (*ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως*, Phil. iii. 9). So also, when the apostle speaks of the righteousness of God (*ἡ δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*) being revealed to us by the gospel (Rom. i. 17), he does not mean that righteousness which God confers, or that righteousness which is an attribute or quality in God, but that righteousness

<sup>1</sup> Several commentators, however, suppose that by *νόμος ἁμαρτίας καὶ θανάτου* is meant, not the moral law, but the evil principle within us, equal to *ὁ νόμος ἐν τοῖς μέλεσι*; but the context favours the meaning above given.

<sup>2</sup> See this distinction well stated in Baur's *N. T. Theologie*, pp. 174, 175. He, however, in conformity with his principles of an opposition between Paulinism and Judaism, asserts that *δικαιοῦσθαι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* is as characteristic for Judaism as *δικαιοῦσθαι ἐκ πίστεως* is for Christianity.

which is valid with God, and on the ground of which God justifies.<sup>1</sup>

The cognate verb (*δικαίω*), so frequently employed by the apostle, is used by him in the sense of "to declare righteous." It never in any instance denotes to make righteous.<sup>2</sup> It is a forensic term, and is the declaration of a judge from his tribunal.<sup>3</sup> This declaration may be either on the ground of personal or imputed righteousness; or, in the language of Paul, of "the righteousness of the law," or of "the righteousness of faith." In the first sense, no man can be declared righteous, because all have sinned; in the second sense, believers are declared righteous, because they appropriate to themselves the righteousness of Christ. It is also to be observed that Paul does not employ *δικαίω* as entirely synonymous with "to acquit," "to forgive," but in the strong sense of "to declare righteous,"—to be possessed of the righteousness of God. "But now," he observes, "the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 21–24).

There is little doubt that the doctrine of the imputation of righteousness, however transcending man's reason and unacceptable to his natural inclination, is the prominent doctrine of Paul, and lies at the foundation of his view of justification. He regards the death of Christ as a satisfaction for our sins. The law pronounces a curse upon transgression, and Christ has redeemed us from this curse of the law by becoming a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13). This curse can be nothing else

<sup>1</sup> See an excellent note on *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*, by De Wette, given by Alford in his Commentary, on Rom. i. 17; see also Baur's *N. T. Theologie*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 11: *ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοθήτω ἔτι*—"he that is righteous, let him be righteous still"—may appear as an exception; but, according to Tischendorf, the correct reading is *ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι*.

<sup>3</sup> This is so evidently the meaning of the term, that one of the great opponents of the Protestant doctrine of justification frankly acknowledges, "But one passage can be produced where it is used for 'making righteous,' and there the reading is doubtful."—Newman *On Justification*, p. 75.

than the punishment of our sins. Thus He became our substitute, so that He suffered the penalty of our sins on the cross, in order that we might not only be forgiven,—freed from that penalty,—but have His righteousness imputed to us. The imputation, according to the apostle, is mutual,—our guilt imputed to Him, and His righteousness imputed to us. “God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21). “In this sense,” as Baur well expresses it, “the apostle calls the death of Christ a *ἱλαστήριον*,—a sin-offering,—and that for a declaration of the righteousness of God, which must cause the punishment of sin to follow the guilt of sin. This righteousness of God must be satisfied, by the punishment of sin being actually endured.”<sup>1</sup>

III. Faith (*πίστις*) is another important word with Paul; indeed, as compared with the other writers of the New Testament, he may be regarded as the apostle of faith. In classical Greek, *πίστις* is generally employed in an active sense, to denote trust or trustfulness, but occasionally also in a passive sense, to signify faithfulness or trustworthiness. In the Old Testament, however, the Hebrew verb *אָמַן*, answering to *πιστεύω*, to trust, had no corresponding substantive signifying trust. *אֱמֻנָה* denotes *fidelity*. This is the uniform meaning of the term in the Old Testament, except in Hab. ii. 4, quoted by the apostle, “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. i. 17), where the meaning is doubtful.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament, on the contrary, *πίστις* is generally employed in the active sense, denoting trust, confidence, conviction; rarely in the passive sense, denoting the virtue of fidelity (Matt. xxiii. 23; Rom. iii. 3; Tit. ii. 10).<sup>3</sup> Sometimes it is opposed to sight (2 Cor.

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 165. Throughout the whole of his remarks on the doctrine of justification, Baur strongly insists on the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings. See also his *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, p. 157 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Even there the meaning of the word in the Hebrew seems to be fidelity or faithfulness: “The just shall live by his fidelity.” See the Lexicons of Gesenius, Cremer, and Robinson. The Septuagint varies from the Hebrew original, and has, “The just shall live by my faith,”—*ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται*.

<sup>3</sup> For some excellent remarks on the meaning of the term *πίστις*, and the variations which it undergoes, see Professor Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Galatians*, “The Words denoting Faith,” pp. 152–156.

v. 7; Heb. xi. 1), but this is not an essential element in the conception. The proper antithesis to faith, according to the Pauline mode of thought, is works or the law. A man is justified by faith without the works of the law. It is of faith, that it might not be by works. Faith and works—*πίστις* and *ἔργα*—are regarded as mutually exclusive.

Faith is chiefly used by Paul in connection with Christ. It is not the mere general feeling of trust, but trust directed to Christ. Externally considered, it proceeds from the preaching of the gospel, and is a belief in the declarations of Scripture (*πίστις τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*); but as the essential theme of the gospel is the work of Christ in accomplishing our salvation, faith is especially directed toward His person (*πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ*); and as our salvation was chiefly accomplished by His death, it is, more narrowly considered, faith in His blood (*πίστις ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ*).<sup>1</sup> Thus, according to Paul, it would appear that faith is not so much a belief in certain dogmas, as confidence in a person,—in other words, trust in Christ. "I know," says Paul, "in whom I have believed,"—that is, in whom I have trusted,—“and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. i. 12).

Faith is regarded by Paul as the subjective condition of our justification. The righteousness of Christ is offered to us; and faith is that principle which accepts this offer and appropriates the righteousness. It is the necessary condition of appropriation. We must trust in the atonement of Christ, otherwise its benefits will not avail us. Hence also faith is that which unites us to Christ, so that there is a mutual transference of our sins to Him and of His righteousness to us. The believer is regarded as one with Christ. He suffered in Christ, and rose with Him. In Christ he paid the penalty of the law, and in Christ he perfectly fulfilled its requirements. And thus by faith he receives the righteousness of Christ, which justifies him before God.

IV. As faith is the subjective condition by which man can come into that relation with Christ on account of which he is

<sup>1</sup> See Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 161.



justified, so grace (*χάρις*) is the objective principle, on the part of God, of the Pauline doctrine of justification. *Χάρις*, as used in classical Greek, primarily denotes gracefulness; and in this sense it is also employed in the Scriptures (Luke iv. 22; Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29). But it is also used in a secondary sense, to denote grace in disposition, kindness, benevolence, goodwill, favour; and it is in this sense that it is chiefly employed by Paul. The grace of God (*χάρις Θεοῦ*) denotes the favour of God, the freeness of His love,—that benevolence which induced Him, without any regard to merits on our part, to bestow on us salvation. Hence the natural antithesis to grace is works (*ἔργα*). Works and grace are two opposites which mutually exclude each other. If righteousness can be obtained by the works of the law, there is no room for the exercise of grace; whereas, if the law pronounces sentence of condemnation, then grace is manifested in our forgiveness. “If by grace,” says the apostle, “then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace” (Rom. xi. 6). And so also the apostle uses the term grace in opposition to the law. The law commands, and promises life as a reward for obedience; grace, on the other hand, freely bestows eternal life on those who believe. The righteousness of the law is founded on merit; the righteousness of faith has its source in grace. Hence the apostle represents believers as not under the law, but under grace (Rom. vi. 14).

Grace, then, is the ultimate source of salvation. Paul traces up everything in the Christian dispensation to the free grace of God. It was His infinite love that induced Him to send His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. “The declaration (*ἐνδειξις*) of His righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) in the death of Jesus,” observes Baur, “could not have taken place, had He not, before He manifested Himself as the righteous One, been the God of grace, who gave the greatest proof of His grace, in that He has exacted the punishment of sin, in order to render satisfaction to His righteousness, not on men themselves, but on another in their place.”<sup>1</sup> The manifestation of the righteousness of God was in order that His mercy might be freely extended toward the penitent and believing. “God hath set forth

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 167.

Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth on Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

V. The flesh (σάρξ) and the spirit (πνεῦμα), the carnal (σαρκικός) and the spiritual (πνευματικός), are also expressions which enter largely into the Pauline theology.

The word flesh (σάρξ) is employed by Paul with a great breadth of meaning. Its primary signification is flesh, as in Luke xxiv. 39: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones." Then its meaning is extended to denote the body, mankind in general, human nature. Paul employs it in a somewhat different sense, to denote the sinful condition of human nature. The flesh is the seat of sin. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). Nor does the apostle by flesh denote merely the body (σῶμα), the corporeal part of our nature, but he evidently intends our whole fallen nature, both soul and body. Among the works of the flesh he mentions several sins, such as wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, which have their seat not so much in the body as in the mind. He does not inculcate an inherent depravity in the body to the exclusion of a mental depravity. The corresponding adjective *σαρκικός* or *σάρκινος* denotes that which pertains to the σάρξ,—carnal. The carnal are they who are in the flesh, in an unregenerate state, and cannot please God (Rom. viii. 8).

The word spirit (πνεῦμα), corresponding to the Hebrew רוּחַ, primarily denotes the wind (John iii. 8). Hence breath, the element of life, life, the spirit or the principle of life. Paul, however, in discoursing on justification, employs it in a peculiar sense. According to him, it is opposed to the flesh, and signifies human nature as sanctified or renewed by the Spirit of God.<sup>1</sup> As the σάρξ is the seat of sin, so the πνεῦμα is the seat of holiness. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the

<sup>1</sup> In several passages where the apostle uses the term πνεῦμα, it is extremely difficult to decide whether he means the sanctified nature of man or the Holy Spirit. Πνεῦμα is also occasionally used in a bad sense, to denote an evil spiritual influence (Eph. ii. 2).

spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. viii. 9). So also the corresponding adjective *πνευματικός* denotes that which pertains to the *πνεῦμα*,—spiritual. The spiritual are they who are in the spirit, in a regenerate state, led by the Spirit of God, under the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 2).

Thus then, according to Paul, there are two principles in human nature,—the *σάρξ* and the *πνεῦμα*. By the *σάρξ* he means human nature in its sinful condition; and by the *πνεῦμα*, human nature, as it becomes by grace, in its renewed condition. The works of the *σάρξ* are all sinful feelings and actions; the fruits of the *πνεῦμα* are all holy graces (Gal. v. 19–23). The believer is actuated by both principles; and between them there is a continued contest. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17). This appears to be the contest described in the seventh chapter of the Romans,—a contest carried on in the hearts of the regenerate. Both principles rule in the regenerate: with the spirit or mind they serve the law of God,—that law which requires holiness; but with the flesh the law of sin,—that sinful principle which impels them to do evil (Rom. vii. 25).<sup>1</sup>

There is another term which Paul uses as almost equivalent to *σαρκικός*, namely *ψυχικός*. This has been differently rendered in our version by the words *natural* (1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 44) and *sensual* (Jas. iii. 15; Jude 19). The word *ψυχή*, from which it is derived, corresponding to the Hebrew *נֶפֶשׁ*, denotes the life, breath, the soul of man. It is difficult to distinguish between the *πνεῦμα* and the *ψυχή*, or what we term the spirit and the soul; and yet in the mind of Paul there is evidently a considerable difference. It would seem that the *πνεῦμα* is a higher principle than the *ψυχή*; so that *ψυχή* may denote the sensual or animal life, and *πνεῦμα* the higher or spiritual life,—that which is susceptible of being acted upon by divine influences,—the religious nature. The corresponding adjective *ψυχικός* signifies that

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the usual idea is that the contest described in Rom. vii. is a contest carried on in the heart, not of the regenerate, but of the unregenerate.

which pertains to the *ψυχή*,—breathing, living. But in the New Testament, so far from corresponding with *πνευματικός*, it is contrasted with it, and appears to denote that which pertains to the animal life uninfluenced by the spirit. Hence it is not improperly rendered in our version by the term *natural*,—that which pertains to us by nature. Thus Paul says: “It is sown a natural body (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*), it is raised a spiritual body” (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*, 1 Cor. xv. 46); the difference being between our present and our raised bodies. So also he says: “The natural man” (*ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*)—that is, man as he is by nature, unassisted by grace—“receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually (*πνευματικῶς*) discerned” (1 Cor. ii. 14). Again, in the Epistle of James, the wisdom which cometh not from above is said to be *ψυχικὴ* (Jas. iii. 15), that is, not *sensual*, as it is rendered in our version, but *natural*, uninfluenced by the Spirit. In a similar manner, in the Epistle of Jude, those who separate themselves are said to be *ψυχικοί*, *πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες* (Jude 19), that is, such as they are by nature, destitute of the Spirit. From this it follows that *ψυχικός* is somewhat equivalent to *σαρκικός*. The difference between them seems to be that *ψυχικός* is the man who is led by the light of natural reason,—the natural man; and *σαρκικός*, the man who is led by his sinful disposition,—the carnal man. The element of sin enters more strongly into the latter term than it does into the former; both are, however, opposed to *πνευματικός*, as both are regarded as destitute of the influences of the Spirit.

Some suppose that Paul teaches that there is in man a threefold nature,—that he is composed of *σάρξ* (or *σῶμα*), *ψυχή*, and *πνεῦμα*,—the body, the animal soul, and the immortal spirit. This, it is affirmed, is taught us not only by the employment of the adjectives corresponding to these words,—*σαρκικός*, *ψυχικός*, and *πνευματικός*,—but directly by the apostle when he says, “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body (*ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχή καὶ τὸ σῶμα*) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. v. 23).<sup>1</sup> Such a notion does not

<sup>1</sup> “*πνεῦμα*,” observes Cremer, “is the divine life-principle, ἡ *ψυχή* the indi-

essentially enter into the theology of Paul, and is probably a far-fetched inference. Revelation is as little designed to teach us psychology, as it is to instruct us in any of the natural sciences. Man may possess a threefold nature, but no argument can be derived in proof of it from the words of Paul. In other parts of Scripture, man has only a twofold nature ascribed to him, being possessed of a *σῶμα* and a *ψυχή* (Matt. x. 28). Whenever metaphysicians attempt to reconcile Scripture with their ideas, they corrupt the word of God with an admixture of human philosophy, and fall into the error of the Gnostics. Science, whether relating to mind or matter, is left to be developed by our natural faculties, and forms no part of revelation; for this is designed to teach us, not what we could, but what we could not know by our unassisted powers: it makes known to us the way of salvation, and does not initiate us into the principles of mental philosophy, except so far as these are connected with the mysteries of redemption.

*vidual life* in which the *πνεῦμα* is manifested, and *σῶμα* the *material organism* vivified by the *ψυχή*." On the other hand, Dean Alford gives a different view of the distinction between the *πνεῦμα* and the *ψυχή*. He regards the *πνεῦμα* as the immortal and responsible soul, and the *ψυχή* as the lower or animal soul, —that which we have in common with the brutes.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THE Epistle to the Colossians is sufficiently attested both by external and internal evidence. It is true that the allusions to it by the apostolic fathers are few and vague; but it is referred to by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and other fathers of the second century. Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) frequently applies the term *πρωτότοκος*—most probably taken from this Epistle—to Christ: as when he says, “Christ is the first-born of all things made;” “The first-born of every creature;” “The first-born of God, and before all creatures” (Col. i. 15).<sup>1</sup> Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: “And in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul says, ‘Luke the beloved physician greets you’” (Col. iv. 14).<sup>2</sup> And again: “On account of this, the apostle in the Epistle to the Colossians says, ‘You, when ye were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, but now reconciled’” (Col. i. 21).<sup>3</sup> Theophilus of Antioch (A.D. 181) says: “When God determined to make those things about which He had taken counsel, He brought forth this emanated Word, the first-born of every creature” (Col. i. 15).<sup>4</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) writes: “And

<sup>1</sup> *Dial. cum Tryph.* pp. 310–326; Lardner’s *Works*, vol. i. p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* iii. 14, 1: In epistola, quæ est ad Colossenses, ait: Salutat vos Lucas medicus dilectus.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* v. 14, 2: Et propter hoc apostolus in epistola, quæ est ad Colossenses, ait: “Et vos cum essetis aliquando alienati, et inimici cogitationi ejus in operibus malis, nunc autem reconciliati,” etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Autoyc.* ii. p. 100: ‘Οπότε δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ Θεὸς ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἐβουλεύσατο, τούτον τὸν λόγον ἐγέννησε προφορικῶν, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως.

in the Epistle to the Colossians he (Paul) writes: 'Admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus' (Col. i. 28).<sup>1</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200) writes: "From which things the apostle restraining us, expressly cautions us against philosophy, saying, 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, and not after the instruction of the Holy Spirit'" (Col. ii. 8).<sup>2</sup>

The internal evidence is by no means defective. The Epistle bears the impress of its Pauline origin. The character of Paul is discernible in the writer: his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the Colossians (i. 9, ii. 5); his gratitude to God for the good report which he had received of their faith and love (i. 4); his earnest desires for their spiritual improvement and increased holiness (i. 9, 10); his liberality and freedom from carnal ordinances (ii. 16); and his solicitude for an interest in their prayers (iv. 3). The style, also, with some variations, accounted for by the nature of the subject, is decidedly Pauline. There are examples of Pauline accumulation of sentences (i. 3-8, 9-20, ii. 9-15); of strong assertions (i. 6, 23); of depth of meaning (ii. 9-11); of anacolutha (ii. 10, iii. 16); and of numerous Pauline expressions and modes of thought.

On account of the brevity of the Epistle, and its nature, the undesigned coincidences between it and the Acts of the Apostles and the other writings of Paul are few, but not unimportant. In the Epistle, Aristarchus is mentioned as one of those from whom salutations are sent (Col. iv. 10); and in the Acts we learn that Aristarchus accompanied Paul when he sailed as a prisoner to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2). In the Epistle, a salutation is also sent from Mark, who is called the sister's son (*ἀνεψιὸς*) to Barnabas; and this affords a reason for the peculiar interest which Barnabas is in the Acts repre-

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.* i. c. 1: Καὶ τῇ πρὸς Κολοσσαῖς ἐπιστολῇ νουτειοῦντες, γράφει, πάντα ἄνθρωπον, καὶ διδάσκοντες ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ.

<sup>2</sup> *De præscript. advers. Hær.* cap. vii.: A quibus nos apostolus refrenans nominatim philosophiam contestatur caveri oportere scribens ad Colossenses: "Videte, ne quis vos circumveniat per philosophiam et inanem seductionem secundum traditionem hominum præter providentiam Spiritus sancti."

sented as taking in Mark in the dispute which arose with Paul concerning him (Acts xv. 37). In the Epistle, salutations are first sent from those of the circumcision, and then follow salutations from others, among whom Luke is mentioned, from which it has been inferred that Luke was a Gentile (Col. iv. 11, 14); and in the Acts, written by Luke, there is a clause which has been construed to show that the writer was not a Jew. Describing the field purchased with the reward of the iniquity of Judas, it is said: "That field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is, the field of blood" (Acts i. 19). The words "*in their proper tongue*" are more appropriate as the writing of a Gentile than a Jew. In the Epistle, Onesimus is mentioned as a Colossian (Col. iv. 9). From the Epistle to Philemon we learn that Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon; Archippus is mentioned in that Epistle as belonging to the household of Philemon (Philem. 2); and in the Epistle to the Colossians Archippus is saluted as a minister of that church (Col. iv. 17), from which it follows that Onesimus also belonged to the same city.<sup>1</sup>

The Epistle to the Colossians, after remaining for eighteen hundred years unchallenged, has recently been questioned by some German critics. The first who cast doubts upon it was Schrader;<sup>2</sup> afterwards Mayerhoff, in a posthumous work, entirely rejected it, supposing it to be a spiritless abridgment of the Epistle to the Ephesians;<sup>3</sup> Baur followed, rejecting both Ephesians and Colossians;<sup>4</sup> and his views have been adopted by Schwegeler.<sup>5</sup> The objections of these critics proceed entirely on subjective grounds.

Mayerhoff's objections to the Epistle are as follows:—1. Both language and style are un-Pauline; various Pauline terms are not employed; there are numerous *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα*; and such an expression as "neither Greek nor Jew" (Col. iii.

<sup>1</sup> For these and other undesigned coincidences, see Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, "On the Colossians."

<sup>2</sup> *Apostel Paulus*, vol. v. p. 175 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Brief an die Kolosser mit vornehmlich Berücksichtigung der drei Pastoralbriefe Krit. geprüft*, Berlin 1838.

*Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 3-49.

<sup>5</sup> *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, vol. ii. pp. 325-330.



11), instead of Jew being put first, is decidedly un-Pauline. But such objections are frivolous. Paul was no mechanical writer, bound to certain words and phrases. The number of *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* is easily accounted for from the subject on which he wrote, being a refutation of the errors of false teachers of a Gnostic character. All the peculiarities of the Epistle are greatly outweighed by its decided Pauline character. 2. It is objected that there are un-Pauline representations of doctrine, and that the Epistle is poor in ideas. But an objection drawn from a peculiarity of doctrine may be made against any epistle written on a peculiar subject. The statements of doctrine were called forth by the necessities of the church to which the apostle wrote. With regard to the poverty of thought in this Epistle, this is a mere question of opinion, which is certainly not shared in by the majority of critics. 3. It is asserted that the Epistle is so related to the superior Epistle to the Ephesians, that it must be considered as copied from it. The connection of these Epistles, the nature and extent of which will afterwards be considered, may be accounted for by the circumstances that they were written at the same time, and addressed to churches whose wants were similar. The Epistles to the Galatians and Romans are somewhat similarly related, though not to the same extent; but this similarity has never been urged as an objection to either epistle. 4. It is affirmed that the opinions of the false teachers of Colosse are those of Cerinthus, who lived after the days of the apostles. This is a mere assertion which is incapable of proof. The germs of the opinions of Cerinthus may have already been in the Colossian church. Nor is the age of Cerinthus accurately determined; according to several of the fathers, he lived in the apostolic age.<sup>1</sup>

The objections of Baur are much more ingenious, and consist in an attempt to prove that the views contained in this Epistle are those of the Gnostics, who did not arise until the beginning of the second century, and consequently that the Epistle could not have been written by Paul. The Epistle,

<sup>1</sup> Mayerhoff's objections are stated and answered at length by Meyer, *Kommentar: Brief an die Kolosser*, pp. 177-179; and by Olshausen *On the Colossians*, pp. 288-292.

he observes, is full of Gnostic expressions and resemblances, such as *πλήρωμα, μυστήριον, σοφία, γνώσις, δυνάμεις, φῶς, σκοτία, κοσμοκράτωρ αἰῶν, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, etc. It bears the closest resemblance to the views of the Gnostic Valentinus. The false teachers are supposed to be the Judaizing Christians, then formed into the sect of the Ebionites. Baur thinks that the Epistle was conciliatory, designed to effect a union between Jews and Gentiles, or the Petrine and Pauline Christians. The universality which is there inculcated is not the union of all things in heaven and in earth in Christ Jesus, but the abolition of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. This, and nothing higher, according to the writer of this Epistle, is the great design of the death of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

These objections are subjective, and derive their whole force from Baur's peculiar views of the nature of primitive Christianity. Many of the terms objected to are found in Paul's unchallenged epistles. It was very probable that the germs of Gnosticism, which was afterwards developed into a system, appeared in the apostolic times. It is, however, more likely that the Gnostics would derive their terms from the Epistle to the Colossians than that the writer of the Epistle would copy from the Gnostics. Although some of the terms are similar, yet there is no resemblance between the views inculcated. The fulness (*πλήρωμα*) of the Godhead which dwelt in Christ is very different from the Gnostic *pleroma*, consisting of a series of *æons*. The creation of the world by the Son is a very different statement from the Gnostic theory of creation by the Demiurge, an *æon* who had wandered away from the *pleroma*. And Baur's suggestion as to the design of the Epistle is extremely improbable and fanciful,—indeed, is so concealed, that until the time of Baur it was never suspected. "It was strange and incomprehensible," as Reuss observes, "that an orthodox catholic Christian, who wrote with a design of reconciling Pauline and Petrine Christianity, should have known no more certain means than to borrow a dialect—equally strange to both parties—of heretics repudiated on all sides."<sup>2</sup> In short,

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 21, 22, 41, 42; Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 116 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Reuss' *Geschichte der heil. Schr. N. T.* p. 110.

as Meyer observes, "the forgery of such an epistle would be far more marvellous than its genuineness."<sup>1</sup>

Ewald's view is peculiar. He thinks that the matter of the Epistle is Paul's, but that the style and expression, with the exception of the concluding sentences, is Timothy's. He supposes that Paul suggested to Timothy what to write, and that Timothy did so, using his own style and language.<sup>2</sup> This opinion is adopted to account for some linguistic peculiarities in the Epistle. It is, however, unnatural and unnecessary, and has never been adopted by any other writer.

## II. THE CHURCH OF COLOSSE.

Colosse, or, as it is written according to the best manuscripts, Colasse (*Κολασσαῖς*),<sup>3</sup> was a town in that part of Phrygia which was in the apostolic age attached to the Roman province of Proconsular Asia, and was situated on the river Lycus, not far from its junction with the Mæander, in the neighbourhood of Hierapolis and Laodicea. It was formerly a city of considerable importance. Herodotus calls it a great city,<sup>4</sup> and Xenophon describes it as prosperous and large.<sup>5</sup> It, however, declined as Laodicea rose in importance. Strabo calls it *πολισμα*, a little town, and contrasts it with Laodicea.<sup>6</sup> Pliny, however, reckons it one of the most celebrated towns of Phrygia;<sup>7</sup> but this was probably with reference to its past greatness. Colosse afterwards received the name of Chone (*Χῶναι*); and a village called Chonas still remains, which is supposed to mark its ancient site.

The words of the Epistle (Col. ii. 1) would seem to intimate that Paul had never as yet visited Colosse. This view has been contested; and it has been supposed that the church of Colosse was founded by the apostle. This opinion is adopted by Theodoret, Lardner, Macknight, Schulz, Schott, Neudecker, Wiggers, and Wordsworth. Lardner argues the point at great

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Kolosses*, p. 177. Baur's objections are answered by Bleek, *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. 35; Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), pp. 178, 179; and Meyer, *an die Kolosses*, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald, *Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus*, p. 467; Meyer's *Kolosses*, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> The reading adopted by Tischendorf.

<sup>4</sup> *πόλιν μεγάλην*, Herod. vii. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *πόλιν οἰκουμένην, καὶ ὑδαίμονα, καὶ μεγάλην*.—Xen. *Anab.* i. 2. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Strabo, xii. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Pliny, *II. N.* v. 41.

length, and adduces no less than sixteen reasons in its support.<sup>1</sup> The principal argument, however, is that in the Acts of the Apostles mention is made of two visits paid by Paul to Phrygia, and it is considered highly improbable that on neither of these occasions did he visit Colosse, and especially the celebrated city of Laodicea. On the first occasion, we read that Paul, accompanied by Silas and Timothy, passed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia (Acts xvi. 6); and this was not a mere flying visit, for then he founded the churches of Galatia. And on the second occasion, we are informed that he went over the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples (Acts xviii. 23). It is also argued that the Epistle to the Colossians shows such intimate relations to the church of Colosse as presupposes a personal connection with it. Salutations are sent to it from Paul's friends; and Archippus, a native of Colosse, and Nymphas, a native of Laodicea, are saluted by name. It would also appear from the Epistle to Philemon, that Philemon was a native of Colosse, and a convert of the apostle. And with regard to the passage (Col. ii. 1) which seems to exclude Paul's personal presence at Colosse, it is affirmed to be susceptible of a different meaning. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh (*καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακασιν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί*)."  
*Kaì* is here supposed to denote *also*, as if two classes of Christians were denoted,—those who had seen Paul's face in the flesh, namely the Colossians and Laodiceans, and also those who had not seen him.<sup>2</sup> "Paul's meaning is," observes Theodoret: "'I have much anxiety not only for you, but also even for those who had never seen me.'"<sup>3</sup>

The opposite view, namely, that Paul had never visited Colosse, is adopted by the majority of critics. And this is the more natural interpretation of the apostle's words, although it is admitted that the language is somewhat am-

<sup>1</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 362-366.

<sup>2</sup> Others refer the clause, "such as have not seen my face in the flesh," to those members of the Colossian and Laodicean churches who were personally unacquainted with the apostle.

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret, tom. iii. pp. 342, 343; Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 313.

biguous. "Ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακασιν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί is not to be taken in contrast to those of Colosse and Laodicea, but as including them, and other Christians in the district: ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακασιν, etc. are the general class to which the Colossians and Laodiceans belong. This has indeed been disputed on account of the words which follow: "That their hearts may be comforted (ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν), being knit together in love" (Col. ii. 2). Those who adopt the opinion that Paul had been at Colosse, restrict the αὐτῶν of verse 2 to the ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακασιν, etc.<sup>1</sup> Thus Theodoret observes: "The apostle says that *their* hearts may be comforted. He does not say *your* hearts, but the hearts of those who have not seen me." But the natural meaning is to refer the words to the whole category: the pronoun is put in the third person on account of ὅσοι which precedes. "The αὐτῶν of verse 2," observes Conybeare, "comprehends and binds together the Colossians and the Laodiceans with the ὅσοι."<sup>2</sup> Besides, on Paul's previous visit to Phrygia, he traversed the northern part of the country, whereas Colosse and Laodicea lay to the south. In his first visit, he passed from Derbe and Lystra to Phrygia, thence northward to Galatia and Troas; and on this second visit, we are informed that he passed through the upper coasts and came down to Ephesus (Acts xix. 1). Phrygia was a very populous district, and is said to have possessed sixty-two towns, so that there is nothing surprising in the fact that Paul may never have visited two of these towns, Colosse and Laodicea. In short, Paul appears to have been in that part of Phrygia which belonged to the Roman province of Galatia,—not in that portion which was attached to Proconsular Asia. Paul's con-

<sup>1</sup> "If," observes Lardner, "the Colossians had been among those who had not seen him, he would have expressed himself in this manner: 'I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that your hearts might be comforted.' But upon the mention of such as had not seen him, he says, 'that their hearts might be comforted.'"—*Works*, vol. iii. p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> See Meyer *in loc.* Bishop Wordsworth admits that the first impression made on the mind on hearing these words is, that the Colossians whom he was addressing had never seen the apostle. See also Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 23; Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 440; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 402 (old edition); Ellieott *in loc.*; Schenkel *in loc.* The argument is not so convincing as to admit of no dubiety.

nection with Colosse may be accounted for by his long residence at Ephesus, by the church at Colosse being founded by some of his fellow-labourers, and perhaps by his coming into personal contact with some of the Colossians.

The church of Colosse, then, like the church of Rome, was not founded by Paul. When and by whom it was founded, are questions to which only a doubtful answer can be given. It was probably after Paul's second visit to Phrygia (Acts xviii. 23) that Christianity was first introduced into Colosse; for on that journey it is said that he went through Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples, and consequently he would not have omitted Colosse, had there been a church in that city. The most likely supposition is, that the gospel was introduced into Colosse during Paul's long residence at Ephesus. Ephesus was a centre for the diffusion of Christianity: many from the other cities of Proconsular Asia resorted to it, and listened to the preaching of the great apostle. "All they that dwelt in Asia," the sacred historian informs us, "heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." And Demetrius the silversmith complained "that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people" (Acts xix. 10, 26). Epaphras and Philemon, both Colossians, may have come in contact with the apostle at Ephesus, and been converted by him to Christianity, and on their return may have been the instruments of disseminating the gospel in their native city. Indeed, there is good reason for supposing that Epaphras was the founder of the Colossian Church. The apostle ascribes their first knowledge of the gospel to him: "As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ" (Col. i. 7).<sup>1</sup> Little is known of this fellow-labourer of the apostle. He was a Colossian by birth, as in the salutation sent to Colosse he is designated, "Epaphras who is one of you" (ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, Col. iv. 12). His zeal for the Colossians and for the neighbouring churches of Laodicea and Hierapolis is commended (Col. iv. 13), being probably the founder of Christianity in all three cities. In the Epistle to Philemon, the apostle calls him his fellow-prisoner (συναιχμα-

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 35.

λαῶτος, Philem. 23); but it is doubtful whether this alludes to an actual imprisonment, or merely to his sympathy with Paul in his bonds. Grotius and others have identified him with Epaphroditus, the messenger of the church of Philippi (Phil. ii. 25). It is doubtful if Epaphras is a contraction for Epaphroditus: the one was a Colossian, and the other most probably a Macedonian.

The church of Colosse was chiefly composed of Gentile Christians. The apostle speaks of them as having been not carnally but spiritually circumcised. "In whom ye also are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him" (Col. ii. 11, 13). There were certainly Jewish elements in the church, and the Colossians were in danger of being corrupted by Jewish false teachers, but still the church was mainly composed of Gentile converts.

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Colossians is polemical, being directed against false teachers, who were drawing away the disciples from the simplicity of the gospel. The character of these false teachers and their peculiar views are reserved for future consideration. At present it is sufficient to observe that they were Jewish Christians, but of an entirely different character from the Judaizing teachers who disturbed the peace of the churches of Galatia and Corinth. That they were Jews, is evident from their insisting on the importance of circumcision, and on the observance of new moons and sabbath-days (Col. ii. 11, 16); and that they were Christians, is evident from the manner in which the apostle describes them (Col. ii. 19). From the Judaizing teachers they are chiefly distinguished by not insisting so strongly on the Mosaic law, and by mixing Judaism with philosophical speculation. The views which they promulgated were extremely pernicious, especially as regards the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they seem to have regarded as belonging to the angelic order.

The apostle received information of the state of the Colossian church from Epaphras, who was then in Rome, perhaps sent by the Colossians to consult the apostle on the affairs of their church. The information which he brought was partly of a satisfactory nature. The apostle heard from him of their "faith and love to all the saints;" and Epaphras "also declared unto him their love in the Spirit" (Col. i. 4, 8). But along with what was satisfactory, there was much of an opposite character. The church was threatened by dangerous heresies,—heresies which struck at the very root of the faith (Col. ii. 18, 19). These heresies were promulgated by the false teachers of Colosse, and had met with some success. The simplicity of the gospel was corrupted by an admixture of heathen philosophy; the supreme dignity and glory of Christ was denied; the worship of angels was introduced into the church; and principles of an ascetic nature and tendency were inculcated and practised.

The existence and influence of these false teachers at Colosse was the occasion of this Epistle. The apostle wrote with a design to refute and correct their errors. For this purpose he dwells upon the supreme glory of Christ,—His exaltation above all angelic powers; and he warns the Colossians against the admixture of heathen philosophy with the truths of the gospel. The bearers of the Epistle were Tychicus, an Asiatic by birth, one of those who accompanied Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4), and who is here described as "a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord;" and Onesimus, a Colossian, once the runaway slave of Philemon, but now Paul's "faithful and beloved brother" (Col. iv. 7-9).

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Colossians is divided into two distinct parts: the first part is *polemical*, and contains a refutation of the false teachers of Colosse (chap. i. ii.); and the second part is *practical*, and contains exhortations to holiness (chap. iii. iv.).

After the usual salutation and thanksgiving on behalf of the Colossians, the apostle expresses his earnest desire for



their spiritual improvement, in the form of a prayer (chap. i. 1-14). He then describes, in opposition to the false teachers, the supreme glory of Christ as the image of the invisible God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, and the Head of the body, the Church (chap. i. 15-23). He expresses his delight in the office to which he was called, as a minister of reconciliation, and his readiness to suffer in the cause of Christ (chap. i. 24-29). He informs them of the great anxiety which he had for them, on account of the danger to which they were exposed by heretical teachers, and earnestly warns them against the principles of a false philosophy, the worship of angels, intrusion into the invisible world, and other false doctrines and practices (chap. ii.). In the ethical portion of the Epistle, the apostle exhorts to heavenly-mindedness, to a renunciation of all fleshly lusts and irascible passions, to the avoidance of falsehood, to the performance of the duties of domestic life, and to a circumspect conduct in the world (chap. iii.-iv. 6). He then informs them of the mission of Tychicus and Onesimus, sends the salutations of the friends who were with him, salutes the brethren of Laodicea, and closes the Epistle with his apostolic benediction (chap. iv. 7-18).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The date of this and of the contemporary Epistles to the Ephesians and Philemon has been much disputed. Whilst it is generally admitted that the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome,<sup>1</sup> the other three Epistles of the captivity—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—are by some supposed to have been written during the imprisonment at Cæsarea, and by others during the imprisonment at Rome. The latter is the usual opinion; but the former has been embraced by some of our greatest modern critics.

The hypothesis that the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written from Cæsarea, has been adopted by Beza, Schulz, Schott, Böttger, Schneckenburger, Thiersch,

<sup>1</sup> Böttger is an exception to this; he supposes that the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Cæsarea.

~~Holtzmann~~, Meyer, Reuss, Schenkel, and other distinguished scholars in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The arguments in favour of this opinion are ably stated by Meyer.<sup>2</sup> They are as follows:—

1. It is more natural and probable that Onesimus fled from Colosse to Cæsarea, than that he undertook a long sea voyage to Rome. 2. If the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were sent from Rome, Onesimus and Tychicus (Col. iv. 8, 9) would first arrive at Ephesus and then at Colosse, which renders the omission of Onesimus in the Epistle to the Ephesians inexplicable; whereas, if they were sent from Cæsarea, Onesimus and Tychicus would first arrive at Colosse, where Onesimus would be left with his master Philemon, and Tychicus would proceed alone to Ephesus, which accounts for the omission of Onesimus. 3. In Eph. vi. 21, *ἵνα δὲ εἰδῇτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ* ("but that ye also may know my affairs"), καὶ shows that Tychicus had already reported the affairs of the apostle to others, namely, to the Colossians (Col. iv. 8), whom Paul knew that he would visit first,—a circumstance which is in favour of a journey not from Rome, but from Cæsarea. 4. In Philem. 22, Paul requests Philemon to prepare him a lodging, which assumes a direct journey to Phrygia; whereas it appears from Phil. ii. 24 that Paul, when released from his Roman imprisonment, designed to go into Macedonia.

These arguments are, however, more ingenious than solid. It is as probable that Onesimus would escape to Rome as to Cæsarea,—indeed, more probable, as he would have greater opportunity of concealment in the metropolis. There was no need to mention Onesimus in the Epistle to the Ephesians, as Onesimus had no connection with Ephesus; whereas his connection with Colosse was personal and intimate,—it was his native town, and his master Philemon dwelt there. The argument drawn from Eph. vi. 21 is far-fetched. There does not appear to be any special reference to the Epistle to the Colossians: the words are a mere incidental remark that Tychicus would inform the Ephesians of his affairs, so that

<sup>1</sup> De Wette expresses himself in a hesitating manner.—*Einleitung*, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, pp. 17–19; see also Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 21, where Meyer's arguments are given and combated at length.

they might know them as well as others. At Cæsarea, Paul had his eye fixed on Rome, not on Proconsular Asia, which he had lately left with a presentiment that he would not return. To preach the gospel at Rome was the great desire of his heart, which he had for many years entertained. A proposed visit to Colosse is suitable if Paul wrote from Rome, but not if he wrote from Cæsarea.

The usual opinion, that the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written from Rome, is adopted by Bleek, Wieseler, Guericke, Davidson, Conybeare and Howson, Lightfoot, Alford, Lange, and other distinguished critics.<sup>1</sup> The reasons on which this opinion is founded are certainly only presumptive, as there are no allusions to Rome in any of these Epistles. The arguments in favour of it are chiefly two,—the nature of the Roman imprisonment, and Paul's companions at Rome. 1. At Rome Paul seemed to have had more freedom in preaching the gospel than at Cæsarea. At Cæsarea we are only informed that Paul's acquaintances were allowed to visit him (Acts xxiv. 23);<sup>2</sup> whereas at Rome, Paul was not in prison, but in his own hired house, and received all who came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus with all confidence, no man forbidding him (Acts xxviii. 30, 31).<sup>3</sup> Now this greater liberty in preaching the gospel at Rome corresponds with what we read in these Epistles. Paul requests the Ephesians to pray for him, that utterance might be given to him that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. vi. 19, 20); and a similar request is made to the Colossians: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds :

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 21; Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 394–398; Guericke's *Isagogik*, pp. 321, 322; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. i. (new edition), p. 425; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 472; Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, pp. 1–28; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, pp. 20–22; Lange's *Apostol. Zeitalter*, vol. i. p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> "The permission of Felix," observes Ellicott, "can scarcely be strained into any degree of liberty to teach or preach the gospel."

<sup>3</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. pp. 448–450; Lightfoot *On the Galatians*, "St. Paul in Rome," pp. 1–28.

that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Col. iv. 3, 4). 2. The companions of Paul, mentioned in the Epistles, suit Rome better than Cæsarea. Two of them, Aristarchus and Luke, accompanied the apostle to Rome. And it was in the great metropolis, the resort of all nations, that Paul would meet with his friends and fellow-labourers, rather than in Cæsarea, which, although the Roman capital of Palestine, was not a town of much importance to those who were not Jews. The preponderance of argument is decidedly in favour of the Roman imprisonment.

Paul's imprisonment at Rome does not appear, at least during the early part of it, to have been severe. His liberty was, indeed, in some measure restricted. He was *in custodia militare*. He could not go where he would. He had to confine himself to his own house. But it was his own house in which he dwelt: no restriction was put upon his receiving visitors, and perfect liberty was granted to him to preach the gospel. He was also under the protection of the Roman government, and met with no molestation either from the unbelieving Jews or the ignorant multitude. He still continued to be burdened with the care of all the churches, whose messengers went to and came from him. He took a living interest in their wants, and wrote epistles for their instruction and guidance.

Three of the Epistles of the captivity were contemporaneous. The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon were evidently written together. They are both sent in the joint name of Paul and Timothy. The companions of the apostle mentioned in these Epistles are the same, with the single exception of Jesus called Justus (Col. iv. 11). Onesimus is the bearer of both, and Archippus is saluted in both. In short, they were sent at the same time, by the same bearer, and to the same town. So also the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians were written at the same time. This is evident, not only from their remarkable resemblance in expressions, but also from the circumstance that they were sent by the same bearer. Tychicus, the bearer of the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7, 8), is also the bearer of the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. vi. 21).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 431, 432.

The order in which the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were written, is a matter of no great importance. Some (Eichhorn, Schneckenburger, Credner, Guericke, Reuss, Wordsworth) consider that the Epistle to the Ephesians was first written; others (Harless, Neander, De Wette, Olshausen, Bleek, Meyer, Schaff, Alford) give the priority to the Epistle to the Colossians. There are very slight grounds to go on, and a definite conclusion can hardly be attained. Some, on the supposition that the epistle from Laodicea (Col. iv. 16) is the same as the Epistle to the Ephesians, argue for the priority of that Epistle; but for this supposition we have seen there is no ground, and even if it were the case, it would not settle the question. Others suppose that in Eph. vi. 21, *ἵνα δὲ εἰδῇτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ*, there is a reference to what the apostle had already written in Col. iv. 7;<sup>1</sup> but this also, as we have already remarked, is a far-fetched conclusion. Some slight reason in favour of the priority of the Epistle to the Colossians may be thought to arise from the fact that that Epistle was called forth by the particular circumstances of the church, whereas the Epistle to the Ephesians was more general. "The Epistle to the Colossians," observes Neander, "was written first, for the apostle's thoughts there exhibit themselves in their original formation and connection, as they were called forth by his opposition to that sect whose sentiments and practices he combats in that epistle."<sup>2</sup>

Bleek, with some hesitation, considers it probable that the Epistle to the Philippians is of prior date to the other three.<sup>3</sup> This opinion has been adopted and defended with much ingenuity by Professor Lightfoot.<sup>4</sup> He considers the Epistle to the Philippians as the link which connects Paul's earlier with his later epistles, and that it bears a closer resemblance to the Epistle to the Romans, to which, according to him, it stands next in chronological order, than to the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. These two Epistles, he considers,

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen *On the Ephesians*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 329; see also Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. i. p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, pp. 29-45.

exhibit an advanced stage in the development of the church. The heresies which the apostle there combats are no longer the crude materialistic errors of the early childhood of Christianity, but the more subtle speculations of its maturer age. These reasons are, however, not sufficient to overturn the generally accepted opinion of the later date of the Epistle to the Philippians. When Paul wrote that Epistle, his imprisonment was coming to a crisis. His long-deferred trial was about to take place, and the question regarding his deliverance or death was to be decided. The Epistle to the Philippians, we infer, was written toward the close of his imprisonment, when, as is most probable, he was restored to liberty. No argument can be deduced from the subject-matter of these Epistles, as this varied according to the circumstances of the churches to which the apostle wrote. The church of Philippi was comparatively uncontaminated with error, whilst the churches of Colosse and Ephesus were threatened with the heresies of false teachers.

At the same time, there does not appear to have been a long interval between the composition of the Epistle to the Philippians and the other three Epistles. It is probable that all four were written toward the close of the last year of Paul's imprisonment (A.D. 63). Not only in the Epistle to the Philippians does he mention the probability of his release and his expectation of shortly coming to Macedonia (Phil. ii. 24), but in the Epistle to Philemon he makes a similar intimation (Philem. 22). Circumstances had occurred which led the apostle to suppose that his imprisonment was coming to its close, although he could not tell with certainty whether his trial would end in his liberation or in his martyrdom.

#### VI. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

The three great Epistles of the first Roman captivity—Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—have certainly marked peculiarities which distinguish them from the other epistles of Paul. Whilst the other epistles treat chiefly of redemption as effected by the reconciliation of man to God, these Epistles treat chiefly of the character and nature of Christ:

they are more christological than the other epistles. There is in them a nearer approach to the Johannean type of Christianity,—to the doctrine of the Logos. The apostle dwells upon the divine nature of Christ, His pre-eminence above all creatures, His possession of the fulness of the Godhead, His appearance as the visible manifestation of God, and His being in the form of God.<sup>1</sup> But it is not to be supposed that there is here any change in the apostle's views, as if, when writing his earlier epistles, he had held lower views of Christ's nature. There are no grounds for such an opinion. The difference arose from the circumstances of the churches to which he wrote, and the errors which he combated. His views were the same in his earlier epistles, though not so fully expressed. At the same time, it may be admitted to be not impossible that there may have been higher revelations communicated to him of the relation in which Christ stood to the angelic natures, and of the great design of redemption, to reconcile all things in Christ, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven (Col. i. 20),—mysterious truths, of which we have the hints and outlines in these epistles, but which we can only imperfectly comprehend.

The Epistle to the Colossians, as distinguished from the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which it bears such a close resemblance, is chiefly remarkable for the great number of *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* contained in it, amounting to thirty-four. The reason of this, as has been already remarked, arises from the polemical nature of this Epistle, and from the peculiarities of the errors against which it was directed. This is evident when it is considered that the greater number of these words are found in the second chapter, where these errors are specially discussed.<sup>2</sup>

The most important commentaries on the Epistle to the Colossians are those of Olshausen (Königsberg 1840), Huther (Hamburg 1841), De Wette (Leipzig 1845), Meyer (Göttingen 1846), and Alford (London 1847).

<sup>1</sup> For the difference between the earlier epistles of Paul and those of the captivity, see some good remarks in Davies' *Epistles of St. Paul to Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, pp. 78-87; see also pp. 47-49 of this work.

<sup>2</sup> For the *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* in the Epistle to the Colossians, see Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 40.

gen 1848; third edition, 1865); and in our own country, Eadie (Glasgow 1856), Ellicott (London 1858), and Davies (London 1866).

### THE FALSE TEACHERS AT COLOSSE.<sup>1</sup>

2:8 It has been already remarked that the Epistle to the Colossians is polemical, being directed against the errors of certain false teachers. The apostle warns the Colossians to beware lest any man should spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit,—a mixture of the pure doctrines of the gospel with the traditions of men,—a theosophy founded on the principles of this world's wisdom, and not on the revelation of Jesus Christ. In opposition to this false theosophy, he dwells on the divinity and supreme glory of the Lord Jesus Christ: that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and that He is the Head of all principality and power. He tells them that the true circumcision is not carnal, but spiritual,—putting off the sins of the flesh; that although they belonged to the uncircumcision, Christ has forgiven them all trespasses, removed by His cross those legal obstacles which hindered their salvation, and conquered all their spiritual enemies; and therefore they are now no longer to judge one another concerning the observances of Jewish practices,—such as the distinctions of meats and drinks, and the observance of the feasts, the new moons, and the sabbaths of the Jews. He further warns them against a false humility, the worship of angels, and a prying curiosity into the mysteries of the unseen world, as having a tendency to draw away their thoughts and affections from Christ, who is the only Head of the body the Church, and the only source of life and spiritual nourishment. And, lastly, he cautions them against ascetic practices,—subjection to ordinances, abstinence from things

<sup>1</sup> This subject is discussed in Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 30-34; Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 25-27; Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 407-424; Eadie *On the Colossians*, Introduction, pp. 30-39; Meyer's *Kolossier*, pp. 173-176; Lange's *Das apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. pp. 353-356; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 319-326; and Olshausen *On the Colossians*, pp. 292-299.



which God had permitted, and bodily mortifications founded on the commandments and doctrines of men (Col. ii. 8-23).

It has been disputed whether the errors thus adverted to belong to one class of heretics, or whether the apostle censures several classes of false teachers, and opposes totally different tendencies of the human mind. Some suppose that the apostle combats the errors of teachers belonging to different schools. Thus Heinrichs thinks that there were at Colosse both Judaizers and Gnostics,—both those who attached too great importance to the Jewish law, and those who undervalued it. And certainly, at first sight, there seems some ground for this supposition. The reference to spiritual circumcision, the mention of the handwriting of ordinances, and the caution against judging one another concerning meats and drinks and the observance of holy days, new moons, and sabbaths, points to Judaizing principles; whereas the warnings of the apostle, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. ii. 8), and “Let no man beguile you of your reward into a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels” (Col. ii. 18), have an anti-Gnostic appearance. At the same time, it is to be remembered that Colosse was a small town, and that consequently the church there must have been small, so that it is improbable that several heretical sects should have been found there. There is also a unity in the admonitions of the apostle, which is hardly consistent with the supposition that he is combating the errors of different heretics. And the Judaizing and Gnostic tendencies had not separated and defined themselves so early as the days of the apostle; whereas we learn from ecclesiastical history there appears to have existed in the earliest age a sect of Judaizing Gnostics.<sup>1</sup>

There was a tendency to Judaism in the doctrines of these false teachers. This is evident from spiritual circumcision being insisted on by the apostle (Col. ii. 11), which presupposes that these teachers dwelt on the importance of circumcision; and also from his caution against Jewish practices (Col. ii. 16),

<sup>1</sup> For a refutation of the opinion of Heinrichs, see Olshausen *On the Colossians*, p. 294; and Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), p. 407.

implying that Judaistic elements mingled in their doctrines. At the same time, the false teachers at Colosse were not precisely similar to the Judaizing teachers who disturbed the peace of the churches of Galatia and Corinth, and against whom the apostle warns the Philippians (Phil. iii. 2, 3). They do not seem to have asserted the necessity of circumcision for salvation, but rather as a counsel of perfection, conferring greater privileges on those who submitted to the rite.<sup>1</sup> There were two tendencies in Judaism,—the one practical, insisting on the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law as absolutely essential for salvation, and this was the tendency which Paul had to oppose in the Epistle to the Galatians; and the other theoretical, rather contemplative than active, attending more to the spiritual than to the ceremonial elements of Judaism, and this seems to have been the tendency which the apostle had to oppose in the Epistle to the Colossians. The one tendency was represented in the Jewish Church by the sect of the Pharisees, who were legalists and formalists, and the other tendency by the sect of the Essenes, whose leanings were to speculation in doctrine and asceticism in practice.

Along with these Judaistic elements there was a mixture of heathen philosophy, which still more evidently distinguished these Colossian heretics from the Judaizing teachers, and allied them to the Gnostics. Hence the warning addressed to the Colossians, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy" (Col. ii. 8). This philosophy is described as "vain deceit" (*κενή ἀπάτη*), the source of pride and self-deception; as "after the traditions of men," in contradistinction to the revelation of Christ; as "after the rudiments of the world," the principles of worldly wisdom; as "not after Christ," being opposed to His gospel; and as professing humility, yet "vainly puffed up by a carnal mind." Such a mixture of philosophy with Judaism was then not uncommon. The strict Pharisees, indeed, were jealous of all foreign admixture;<sup>2</sup> but the more

<sup>1</sup> Lechler's *Das apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> The sect of the Pharisees were subdivided into two parties,—the stricter faction, or the school of Schammai, and a more liberal faction, or the school of Hillel. The school of Hillel permitted the study of Greek philosophy. Gamaliel belonged to this school.

liberal Jews cultivated the Greek philosophy, and thus either unwittingly or designedly introduced it into their religion.<sup>1</sup> This was especially the case among the Jews of Alexandria, where there was at that time a flourishing school of philosophic Judaism,—the school of Philo, which arose from a union of Judaism and Platonism.<sup>2</sup>

(b)  
This false philosophy appears to have occupied itself with discussions concerning the nature of angels and the hierarchy of the heavenly world. Hence the warning of the apostle against the worship of angels: "Let no man beguile you of your reward into a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels (*θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων*), intruding into those things which he hath not seen" (Col. ii. 18). Angels occupied an important place in the Jewish religion. They frequently appeared to the patriarchs. The law was given by the ministry of angels. An angel (*ὁ ἄγγελος*) is represented as guiding the Israelites through the wilderness. And in the book of Daniel angels are described as the rulers of kingdoms. From being venerated, they came to be worshipped by the Jews. Thus in the book of Tobit angels are represented as mediators with God, and as presenting the prayers of good men to God (Tobit xii. 12, 13). Philo taught that angels are ambassadors and mediators between God and man.<sup>3</sup> In an apocryphal book, written about the middle of the second century, entitled "The Preaching of Peter" (*Κήρυγμα Πέτρου*), the Jews are described as worshippers of angels. Nor was angelolatry unknown among Christians. The Gnostic sects especially worshipped angels, as the æons who constituted the pleroma. At the council of Laodicea, A.D. 363 (a city in the immediate neighbourhood of Colosse), the worship of angels was forbidden in a special canon.<sup>4</sup> And Theodoret, in his commentary on this Epistle, tells us that in his days this superstition was still practised in Phrygia, and

<sup>1</sup> "From whatever cause," observes Dr. Davies, "the most actively eclectic minds in those ages were Jewish minds."—*Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> There is also a considerable element of Oriental philosophy in Philonism.

<sup>3</sup> See Whitby's note on Col. ii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> ὅτι οὐ διὸ Χριστιανούς ἡγκαταλείπειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀγγέλους ὀνομάζειν: that Christians should not leave the Church of God, and invoke angels.—Canon xxxv.

that there were in the district to be found oratories dedicated to the Archangel Michael.<sup>1</sup>

(c) It would further appear, from the manner in which the apostle so strongly insists on the divinity of Christ, that this false theosophy assigned an inferior position to the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle, in opposition to this theosophy, asserts that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii, 9); that He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the Creator of heaven and earth, exalted above all thrones and dominions and principalities and powers (Col. i. 15, 16); and that He is the Head both of His body the Church (*κεφαλή τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας*, Col. i. 18), and of all principality and power (*κεφαλή πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας*, Col. ii. 10). It is not certain whether these Colossian heretics entertained Docetic views concerning the person of Christ, and distinguished between the Christ and the man Jesus. It would rather appear that they regarded Him as belonging to the angelic order, and that their views were somewhat similar to those which were afterwards developed by Arius. Analogous opinions were entertained by the Ebionites,—some of whom, indeed, considered Christ to be a mere man, but others assigned to Him a high rank in the angelic order. So also the Gnostics regarded Christ as an æon or divine power, who descended from the pleroma upon the man Jesus.

Whilst the doctrines of these Colossian heretics were mystic, their practice was ascetic. They gained credit for superior holiness and humility by reason of their self-imposed penances. "If," says the apostle, "ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not' (which all are to perish with the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. ii 20-23). They seem, like many of the Greek philosophers, to have regarded matter as evil, and the body as the seat of sin, which must be mortified. Perhaps also they

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret on Col. ii. 18.

were among the number of those who not only commanded to abstain from meats, but also forbade to marry (*μὴ ἄψῃ, μὴδὲ γεύσῃ, μὴδὲ θίγῃς*), and thus in both points bore a resemblance to the Essenes. They may also, on the ground of the inherent depravity of matter, like the false teachers in Corinth, have denied the resurrection of the body, and explained it away as a spiritual resurrection. It does not, however, appear, from anything that is here said, that they went the length of denying the resurrection of Christ.

Such mystic notions and ascetic practices found a congenial soil in Phrygia. This country was notorious for the fanatical and mystic nature of its religion, and for the bodily mortifications practised by the worshippers of Cybele. Numerous Jews had been transplanted into it by Antiochus the Great. That monarch, as we are informed by Josephus, removed two thousand Jewish families out of Mesopotamia and Babylon into Lydia and Phrygia.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that these Jews had imbibed the Phrygian spirit of speculation; and from this cause probably arose that mixture of Judaism, mysticism, and asceticism, against which Paul cautions the Colossians. In like manner, it was from Phrygia that, in the second century, the mystical and wide spread heresy of Montanism had its origin.

Such were the opinions of the false teachers at Colosse. Our next inquiry is, who they were. On this point very different opinions are entertained by modern critics. The most important are here noticed.

Some (Schöttgen, Eichhorn, Schneckenburger, and Hug) suppose that they were unconverted Jews, who sought to gain proselytes to Judaism from among the Colossian Christians. Schöttgen supposes that they were Pharisees; Eichhorn, that they were indirect rather than avowed opponents of Christianity, who by an appearance of extraordinary sanctity imposed upon the Colossians;<sup>2</sup> Schneckenburger, that they were universalists or eclectics, who subordinated Christianity as well as philosophy to Judaism;<sup>3</sup> and Hug, that they were Jews

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Eichhorn's *Einleitung*, vol. iii. p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> Schneckenburger's *Beiträge zur Einleitung*, pp. 146-152.

who had imbibed the Chaldean or Magian philosophy.<sup>1</sup> That they were Jewish teachers, is evident from their insisting on Jewish rites and ceremonies; but it is also evident, from the manner in which the apostle describes them, that they were not unconverted Jews, but Jewish Christians. He indeed accuses them of not holding the Head (*οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν*, Col. ii. 19); but it is evident from the context that this does not imply that they disbelieved in Christ as the Messiah, or that they renounced Him, but that they lowered His nature, and called in question His supreme dignity, and thus did not maintain His exclusive prerogative as the only Saviour and Mediator. Nor does the apostle warn the Colossians against the denial, but against the perversion of Christianity,—not against apostasy, but against heresy. The false teachers were not without, but within the church: they did not wish to subvert, but, according to their notions, to perfect Christianity.

Others (Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Calixtus, and Grotius) think that they were unconverted Gentiles, the followers of heathen philosophy. This appears to have been the common opinion among the fathers. Clemens Alexandrinus supposes that they were Epicureans, and Tertullian that they were eclectics, belonging to no definite school. So also Grotius regards them as Pythagoreans, and Heumann as uniting the Platonic and Stoic doctrines. Paul indeed warns the Colossians against philosophy (Col. ii. 8),—that is, against the union of heathen philosophy with Christianity,—and the false teachers certainly inculcated such philosophy. But still they were not the mere disciples of any philosophic sect, whether Epicureans or Stoics, Pythagoreans or Platonists, but philosophic Christians; and as it was not unusual for the Jews, especially those of Alexandria, to cultivate Greek philosophy, they appear to have been Jewish Christians who attempted to introduce Judaism and philosophy into Christianity.

Michaelis supposes them to have been Jews of Alexandria converted to Christianity, and thinks that they were the converts of Apollos before he was perfectly instructed in the

<sup>1</sup> Hug's *Einleitung*, vol. ii. p. 361 ff.

nature of Christianity,—a species of half Christians:<sup>1</sup> an opinion for which there is no historical basis, and which is destitute of all probability. It is not probable that Apollos for any length of time inculcated a defective Christianity; and any false impression arising from his preaching, he would be careful to rectify when his views became more enlightened.

The false teachers at Colosse, then, were Jewish Christians. Conybeare and Howson, indeed, suppose that they were rather of Gentile than of Jewish origin; that their views had a closer resemblance to Gnosticism than to Ebionism; and that their adoption of certain superstitions of Judaism does not militate against this opinion.<sup>2</sup> But the whole description given us of these heretics is against this view: Jewish elements were not mere secondary, but primary principles in their teaching.

Some suppose that these Jewish teachers were Christian Pharisees, and that, with some slight variations, they were the same as those who wished to impose the yoke of circumcision on the neck of the Gentile converts, and who everywhere opposed the preaching of Paul. But, as has already been observed, this does not appear to have been the case. Their admixture of philosophical speculation with Judaism distinguishes them from the Judaizing teachers. Besides, it does not appear from this Epistle that they called in question the apostolic authority of Paul, or actively opposed his doctrine concerning the universality of Christianity. They did not so much impugn the doctrine of justification by faith, like the Judaizing teachers, as the doctrine of Christ's divinity, like the Ebionites and Gnostics of the second century.

Others suppose that these false teachers were Christian Essenes. This opinion is adopted by Chemnitz, Storr, Credner, Thiersch, Guericke, Ewald, Ritschl, and is favoured by Meyer.<sup>3</sup> And certainly their views suggest a closer resemblance to the Essenes and the cognate Jewish sect of the

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 85-88 (Marsh's translation). De Wette also supposed that the Apolline party at Corinth entertained views similar to those of the Colossian heretics.

<sup>2</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 530.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's *Kolossier*, p. 174; Ritschl's *altkut. Kirche*, p. 233.

Therapeutæ in Egypt than to the Pharisees.<sup>1</sup> There is no mention in the historical books of Scripture of the gospel ever coming in contact with the Essenes; yet there are many points of resemblance between the views of that Jewish sect and those of the Colossian heretics. The Essenes were ascetic in their practice: they mortified the body, abstained from certain meats and drinks, rejected pleasures as an evil, avoided marriage, were stricter than the other Jewish sects in the observance of the Sabbath, and regarded the soul as immortal, but the body as corruptible. They were contemplative rather than active, and thus were habituated to the study of philosophy. It does not distinctly appear whether they worshipped angels; but Josephus states that they religiously observed the names of angels.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, with these points of resemblance, there are also points of difference. The Essenes were not a numerous sect among the Jews, and generally dwelt in seclusion. They were not much given to proselytize, and avoided intercourse with others. They practised community of goods. Their speculation was not so much of a metaphysical as of a practical and ethical character. The resemblance between them and the Colossian heretics is, however, too general to identify them, and suits other manifestations.<sup>3</sup> It is probable that several of the principles of the Essenes were adopted by Jews who did not belong to their sect. Asceticism is a very common feature in all periods of religious excitement, and pervades almost all religions. Although, then, it would be unwarranted to affirm that these false teachers were Essene Christians, yet they were ascetic Jews who carried their asceticism into Christianity.

These teachers not only bore a relation, by reason of their asceticism, to Essenism, but also, by reason of their philosophy, to Philonism. The school of Philo was then flourishing in Alexandria.<sup>4</sup> A mystical and allegorical sense was attached

<sup>1</sup> We have two important accounts of the Essenes,—the one given us by Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 8), and the other by Philo in his treatise on the freedom of the virtuous man. The Therapeutæ are described by Philo in his treatise on a contemplative life. See for a description of the Essenes and Therapeutæ, Ritschl's *altkat. Kirche*, pp. 179-204.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 8. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Schenkel, *an die Kolosser*, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Philo was born about B.C. 20. He went on a deputation to Caligula, A.D. 40.



to the Jewish Scriptures. The historical incidents recorded were merely the outward clothing of the spiritual meaning. Philosophical Judaism spread from Alexandria as a centre, and exerted a powerful influence on the Jewish mind during the first century; and it is highly probable that it formed a considerable element in the philosophy of these Colossian teachers.<sup>1</sup>

Baur supposes that the Colossian teachers were Ebionites, or those Jewish Christians who departed from the Church in the second century; and he sees in this fact a proof of the spuriousness of the Epistle. He points out the remarkable resemblance between the Colossian teachers and the Ebionites. The Ebionites rejected flesh, which they regarded as polluting; they considered it also as forbidden to taste wine. The rite of circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were the commandments of the Jewish religion which were peculiarly sacred to them. They not only attached great importance to the doctrine of angels and to their religious worship, but also placed Christ in the closest connection with the angels, and considered Him as one of them.<sup>2</sup> The Ebionites were also more allied to the Essene than to the Pharisaical phase of Judaism. It is extremely probable that the germs of Ebionism may have already been in the Colossian church. Christian Judaism may have taken that shape and form which was afterwards developed into the Ebionism of the second century. But still Ebionism proper was much more strongly anti-Pauline and Judaistic than the teaching of those heretics appears to have been. Paul was regarded by the Ebionites as a false apostle, and is compared in the Clementine Homilies to Simon Magus; whereas, in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul does not feel himself constrained to assert and defend his apostolic authority, as he had to do when writing to the Corinthians.

Others suppose that the tenets of the Colossian heretics bore the closest relation to the opinions of Cerinthus. This view of the subject is adopted by Neander, Nitzsch, Mayer-

<sup>1</sup> It is also to be observed that the sect of the Therapeutæ resided in Egypt, so that the union of Essene asceticism and Philonian theosophy is easily accounted for.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 32-34.

hoff, Lange, and Meyer.<sup>1</sup> "Though," observes Neander, "the account given by Epiphanius of the conflict between Cerinthus and the Apostle Paul is not worthy of credit, yet at least between the tendency which Paul here combats and the tendency of Cerinthus the greatest agreement is found to exist; and, judging by internal marks, we may consider the sect here spoken of to be allied to the Cerinthian."<sup>2</sup> Cerinthus lived in Asia Minor about the close of the apostolic age; indeed, there is nothing improbable in the account of his encounter with the Apostle John at Ephesus, given by Irenæus, who received it by tradition from Polycarp.<sup>3</sup> What were the opinions of Cerinthus is somewhat doubtful, but he may be justly considered as the intermediate link between Ebionism and Gnosticism.<sup>4</sup> According to Neander, he taught that there were numberless angelic beings, divided into different classes, intermediate between God and the world, and that the world was created by these angels; for he considered it beneath the dignity of the Supreme Being to come into immediate contact with the material world. His Christology appears to have been Docetic. He denied the miraculous conception, and taught that Jesus was a mere man, the earthly Messiah (ὁ κάτω Χριστός), and that the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) as the heavenly Messiah (ὁ ἄνω Χριστός) descended upon Him at His baptism, and withdrew from Him at His crucifixion. "Cerinthus," observes Irenæus, "represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to ordinary generation, while he was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after His baptism, Christ descended upon Him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and then He proclaimed the unknown

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 325; a note by Nitzsch in Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 26, 27; Mayerhoff's *Brief an die Kolosser mit vernehmlich Berucksichtigung der drei Pastoralbriefe*; Lange's *ap. Zeitalt.* vol. ii. p. 355; Meyer's *Kolosser*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 28, and iv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> "Cerinthus," observes Neander, "is best entitled to be considered as the intermediate link between the Judaizing and the Gnostic sects. It may well be disputed whether he ought to be placed in the former or latter class of these sects, for in him elements alike of Ebionism and Gnosticism are found united."—*Church History*, vol. ii. p. 42.

Father and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as He was a spiritual being."<sup>1</sup> But with these Gnostic views there were also Judaistic elements. Cerinthus maintained the perpetual obligation of the Mosaic law, and looked forward to the universal establishment of the Messianic kingdom.<sup>2</sup> He was himself a Jewish Christian. It is supposed that in the views of the Colossian heretics we see the germs of Cerinthianism. The errors may be said to be Cerinthian, but it was Cerinthianism in a crude state; in particular, the distinction between the earthly and the heavenly Christ does not seem to have been taught.

The false teachers of Colosse, then, were a species of Jewish Gnostics, combining Judaism with Gnostic theosophic views. If, indeed, Gnosticism is to be considered as anti-Judaistic, as it afterwards became in its development in the middle of the second century, and as the direct antagonism to Ebionism,<sup>3</sup> then the Colossian teachers were not Gnostics. But if we take Gnosticism in an enlarged sense,—as the introduction of speculation into Christianity, the pretension to a higher gnosis, the mixture of Orientalism or Platonism with Christianity, what Paul calls *ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως* (1 Tim. vi. 20),—then these Colossian teachers were Gnostics. There appears to have been an amalgamation between Judaism and Gnosticism before these principles were separated: there were Gnostics who believed in the divinity of the Jewish religion. As the result of the whole discussion, there were in the doctrines and practices of the false teachers at Colosse germs of two different tendencies of early Christian thought, which were afterwards found united as a system in the heresy of Cerinthus, but which soon after diverged from one another into two distinct and opposite heresies,—Ebionism and Gnosticism,—the one Judaistic and the other anti-Judaistic.

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. lxx.* i. 26. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 42-47 (Bohn's edition). See also Hippolytus, *Ref. Hæres.* vii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> "We find," observes Dr. Burton, "all the Gnostics agree in rejecting the Jewish Scriptures, or at least in treating them with contempt."—*Lectures*, p. 39.

## THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

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### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

**J**EROME asserts that in his days there were some who either doubted or entirely rejected the Epistle to Philemon, because they conceived it beneath the dignity of the apostle to concern himself about a runaway slave; and even if it were written by the apostle, they regarded it as a private epistle, and not designed for public edification. To these objections Jerome replies, that there was nothing in this epistle unworthy of the apostle; that similar matters of a private nature are mentioned in other epistles; and that it had been received as genuine by the Church throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> It is admitted that the Epistle, being small, and in a doctrinal point of view comparatively unimportant, is not so frequently referred to by the early Christian writers as the other epistles of Paul; still it is by no means destitute of external evidence. The references to it, supposed to occur in the Ignatian epistles, are indeed obscure and indefinite.<sup>2</sup> The first who distinctly notices the Epistle is Tertullian (A.D. 200). "This epistle," he observes, "alone had an advantage from its brevity, for hereby it has escaped the falsifying hands of Marcion. Nevertheless I wonder that when he receives an epistle to one man, he should reject two to Timothy, and one to Titus, which treat of the government of the Church."<sup>3</sup> Origen (A.D. 230) says: "Which

<sup>1</sup> *Comment. in Ep. ad Philem.*—Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Ephes.* c. 2; *Ad Magnes.* c. 12; *Ad Polycarp.* c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Marcion.* v. 21: Soli huic epistolæ brevitās sua profuit, ut falsariās manus Marcionis evaderet. Miror tamen cum ad unum hominem literas factas receperit, quid ad Timotheum duas, et unam ad Titum de ecclesiastico statu compositas recusaverit.

Paul knowing, said to Philemon, in the Epistle to Philemon concerning Onesimus, 'That thy benefit should not be of necessity, but willingly'" (ver. 14).<sup>1</sup> And again: "As Paul says to Philemon, 'We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother'" (ver. 7).<sup>2</sup> "Of Paul it is said (in the Epistle) to Philemon, 'Being such an one as Paul the aged,' when he was a young man at the time Stephen was stoned for the testimony of Christ" (ver. 9).<sup>3</sup> This Epistle is also contained in the catalogue of Marcion (A.D. 140), in the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170), in the Peshito (A.D. 160), and Latin (A.D. 170) versions, and is ranked by Eusebius among the *ὁμολογόμενα*.<sup>4</sup>

The internal evidence in favour of this Epistle is sufficiently convincing. The style and diction, as is evident from examination, are Pauline.<sup>5</sup> The character of Paul pervades the whole Epistle. The sense of apostolic dignity, combined with deep humility and love, the Christian spirit infused into the common relations of life, the delicacy, courtesy, and tact of the address, and the earnestness with which he urges his suit, bear throughout the impress of Paul. There is also an artless character in the Epistle: the occasion of writing is simple and natural, and fully accords with the warmth of the apostle's temper. There

<sup>1</sup> *Homil. in Jerem.* 19: "Ὁπερ καὶ ὁ Παῦλος ἐπιστάμενος, ἔλεγεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Φιλήμονα ἐπιστολῇ τῷ Φιλήμονι περὶ τοῦ Ὀνησίμου· ἵνα μὴ κατ' ἀνάγκην τὸ ἀγαθὸν σου ᾖ, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐκούσιον.

<sup>2</sup> *Comment., in Matt., tract.* 34: Sicut Paulus ad Philemonem dicit: "gaudium enim magnum habuimus, et consolationem in charitate tua, quia viscera sanctorum requieverunt per te frater."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid., tract.* 33: De Paulo autem dictum est ad Philemonem: "hunc autem ut Paulus senex" cum esset adolescentulus quando Stephanus pro Christi testimonio lapidabatur.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Critics mention two examples of paronomasia,—a figure of speech in which the apostle sometimes indulges. In verse 11 we read, Ὀνησίμου, τὸν ποτὶ σοὶ ἄχρηστον, νυνὶ δὲ σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον: "Onesimus, who was formerly unprofitable to thee, but is now profitable both to thee and to me." Here there is a play on the meaning of the word,—Onesimus signifies profitable,—"formerly he was not Onesimus to thee, but now he is Onesimus both to thee and to me." So also in verse 20 we read, Καὶ, ἀδελφε, ἐγὼ σου ὀφείμην ἐν Κυρίῳ: "Yea, brother, let me have profit of thee in the Lord." Ὀφείμην is supposed to be an allusion to the name of the slave Ὀνήσιμος. See Winer's *Grammar of the N. T.*, p. 660. It is, however, very doubtful if these paronomasiae were intended by the apostle.

can be no possible intention to deceive, as there is no doctrine prominently brought forward.<sup>1</sup>

There are also in this Epistle to Philemon numerous undesigned allusions to the Epistle to the Colossians, so that these two epistles mutually corroborate each other. Thus in the Epistle to the Colossians the mission of Onesimus to Colosse is mentioned: "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you" (Col. iv. 7-9); and in the Epistle to Philemon the same mission of Onesimus is alluded to: "I beseech you for my son Onesimus, whom I have sent again" (Philem. 10-12). In the Epistle to the Colossians Paul mentions his imprisonment: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Col. iv. 3); and in the Epistle to Philemon there is a similar allusion: "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (Philem. 10). In the salutations contained in the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, there is a general similarity in the names, with minute differences, proving that the one catalogue was not copied from the other. In both epistles salutations are sent from Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. In both epistles Timothy is joined with Paul in the superscription. Jesus called Justus occurs in the Epistle to the Colossians, whilst he is omitted in the Epistle to Philemon. In the Epistle to Philemon Epaphras is called by Paul his fellow-prisoner (Philem. 23); whilst in the Epistle to the Colossians that title is not given to Epaphras, but is conferred on Aristarchus (Col. iv. 10). Such an undesigned correspondence can only be accounted for on the supposition, that those persons who sent their salutations were really with the apostle when he wrote these epistles.<sup>2</sup>

The Epistle to Philemon has been questioned only by Baur<sup>3</sup> and the school of Tübingen. Baur does not so much object to the Epistle in itself,—indeed he admits that were the other

<sup>1</sup> There are some good remarks on this point in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Philemon, No. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Philemon, No. II.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 88-94.

epistles, said to have been written in the same imprisonment, placed beyond all doubt, there would be nothing to object against this Epistle,—but as he denies the authenticity of the other epistles of the captivity, he feels constrained also to reject the Epistle to Philemon. His objections are as follows:—1. The diction of the Epistle is un-Pauline. He observes that there are in it several words and expressions which are either not found at all in Paul's Epistles, or only in those epistles which are (by Baur) disputed;<sup>1</sup> and that the word *σπλάγχνα*, though a Pauline word, is suspicious, because it occurs three times.<sup>2</sup> But Paul was not confined to certain words; and in the only familiar letter of the apostle which is extant, it was to be expected that some words should occur which are not found in his didactic epistles. 2. Baur objects to the contents of the Epistle. It supposes, he asserts, an occurrence of fortuitous circumstances of a very improbable kind: a runaway slave of a Christian master, who was a native of Colosse in Phrygia, and a trusted friend of the Apostle Paul, betakes himself to Rome; there he comes in contact with Paul, imprisoned in that city, and is by him converted to Christianity. But although in all this the hand of Providence may clearly be discerned, there is nothing so improbable as to render the truth of the narrative suspected. It is not improbable that Onesimus would betake himself to Rome, in the hope of being better concealed in the great metropolis than elsewhere. He may through Philemon have previously known Paul, or at least been aware of the apostle's acquaintance with his master, and therefore there is nothing strange in his repairing to the apostle in his difficulties. 3. To account for the origin of the Epistle, Baur makes the strange supposition that it is a religious romance, of a similar character with the Clementine Homilies,<sup>3</sup> written with a design to teach that what man loses in time in

<sup>1</sup> These words amount to ten. Several of them are to be found in those epistles of Paul which are disputed by Baur.

<sup>2</sup> The occurrence of *σπλάγχνα*, such a decided Pauline word, one would think, would be an argument rather in favour of the genuineness of the Epistle to Philemon. Baur's words are, "auch der zwar nicht unpaulinische, hier aber dreimal nach einander vorkommende Ausdruck *σπλάγχνα*, vers. 7, 12, 20, muss auffallen."—Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Embryo einer christlichen Dichtung.

this world he regains for ever in Christianity, or that the world and Christianity are related together as separation and union, as time and eternity; and that the spirit of the historical narrative is expressed in the words of ver. 15: "For perhaps he hath departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever."<sup>1</sup> Such an explanation carries with it its own refutation, and deserves the censure which Alford pronounces: "I am persuaded, if the section on the Epistle to Philemon had been first published separately and without the author's name, the world might well have supposed it written by some defender of the authenticity of the Epistle, as a caricature on Baur's general line of argument."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Baur himself confesses that in objecting to the Epistle to Philemon he subjects himself to the reproach of hypercriticism, of an excessive distrust, and of a scepticism attacking everything.<sup>3</sup>

The Epistle to Philemon was probably preserved because it was sent along with the Epistle to the Colossians, to which it may be considered as an appendix. When the Colossian Epistle was read in the church, it would be read along with it. Besides, Archippus, one of the persons to whom it is addressed, was connected with the ministry of the church of Colosse (Col. iv. 17).

## II. THE PERSON ADDRESSED.

This Epistle was primarily addressed to Philemon, the master of Onesimus. Along with him are mentioned Apphia, who is generally supposed to be his wife, and Archippus, a minister of Colosse, whom some regard as his son, and the church which assembled in the house of Philemon (Philem. 1, 2). It would appear that Philemon was one of the apostle's converts; for this is implied in the words, "Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> "Bei keinem andern Briefe kommt die Kritik mehr in Gefahr, sich den Vorwurf der Hyperkritik, eines übertriebenen Misstrauens, einer alles angreifenden Zweifelsucht zuzuziehen, als bei dem Briefe an den Philemon, wenn sie auch ihn nach der Berechtigung seines apostolischen Namens fragt."—Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 89.



self besides" (Philem. 19). Paul had never been at Colosse; but Philemon may have come in contact with him at Ephesus during the apostle's residence of three years in that city, and perhaps along with Epaphras may have been one of the instruments in introducing Christianity into his native city. Paul calls Philemon a fellow-worker (*συνεργός*), from which some infer that he was an office-bearer in the church of Colosse. Grotius, Doddridge, Neander, and Lange<sup>1</sup> suppose that he was one of the presbyters or bishops, whilst Michaelis thinks that he was a deacon.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, no sufficient reason for either opinion: the word *συνεργός* might well be employed by Paul to denote any active Christian. Hence the usual opinion is that he was a layman, a man of substance and position in Colosse. A church, probably under the charge of Archippus, met in his house. Ecclesiastical tradition names him bishop of Colosse,<sup>3</sup> and causes him to suffer martyrdom in the reign of Nero. According to another tradition, he was bishop of Gaza. His supposed house at Colosse was, according to Theodoret, still pointed out in the fifth century.

Wieseler supposes that Philemon was a native of Laodicea, and that consequently the Epistle was sent not to Colosse, but to Laodicea. This view was adopted in support of his opinion that the Epistle to Philemon is the same as the epistle to Laodicea alluded to in Col. iv. 16. His argument is, that immediately after the Colossians were exhorted to read the epistle from Laodicea, the apostle adds, "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord,—that thou fulfil it" (Col. iv. 16, 17); from which it is inferred that Archippus belonged to Laodicea. But Philemon was of the same city with Archippus (Philem. 1, 2), and therefore must also have been a native of Laodicea.<sup>4</sup> The futility of this argument has already been discussed, in considering the number of Paul's Epistles.<sup>5</sup> The injunction *εἰπατε Ἀρχίππῳ* is addressed to the Colossians, and not to the church of Laodicea; and, besides, we are expressly informed that

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Const. Apost.* vii. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apost. Zeital.*, pp. 450, 451.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 32, 33 of this work.

Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, was a Colossian: "with Onesimus, who is one of you" (ὃς ἐστὶν ἐξ ὑμῶν, Col. iv. 9). Both Philemon and Archippus, then, were natives of Colosse, and therefore the Epistle was sent to that city, and not, as Wieseler supposes, to Laodicea. Indeed, as Paley observes, we have here an instance of an undesigned coincidence. "An assertion in the Epistle to the Colossians, namely, that 'Onesimus was one of them,' is verified, not by any mention of Colosse, any the most distant intimation concerning the place of Philemon's abode, but by stating Onesimus to be Philemon's servant, and by joining in the salutation Philemon with Archippus; for this Archippus, when we go back to the Epistle to the Colossians, appears to have been an inhabitant of that city, and, as it would seem, to have held an office of authority in that church. The case stands thus. Take the Epistle to the Colossians alone, and no circumstance is discoverable which makes out the assertion that Onesimus was 'one of them.' Take the Epistle to Philemon alone, and nothing at all appears concerning the place to which Philemon or his servant Onesimus belonged. For anything that is said in the Epistle, Philemon might have been a Thessalonian, a Philippian, or an Ephesian, as well as a Colossian. Put the two epistles together, and the matter is clear." And he adds: "All that is necessary to be added in this place is, that this correspondency evinces the genuineness of one epistle as well as of the other."<sup>1</sup>

The date of the Epistle has already been determined in discussing the Epistle to the Colossians. Both epistles were sent by the same bearer, Onesimus, and to the same town, Colosse; and in both, salutations were sent from the same persons. Which epistle was written first, must, from the nature of the case, remain undetermined. The Epistle to Philemon, then, was written by Paul at Rome in A.D. 63, toward the close of his imprisonment.

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is a letter of recommendation of Onesimus to his master Philemon. Onesimus was the runaway slave of

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Philemon, No. I.

Philemon. From the expression, "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that to my account" (Philem. 18), some suppose that Onesimus had been guilty of the crime of robbing his master, and had fled to escape punishment. Hence Conybeare and Howson represent him as belonging to the "dregs and offal of society."<sup>1</sup> But this is going beyond the record. Onesimus wronged Philemon by depriving him of his services: it is not necessary to impute any additional crime to him. He does not appear to have been of a bad natural disposition. Whatever may have been the motive of his desertion, he fled to Rome, that general resort of all nations. Here he came in contact with Paul, and was by him converted to Christianity; hence the apostle calls him "my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (Philem. 10). He became eminently serviceable to the apostle, and obtained a large share in his affections. The runaway slave of Philemon was transformed into Paul's "faithful and beloved brother" (Col. iv. 9). Not only was his character renewed by the Spirit, but there must have been something exceedingly amiable and attractive in his natural disposition. The apostle says that "he was a brother beloved by him both in the flesh"—according to his natural disposition—"and in the Lord,"—according to his renewed character<sup>2</sup> (Philem. 16). Paul would have retained him that he might minister unto him in the bonds of the gospel, but he felt that he could not do so without the permission of Philemon, and therefore he determined to restore him to his master. An opportunity of doing so having occurred, Paul sent Onesimus to Colosse, bearing with him this letter to Philemon.

The design of this Epistle was to procure a favourable reception for Onesimus. The apostle entreats Philemon to forgive him, and to restore him to his favour; to receive him not now as a slave, but as a brother beloved both in the flesh and in the Lord; and he adds, "Having this confidence in thy obedience, I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say" (Philem. 21). We are not

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> See some excellent remarks on the character of Onesimus in Dr. Hackett's able article in *Smith's Dictionary*.

informed what were the effects of this Epistle, but these can hardly be doubted. Such a letter, so feelingly and delicately expressed, written by Paul's own hand, could not have been sent in vain to Philemon, Paul's own convert. As Chrysostom expresses it, Philemon must have been no Christian, nor even man, but a stone or a beast, if he did not grant all Paul's requests. Doubtless Onesimus would be kindly received, his desertion and all his past offences would be forgiven, and he would occupy a far higher position in his master's affection and confidence than before his flight. Philemon would feel that, in receiving him, he was receiving a brother in the Lord. Nay, it cannot be doubted that Philemon would attend to the hint conveyed in these words, "Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say," and would restore Onesimus to liberty.

According to ecclesiastical tradition, Onesimus was liberated by his master and returned to Paul, by whom he was ordained bishop of Berea in Macedonia, and afterwards suffered martyrdom at Rome.<sup>1</sup> In the epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, an Onesimus is mentioned as bishop of Ephesus, and hence some suppose that he was the manumitted slave of Philemon;<sup>2</sup> but for this supposition there is no other reason than the identity of names:

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to Philemon commences with a salutation addressed to Philemon and the church in his house, and with a thanksgiving to God for the love of Philemon toward all saints, his faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, his zeal in the service of Christ, and his beneficence toward believers (vers. 1-7). The apostle then enters upon the special object of his Epistle. He tells Philemon that he has a favour to ask,—that although as an apostle of Christ he might command his obedience, yet that rather as aged and a prisoner he addressed him on behalf of his son, whom he had begotten in his bonds,

<sup>1</sup> *Constitut. apost.* vii. 46 ; *Niceph. H. E.* iii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Ephes.* c. 1.

Onesimus,<sup>1</sup> who, though formerly unprofitable, was now highly serviceable in the ministry; he besought him to receive him into favour, to forgive the wrong he had done, to welcome him as if he were Paul himself. He, Paul, would repay any loss sustained, although Philemon was indebted to him for his salvation. He expresses his confidence that Philemon would not only grant his request, but would even go beyond it, and do more than he asked (vers. 8–21). He then desires him to prepare for him a lodging, as he had the near prospect of deliverance, and intended soon to visit Colosse. He sends to him salutations from those friends and fellow-workers who were with him, and concludes the Epistle with his apostolic benediction (vers. 22–25).

#### V. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

All the other epistles, with the probable exception of the Epistle to the Galatians, were written by means of amanuenses; but Paul was so anxious about the reception of Onesimus, that he wrote this Epistle himself. "I Paul have written it with my own hand" (Philem. 19). It also differs from the other epistles, in being a private epistle: it was a letter of friendship addressed to an individual. Those to Timothy and Titus were likewise addressed to individuals, but they had a certain official character which this Epistle wants: they were pastoral addresses. There is no distinct statement of doctrine in this Epistle: it is entirely occupied with the private concerns of a Christian family at Colosse. It can hardly be doubted that the apostle wrote several such letters. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians he offers to send letters of commendation (1 Cor. xvi. 3), showing that it was not unusual for him to do so; yet this is the only private letter of the apostle remaining, and certainly it is a precious remnant of his epistolary correspondence.

The Epistle to Philemon has gained the admiration of all commentators for the courtesy, tact, and address displayed in

<sup>1</sup> The emphatic position of Ὀνήσιμον at the end of verse 10, not observed in our translation, merits attention: "I beseech thee concerning my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus."

it. The apostle, whilst he maintains a dignified demeanour, not omitting to mention his apostolic dignity and the obligation under which Philemon lay to him, yet combines all this with love and humility: he does not wish the acquiescence of Philemon to proceed from necessity, but from his own free will. He commends Onesimus with admirable tact and address. He does not extenuate the wrong committed, but urges the change to the better, the services which Onesimus rendered to himself, and the love which he bore to him. He, as it were, takes the place of Onesimus: Philemon is to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul, and he is to treat Paul as if he had committed the faults of Onesimus: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (Philem. 17-19). And he adds that he cannot entertain a doubt that his request will be abundantly granted. "The qualities," as Dr. Davidson observes, "which dictated the composition of this epistle are eminently attractive. Dignity, generosity, prudence, friendship, affection, politeness, skilful address, purity, are apparent. Hence it has been called with great propriety, *the polite epistle*. True delicacy, fine address, consummate courtesy, nice strokes of rhetoric, make it a unique specimen of the epistolary style. It shows the perfect Christian gentleman. Doddridge has compared it to an epistle of Pliny, supposed to have been written on a similar occasion, pronouncing it far superior as a human composition, though antiquity furnishes no example of the epistolary style equal to that of the younger Pliny to Sabinius."<sup>1</sup> Luther also, as quoted by Alford, has the following striking remarks: "This Epistle sheweth a right noble, lovely example of Christian love. Here we see how Paul layeth himself out for the poor Onesimus, and with all his means pleadeth his cause with his master, and so setteth himself as if he were Onesimus, and had himself done wrong to Philemon. Yet all this doeth he not with power or force, as if he had

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction to the N. T.*, vol. i. p. 166 (new edition). See for similar commendations, Meyer's *Der Brief an Philemon*, p. 356; Ewald's *Send-schreiben*, pp. 458-460.

right thereto ; but he strippeth himself of his right, and thus enforceth Philemon to forego his right also. Even as Christ did for us with God the Father, thus also doth Paul for Onesimus with Philemon ; for Christ also stripped Himself of His right, and by love and humility enforced the Father to lay aside His wrath and power, and to take us to His grace for the sake of Christ, who lovingly pleadeth our cause, and with all His heart layeth Himself out for us. For we are all His Onesimi, to my thinking."<sup>1</sup>

The relation in which Christianity stands to slavery is seen from this Epistle and from that to the Colossians. In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul sends special admonitions to slaves and masters. He enjoins obedience on slaves, and assigns, as a motive, a regard to Christ, who is their great Master, and exhorts them to look forward for the reward of faithful service, not in this world, but in the next (Col. iii. 22-24). And he commands masters to give unto their slaves those things which are just and equal, and to remember that they also have a Master in heaven (Col. iv. 1). It is to be observed that Christianity does not directly forbid slavery : Paul does not enjoin masters to emancipate their slaves, nor does he order Philemon to liberate Onesimus. On the contrary, he asserts that Christianity made no alteration on their social position ; it conferred spiritual freedom, but did not break the bonds of servitude, or bestow liberty from earthly masters. But still the indirect effects of Christianity naturally resulted in freedom. The spiritual equality conferred by it was too great to admit of such a discrepancy as master and slave : both were made by the gospel beloved brethren in Christ ; and hence the master could no longer receive the slave as a slave, but above a slave, as a brother beloved in the Lord (Philem. 16). "The gospel of Christ," observes Bishop Wordsworth, "by christianizing the master, enfranchised the slave. It did not legislate about names and forms, but it went to the root of the evil. It spoke to the heart of man. When the heart of the master was stirred with divine grace, and was warmed with the love of Christ, the rest would soon follow. The lips would speak kind words, the hand would do liberal

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 115.

things. Every Onesimus would be treated by every Philemon as a beloved brother in Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

The most important commentaries on the Epistle to Philemon are those of Koch (Zurich 1846), Meyer (Göttingen 1848; third edition, 1865), De Wette (Leipzig 1847), Wiesinger (Königsberg 1850), Ewald (Göttingen 1857).

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *Greek Testament: St Paul's Epistles*, p. 336. “That short letter,” he well observes, “dictated from ‘the hired house’ of the aged apostle, ‘Christ’s bondsman’ at Rome, may be called a divine act of emancipation: one far more powerful than any edict of manumission promulgated by sovereigns and senates,—one from whose sacred principles all human statutes for the abolition of slavery derive their virtue.”



## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

WITH the exception of the Pastoral Epistles, the Epistle to the Ephesians has been more objected to by recent critics than any of the other Pauline Epistles. This seems to arise from its general nature and its want of any special references, rather than from any defect in the evidence by which its authenticity is supported. The external evidence in its favour is not defective; and the internal evidence, arising from its style and diction, is at least equal to that of any other of the Pauline Epistles. The testimony of Ignatius (A.D. 115) is indeed somewhat doubtful, and is perhaps not to be insisted upon. Writing to the Ephesians, he says: "Ye are initiated in the mysteries of Paul, the holy, the martyr, worthy of all blessing, who in all his epistles (ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ) makes mention of you in Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup> If the genuineness of these words were undoubted, there is here a clear assertion of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Some, indeed, assert that the words ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ can only mean "in every epistle;" but this cannot be their meaning in accordance with the context: Paul does not make mention of the Ephesians in every epistle. The words can only here mean, "in the whole epistle," that is, throughout the Epistle which Paul wrote to the Ephesians; in a similar manner as *πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ* (Eph. ii. 21)<sup>2</sup> does not

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Ephes.* c. 12: Παύλου συμμύσται τοῦ ἁγιασμένου, τοῦ μαρτυρημένου, ἀξιομακαρίστου, ὃς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ μνημονεύει ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

<sup>2</sup> The correct reading; not *πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομή*, as in the *textus receptus*. See Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 123.

signify "every building," but "the whole building." But the genuineness of the words is doubtful. They are only found in the shorter Greek recension, whilst in the larger *πάντοτε* is used in their stead;<sup>1</sup> and in the Syriac recension, the whole chapter from which they are taken is wanting. The allusion by Polycarp (A.D. 116) is more unquestionable: "I trust ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures. As in these Scriptures it is said, 'Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath'" (Eph. iv. 26).<sup>2</sup> Here there is an express quotation from the Epistle to the Ephesians; and the objection of Meyer, that, from the use of the phrase "Holy Scriptures," Polycarp must mean the Old Testament,<sup>3</sup> is without weight, considering the exactness of the quotation. Valentinus (A.D. 130), as we learn from Hippolytus, quoted Eph. iii. 14-18, employing it in support of his Gnostic opinions;<sup>4</sup> Marcion (A.D. 140), as Tertullian informs us, admitted the Epistle to the Ephesians into his catalogue, though he called it the Epistle to the Laodiceans.<sup>5</sup> Irenæus (A.D. 178) observes: "As Paul says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 'For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones'" (Eph. v. 30).<sup>6</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 196) observes: "Writing to the Ephesians, Paul has unfolded that which is inquired after, saying, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'" (Eph. iv. 13).<sup>7</sup> And again: "Therefore he says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 'Be ye subject one to another in the fear of the Lord'" (Eph. v. 21).<sup>8</sup> And Tertullian, in

<sup>1</sup> The larger Greek recension reads, *ὅς πάντοτε ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσιν αὐτοῦ μνημονεύει ἡμῶν*: "who is always mindful of us in his prayers."

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Philippens*, c. 12: *Confido enim vos bene exercitatos esse in sacris literis. Ut his scripturis dictum est: "Irascimini, et nolite peccare." Et "Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram."*

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio Hæres.* vi. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*, v. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* v. 2, 3: *Καθὼς Παῦλός φησιν, ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἐφεσίους ἐπιστολῇ· ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος, ἐκ τοῦ σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ.*

<sup>7</sup> *Pudag.* i. c. 5: *Ἐφεσίους γραφῶν, ἀπεκάλυψε τὸ ζητούμενον, ὃδὲ πως λίγων Μίχρη καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητά τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

<sup>8</sup> *Strom.* iv. c. 8: *Διὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἐφεσίους γράφει· ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ.*

his refutation of Marcion, says: "I pass on to another epistle which we have ascribed to the Ephesians, but the heretics to the Laodiceans."<sup>1</sup>

The internal evidence is even stronger than the external; all the striking peculiarities of the Pauline style are to be found in this Epistle. The fervour and warmth of the apostle's temperament are marked by a frequent use of superlatives, strong expressions, and compounds of *ὑπέρ*. He speaks of the exceeding greatness (*τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος*, Eph. i. 19) of the divine power; of the exceeding riches (*τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον*, Eph. ii. 7) of the divine grace; of himself as less than the least (*τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ*, Eph. iii. 8) of all saints; of knowing the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (*ὑπερβάλλουσιν τῆς γνώσεως*, Eph. iii. 19); and of Christ ascending far above all heavens (*ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν*, Eph. iv. 10). There are also numerous examples of lengthened periods, formed by an accumulation of sentences without any intimation of a pause, one idea pressing upon another, which is so highly characteristic of the style of the apostle. Thus, for example, Eph. i. 3-14, 15-23, ii. 1-7, iii. 1-12, are but single sentences, containing several ideas connected by a series of participles. So also, as Paley remarks, there is a frequent use of the word *riches* (*πλοῦτος*) in a metaphorical sense, a favourite expression of the apostle, which is often employed in his other epistles, but nowhere so frequently as in this Epistle: "The riches of His glory," "the riches of His grace," "the riches of Christ," "the riches of the glory of His inheritance" (Eph. i. 7, 18, ii. 7, iii. 8, 16). And it is observed that this metaphorical use of the word, though so frequently employed by Paul, does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, except once in the Epistle of James (Jas. ii. 5).<sup>2</sup> There is also that notable characteristic of Paul's writings,—the species of digression or parenthesis, which Paley calls "going off at a word." There are two instances of this in this Epistle: the one in Eph. iv. 8-11, where a parenthetic clause is introduced at the word *ascended*; and the

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Marcion*, v. 11: Prætereo his et de alia epistola, quam nos ad Ephesios præscriptam habemus, hæretici vero ad Laodiceos.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*: Ephesians, No. II.

other in Eph. v. 12-15, when the same occurs at the word *light*.<sup>1</sup>

The first critic who cast doubts on the genuineness of this Epistle was Schleiermacher; he was followed by Usteri; and De Wette afterwards completely rejected it, supposing it to be a mere imitation of the Epistle to the Colossians.<sup>2</sup> Baur, Schwegler, and other writers of the school of Tübingen, followed.<sup>3</sup> Ewald regards it as spurious, and omits it in his *Epistles of the Apostle Paul*. Weisse and Hausrath reject it;<sup>4</sup> and in our own country, Dr. Davidson, in the last edition of his *Introduction to the New Testament*, has decided against its reception.

De Wette considers the Epistle to be a verbose expansion (*eine wörtreiche Erweiterung*) of the Epistle to the Colossians. He describes it as entirely dependent upon that Epistle, as a writing unworthy of the apostle, as the work of an imitator, as rich in words but poor in thoughts, and as deviating from the genuine epistles of Paul both in doctrine and diction.<sup>5</sup> These objections have been frequently met and answered. Meyer, in his excellent commentary, discusses them;<sup>6</sup> and Dr. Davidson, in the old edition of his *Introduction*, treats of them in detail, and with reasoning so convincing, that it is difficult to understand the grounds on which he appears from his later edition to have rejected the Epistle.<sup>7</sup>

The objections of De Wette are reproduced with greater freshness and vigour by Dr. Davidson in his last edition. His objections to the genuineness of the Epistle may be summed up in the following particulars: 1. There is such a striking resemblance between this Epistle and the letter to the Colossians, that it must be considered as a mere reproduction

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Hore Paulineæ*: Ephesians, No. III.

<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher's *Vorl. über Einl. N. T.* p. 165; Usteri's *Paulin. Lehrbegr.*; De Wette's *Einleitung N. T.* p. 312 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 3 ff.; Schwegler's *Nachapost. Zeital.* ii. p. 330 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Weisse's *Dogmat.* i. p. 146; Hausrath's *Apostel Paulus*.

<sup>5</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung N. T.* pp. 313-320.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, pp. 21-26. See also Olshausen *On the Ephesians*, pp. 117-121; Hensen's *der Apostel Paulus*, p. 629 ff.; and Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., *Prolegomena*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>7</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 352-360.

of the latter, with certain verbal modifications. 2. Un-apostolic ideas and phrases, and also numerous un-Pauline words, occur. 3. The mode of writing and style are perceptibly inferior to Paul's. 4. The Epistle betrays a want of specific purpose.<sup>1</sup> For these reasons, Dr. Davidson considers that the Epistle was not Paul's, but was composed by some imitator after his death, before the close of the first century. Let us examine these objections in detail.

1. The first objection adduced by Dr. Davidson is that this Epistle is but an *imitation of the Epistle to the Colossians*. "The writer," he observes, "is dependent on the other to so great an extent as to put an apostle out of the question. Paul could not have been so poor in ideas and words as to reproduce himself in an inferior degree."<sup>2</sup> That there is a closer resemblance between these two Epistles than between any other two of Paul's epistles, is undoubted; but then it is not such a resemblance as proves servile imitation. Its nature and extent are reserved as the subject of future consideration;<sup>3</sup> and, to avoid repetition, it is only necessary at present to observe that in the doctrinal parts of the Epistles it is a resemblance rather of words than of ideas.<sup>4</sup> The resemblance has been sufficiently explained from the fact that the two Epistles were written at the same time, and to churches not far apart from each other, and in a similar moral condition.<sup>5</sup>

2. Dr. Davidson objects that there are in the Epistle *un-Pauline ideas and words*.<sup>6</sup> The phrase "apostles and prophets" (Eph. iii. 5, iv. 11, ii. 20) is said to betray a post-apostolic age. This, however, is an assertion which is incapable of proof. It is also a mere assumption to suppose, as Dr. Davidson does, that by "prophets" are here meant *Christian* prophets, and not rather the prophets of the Old Testament. So also it is asserted that the statement of the doctrine of justification in Eph. ii. 8-10,—“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 384-392.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, vol. i. pp. 384, 385. <sup>3</sup> See dissertation attached to this Epistle.

<sup>4</sup> See Reuss, *Geschichte N. T.* p. 103. <sup>5</sup> See Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 385-388, 391, 392.

of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,"—is strange and inappropriate. But there is nothing inappropriate in Paul insisting on the great doctrine of justification; and there is nothing un-Pauline in the mode of statement.<sup>1</sup> It is the same doctrine of justification by grace and through faith, which establishes the law, and transforms men into servants of righteousness, which is taught by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. The admonition against stealing (Eph. iv. 28) is said to be unsuitable to a church where the apostle had laboured three years, especially the mild form it assumes. But it was no more unsuitable to warn the Ephesians against that vice than it is in our days to warn professing Christians against it; nor is there any reason to suppose that the primitive Christian communities were freer from that vice than those of our own day.<sup>2</sup> The demonological doctrine, especially where the devil is described as "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), is said to be un-Pauline. But the doctrine of evil spirits is decidedly Pauline, and we are not at liberty to affirm that any peculiar statements on the subject in this Epistle are not in accordance with Paul's views: they do not contradict his former statements, but only add to them. The phrase, "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3), is considered un-Pauline, because Paul nowhere expresses the idea that the natural state of mankind is one in which they are subject to the wrath of God. But the doctrine of human depravity enters largely into the Pauline theology; and although the precise terms "children of wrath" are not elsewhere used, yet it is asserted that men are under the curse (Gal. iii. 10),—a phrase which may justly be considered as nearly equivalent. The explanation given of Ps. lxxviii. 18, in chap. iv. 8, which is objected to, is not dissimilar to Paul's typological interpretation of the Old Testament in his other epistles, and indeed bears a close resemblance to a

<sup>1</sup> The same objection is made by De Wette, who maintains that it is un-Pauline: he is answered by Neander, *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> The same observation applies to the admonition against drunkenness (Eph. v. 18), which is also objected to as inappropriate.

similar explanation of Deut. xxx. 12 in Rom. x. 6, 7. With regard to the alleged un-Pauline words—the so-called ἄπαξ λεγόμενα—it is to be observed that it is highly unreasonable to consider Paul as restricted to the use of certain words and phrases, and that these ἄπαξ λεγόμενα are less numerous than in the Epistle to the Colossians.

3. Dr. Davidson further objects to the *degeneracy of style* which he considers is apparent in the Epistle to the Ephesians when compared with the Epistle to the Colossians. "There is," he observes, "a fulness of expression which partakes of the verbose and redundant. The words are manifold, without conveying proportionate ideas. A poverty of meaning is often observable beneath a superfluity of terms."<sup>1</sup> This is a mere subjective reason, founded on individual opinion. Even although its truth were admitted, yet it could hardly be regarded as a proof of spuriousness. Many critics consider the Second Epistle to the Corinthians as inferior to the First, but this inferiority has never been advanced as an objection to the genuineness of that Epistle. But the ground of this objection is far from being admitted by many students of Scripture. The Epistle to the Ephesians has been praised as the sublimest and most profound of all Paul's epistles. Luther reckons this Epistle as among "the noblest books of the New Testament, which show Christ to you, and teach you all things which is necessary to know, although you should never see or hear any other book or doctrine."<sup>2</sup> So also Coleridge remarks: "In this, the divinest composition of man, is every doctrine of Christianity: first, those doctrines peculiar to Christianity; and secondly, those precepts common to it with natural religion."<sup>3</sup> When such a difference of opinion exists, it is

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 388-391.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Meyer, *Epheser*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Table Talk*, p. 82, quoted by Eadie, *Ephesians*, Introduction, p. 38. Dr. Davidson himself, in his earlier edition, observes: "It is surprising that a writer of De Wette's taste should pronounce the Epistle a *verbose enlargement* of the Colossian, charging it with multiplicity of words and poverty of ideas. Nothing appears to us more groundless than the alleged poverty of thought. The language is rich and copious, but it is everywhere pregnant with meaning. If the Epistle has more words than that sent to the Colossians, it has more ideas." —Vol. ii. pp. 358, 359.

surely unreasonable to affirm that the Epistle displays such a poverty of ideas that it cannot be Paul's.

4. The last objection of Dr. Davidson is that the Epistle betrays a *want of specific purpose*: it deals in generalities, so that the reader can neither discover the occasion that called it forth, nor the peculiar conditions of the persons to whom it was addressed.<sup>1</sup> And the same objection was made by De Wette: "The Epistle is destitute of all speciality in design and references, and is almost nothing else than a verbose expansion of the Epistle to the Colossians."<sup>2</sup> The general object of the Epistle, the want of all special purpose, and the absence of personal references, are admitted, and in these respects there is a difference between this Epistle and the other epistles of Paul. But then these circumstances are also against the idea of its being the work of a copier; "for," as Credner remarks, "if the Epistle has a want of specific purpose, it will follow that the forger could have no design in writing it."<sup>3</sup> This is, however, impossible to suppose. A forger or copier must have some design in his imposition. And especially, a forger of an Epistle to the Ephesians—a church to which Paul was so closely connected by a residence of three years—would not write without inserting in the Epistle references to what occurred to the apostle in Ephesus, and sending salutations to Christians resident in that city.

Baur's objections are of a different character. He takes the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians together, and endeavours to prove that they contain Gnostic elements, and could not have been composed before the second century, when the Gnostic system was developed. These objections have already been discussed when considering the Epistle to the Colossians, and do not again require to be adverted to. They are opposed by Dr. Davidson, and shown to be untenable.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 335.

<sup>4</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 396-401.



## II. THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS.

Ephesus, the capital of Ionia, and under the Romans of Proconsular Asia, was, at the time when the apostle wrote his Epistle, a large and flourishing city. It was situated on the river Cayster, not far from the coast, between Smyrna and Miletus, and was built partly on Mount Prion, partly on Mount Coressus, and partly on the valley which separates these hills. The situation of the city was favourable, not only for maritime, but also for inland commerce, as it lay on the main road of traffic between the East and the West. The magnificent temple of Artemis or Diana, reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world, added to the celebrity of the city. Its erection commenced even before the Persian Empire. Croesus, king of Lydia, and all the Greek cities of Asia, contributed to the building. After being burned by Herostratus on the day on which Alexander the Great was born (B.C. 355), it was rebuilt with greater splendour. In the time of Paul, the temple of Diana was in all its glory, and pilgrims from all nations flocked to its shrine. Ephesus is famous in the history of the Church. Here, as tradition informs us, the Apostle John spent his later years and died in old age; and here also, as was alleged, the Virgin Mary was buried. Here one of the five famous councils of the Church was held. The glory of Ephesus has long since departed, and nothing remains of the metropolis of Asia but a heap of ruins and a small village called Ajasoluk or Asalook, said to be a corruption of *ἅγιος θεόλογος*, the name by which the Apostle John was known.<sup>1</sup>

Christianity was introduced into Ephesus by Paul during his second missionary journey. After spending three months at Corinth, he sailed to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19). Here he preached Christ in the synagogue, with such acceptance that he was requested to remain. At this time, however, his stay was short, and he departed to keep the feast at Jerusalem. He left behind him his converts and fellow-labourers, Aquila and Priscilla, and they, afterwards assisted by Apollos, carried on that work which Paul had so favourably commenced. On

<sup>1</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. p. 193 ff.

his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Ephesus (Acts xix. 1). On this occasion he remained three years, choosing Ephesus as a centre for the diffusion of Christianity. At first he preached in the Jewish synagogue; but when the Jews continued obstinate and unbelieving, he abandoned it, and taught in the school of Tyrannus. From the account in the Acts, it would appear that a numerous church was formed; the word of God grew mightily, and prevailed; all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord; and the jealousy of the fabricators of the shrines of Diana was excited lest their gains should disappear (Acts xix. 26). After the uproar occasioned by the worshippers of Diana, Paul departed from Ephesus. He did not visit it on his last journey to Jerusalem, but met with the elders of the church at Miletus, and delivered there his parting address (Acts xx. 17). It is uncertain whether he revisited Ephesus on his release from his Roman imprisonment; but it would appear that at least his First Epistle to Timothy was sent to Ephesus. "As I besought thee," writes the apostle, "to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia" (1 Tim. i. 3).

The church of Ephesus, as appears from the contents of the Epistle, was composed both of Jews and Gentiles. The apostle addresses both parties, and insists on the unity which Christianity had established between them. Still the Gentile element prevailed to such an extent, that the church might be regarded as on the whole of Gentile composition. This is evident from the manner in which the apostle addresses them: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands" (Eph. ii. 11). And again: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. iii. 1). And this seems to have been the case with all the churches founded by Paul. The nucleus was Jewish, but after a time the Gentile element so greatly preponderated that they might be regarded as Gentile churches. And this fact is, as regards the Ephesian church, in perfect accordance with what we read in the Acts of the Apostles. At first, Paul preached to the Jews, and gained some converts among them; but afterwards it was the

Gentiles who chiefly received the gospel. And the success of the gospel among the worshippers of Diana was so great, that the mystical books which they brought together and burned amounted in value to a vast sum of money; and not only in Ephesus, but throughout all Asia, many of the worshippers of false gods turned to the Lord (Acts xix. 19, 26). The riot at Ephesus was occasioned by the large number of converts which Paul made among the Gentiles. Hence, then, the statements in the Epistle, that those to whom Paul wrote were chiefly Gentiles, are not to be regarded—as is frequently done—as a reason in proof of the opinion that this Epistle was not addressed to the Ephesians; because such statements are in entire conformity with the account of the state of the church as given in the Acts.

Many critics, who admit the genuineness of this Epistle, do not suppose it to have been addressed primarily or exclusively to the Ephesians. The arguments on which they ground their opinion are partly the state of the text, but chiefly indications in the Epistle.

The reading of the first verse is disputed: the genuineness of the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* is regarded as doubtful; and if these words are omitted, there is nothing in the Epistle itself to prove that it was addressed to the Ephesians. These words are wanting in the two oldest manuscripts. The Vatican (B) and the Sinaitic (Ⲡ) have the words not in the text, but written on the margin, and that, according to Tischendorf, by later hands. In another much inferior manuscript (No. 67, belonging to the eleventh century) the words were originally in the text, but have been erased by a later hand.

The opinion of the Fathers is also regarded as doubtful. Tertullian observes: “I pass by here another Epistle which we have inscribed to the Ephesians, but heretics (the followers of Marcion) to the Laodiceans. According to the true testimony of the Church, we suppose this Epistle to have been sent to the Ephesians; but Marcion has sought to alter (or interpolate, *interpolare*) the title (*titulum*), as if he had made a most diligent inquiry into the matter. Yet the titles are of no importance, since the apostle wrote to all when he wrote to some.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*, v. 11 and 17: *Ecclesie quidem veritate epis-*

Marcion, according to Tertullian, altered or interpolated the title or subscription of the epistle; but whether he also altered the text is not affirmed. It may be, though this is doubtful, that in the manuscript which he used the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were omitted, and that he inserted ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ. We are not, however, with Meyer and Bleek, to infer from this that Tertullian himself did not read ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, because, as they allege, if he had, he would have charged Marcion not simply with altering the title, but with corrupting the text, and would have appealed to it, and not to the testimony of the Church.<sup>1</sup> But the testimony of the Church could only have been founded on the reading of the text, and therefore these two must be regarded as substantially the same.

The following passage in the writings of Basil is also appealed to: "And writing to the Ephesians, as truly united by knowledge to Him *who is* (τῷ ὄντι), he called them in a peculiar sense those *who are* (ὄντας), saying, 'To the saints *who are* (τοῖς ὄνσιν), and the faithful in Christ Jesus.' For so those before us have transmitted it; and so we have found it in the ancient copies."<sup>2</sup> We have nothing to do with the childish nature of Basil's argument, his play on the words τοῖς ὄνσιν. It must be admitted that the "ancient copies," to which he refers, omitted the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ; for only on this supposition can any sense be attached to his words.<sup>3</sup>

The meaning of the similar statement of Jerome is not so evident. "Some," he observes, "think that the saints and faithful at Ephesus are addressed by a term descriptive of essence, as if they had been named they *who are* from Him *who is*. But others suppose that the Epistle was written not simply to those *who are*, but to those *who are at Ephesus*, saints

tolam istam ad Ephesios habemus emissam, non ad Laodiceos, sed Marcion ei titulum aliquando interpolare gestiit, quare et in isto diligentissimus explorator. Nihil autem de titulis interest, cum ad omnes apostolos scripserit, dum ad quosdam.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 4 f.; Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 41, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Basil, *contr. Eunom.* ii. 19: Τοῖς Ἐφεσίοις ἐπιστέλλων, ὡς γνησίως ἡνωμένοις τῷ ὄντι δι' ἐπιγνώσεως, ὄντας αὐτοὺς ἰδιαζόντως ἀνόμασεν εἰπὼν τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς ὄνσιν καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. οὕτω γὰρ οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν παραδιδώκουσι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τοῖς παλαιαῖς τῶν ἀντιγράφων εὐρήκαμεν.

<sup>3</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 327-330 (old edition).

and faithful.”<sup>1</sup> Here it is possible that Jerome is speaking of two classes of manuscripts, one of which wanted and the other contained the words *ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ*; but it is also probable, as Meyer observes, that he is speaking of persons who attached a mystical meaning to the words *τοῖς οὖδιν*, without any indication of the omission of the words *ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ*. Jerome cannot therefore be adduced as a decisive authority in favour of the omission of these words.

Thus, then, the external evidence for the omission of *ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ* amounts to this: the words are wanting<sup>2</sup> in B, *8*, and were found omitted in certain MSS. by Marcion, Basil, and possibly Jerome. The external evidence in their favour is, on the other hand, overwhelmingly greater. All other manuscripts extant, and all versions whatever, possess them; and the Fathers universally, even Basil and Jerome, received the Epistle as addressed to the Ephesians. Besides, all the other epistles of Paul are addressed to some church, even those which were of a circular character, as the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which is addressed to “the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia” (2 Cor. i. 1), and the Epistle to the Galatians, addressed “to the churches of Galatia” (Gal. i. 2). The omission of an address is a thing unprecedented. Besides, if the words *ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ* were omitted, the passage would yield no sense: “To the saints which are, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” This is evident from the various attempts which have been made to derive a meaning from it. Thus Schneckenburger renders it, “To the saints who are so in very deed;” Weiss, “To the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus;” and Credner, “To the saints who are in very deed also believers.”

How the words *ἐν ᾿Εφέσῳ* ever came to be omitted need not be inquired into. It may have been from an error in transcription, in a similar manner as the words *ἐν ᾿Ρώμῃ* (Rom. i. 1) are omitted in several manuscripts. Or it is very possible

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *ad Eph.* i. 1: *Quidam putant eos qui Ephesi sunt sancti et fideles essentie vocabulo nuncupatos ut ab eo qui est, hi qui sunt appellentur. Alii vero simpliciter non ad eos qui sunt, sed qui Ephesi sancti et fideles sunt, scripturn arbitrantur.*

<sup>2</sup> The Vatican and the Sinaitic have *πρὸς ᾿Εφ᾿εῖους* in the title.

that the general character of the Epistle, and the want of any specific references, caused certain transcribers to reject them, as it appeared doubtful whether the Epistle was addressed to the Ephesians. This seems to have been the reason which induced Marcion to alter the title, and to suppose the Epistle to have been inscribed to the Laodiceans.<sup>1</sup>

The external evidence for the omission of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is therefore weak, and hence greater stress is placed on internal considerations. It is objected that there are no personal references in the Epistle. The Epistle assumes to be addressed to the Ephesians, with whom the apostle was intimately acquainted, among whom he had laboured three years, and many of whom he numbered among his converts and friends. And yet in the Epistle, with the sole exception of a notice of Tychicus, there are no personal references, no salutations sent from any of Paul's friends, and no member of the church of Ephesus saluted. Even Timothy, who is united with the apostle in the contemporaneous Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, is omitted. But it is to be observed that Paul's custom with regard to salutations is by no means uniform. Other epistles as well as the Epistle to the Ephesians are destitute of them. In First Corinthians no person is saluted, and only one salutation is sent—namely, that from Aquila and Priscilla. In Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First and Second Thessalonians, and First Timothy, there are no salutations of either kind. And therefore the omission of them in Ephesians is not an anomaly.<sup>2</sup> Besides, as has been often observed, Tychicus was entrusted with the special communications of the apostle to the Ephesians (Eph. vi. 21, 22). The omission of Timothy is indeed singular, and no reason can be assigned for it, especially as he is conjoined with Paul in the salutations in the contemporaneous Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, and was undoubtedly with the

<sup>1</sup> For the various reasons assigned for the omission of these words, see Meyer's *Epheser*, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 13. The total want of special references, however, in the Epistle is a striking fact, and, it is admitted, distinguishes this Epistle.

apostle when he wrote this Epistle;<sup>1</sup> but the same difficulty of assigning a reason for this omission holds good whatever theory on the subject is adopted, and to whatever church or churches we may suppose the Epistle addressed.

It is further argued, that it appears from the Epistle that there was little previous acquaintance between Paul and those to whom he wrote: the Epistle is similar to that of the Colossians, which was written to a church which Paul never visited. Paul, it is asserted, speaks of the Ephesians as if he knew of their conversion only by report: "Wherefore I also, after that I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints" (Eph. i. 15). But these words do not refer to the conversion of the Ephesians, but to their spiritual progress. He knew that they were Christians, and now he had a favourable report of the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and of the warmth of their love to all saints. A precisely similar expression is used with reference to Philemon, who was one of Paul's own converts: "Hearing of thy faith and love which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints" (Philem. 5). So also it is affirmed that the Ephesians are represented as strangers to Paul; it was doubtful if they knew the nature of the gospel which he preached: "If (εἴγε) ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to you-ward" (Eph. iii. 2). But the conjunction εἴγε does not necessarily denote dubiety, but is used for assumption: so that the words mean, "assuming, taking for granted, that ye have heard." Others render it, "since, inasmuch as ye have heard." There are, besides, other portions of the Epistle which presuppose an acquaintance with Paul, and an interest taken in his sufferings: thus he desires them not to faint at his tribulations for them, which is their glory (Eph. iii. 13). It is admitted that there is a generality about this Epistle; but there is nothing to intimate either an ignorance of the Ephesians on the part of Paul, or an ignorance of Paul on the part of the Ephesians.

Some suppose that this Epistle was addressed, not to the

<sup>1</sup> It is a mere evasion to assert, with Lardner, that Timothy was not at Rome when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Ephesians and the Colossians were written at the same time.

Ephesians, but to the Laodiceans. They think that ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ is the correct reading, and has been altered by transcribers into ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. This, the opinion of Marcion, has been adopted by Grotius, Hammond, Mill, Pierce, Whiston, Wetstein, Lewin, and Paley.<sup>1</sup> It has already been adverted to in considering the number of Paul's epistles.<sup>2</sup> It has evidently originated from Col. iv. 16, where the apostle directs the Colossians to send for the epistle from Laodicea (τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας); and as there was no epistle in the canon with this title, and as the contents of the Epistle to the Ephesians were considered to be unsuitable to the church of Ephesus, it was supposed that this might have been the Laodicean epistle, and that it was erroneously ascribed to the Ephesians. But such an opinion is wholly untenable. All authorities are against it. In two manuscripts the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are wanting; but in no manuscript are they supplied by ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ. Marcion is the only authority; but even he did not read ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ in any manuscript, and he is charged by Tertullian with altering the title. Besides, it is utterly inconceivable how the words "in Laodicea," if they were in the original, could ever have been changed in all manuscripts and versions into "in Ephesus." Further, the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were written at the same time, and sent together by the same messenger. Now in the Epistle to the Colossians, a salutation is sent to the church of Laodicea (Col. iv. 15). But if the Epistle to the Ephesians was in reality addressed to the Laodiceans, the messenger who brought it would convey the salutations of the apostle, and consequently a salutation sent in another epistle is unsuitable. Indeed, the opinion that this is the Laodicean epistle is so untenable, that it is now abandoned by all competent scholars.<sup>3</sup>

Another opinion, much more widely adopted, and still maintained, is that the Epistle to the Ephesians was not addressed to any church in particular, but is a circular or encyclical epistle addressed to all the churches of Proconsular

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulineæ*, Ephesians, No. IV.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 31, 32 of this work.

<sup>3</sup> See this opinion refuted in Meyer's *Epheser*, pp. 10-12.



Asia. This opinion first originated with Archbishop Usher, and has since been adopted with some variations by Bengel, Benson, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Hug, Guericke, Schneckenburger, Neander, Rückert, Credner, Harless, Olshausen, Stier, Reuss, Bleek, Schaff, Lange, and Conybeare and Howson. There is considerable variety in the mode of statement. Usher conceived that several copies were made of the Epistle, and that they were filled up with the names of different churches; thus one copy would be addressed to Ephesus, a second to Laodicea, a third to Hierapolis, and a fourth to Smyrna.<sup>1</sup> So also Michaelis observes, "At the beginning of the Epistle, after the words *τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν*, Paul added the name of the church to which the copy was to be sent, so that in the copy intended for the Ephesians he would write *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*, in the copy intended for the Laodiceans *ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ*, and in like manner in the other copies."<sup>2</sup> Others (Schneckenburger, Credner) suppose that there was no address in the original, and that the reading of the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts, *τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, is the true text. Bleek goes the length of asserting that Ephesus was not one of the churches to which the Epistle was directed; but that it was sent to those churches in the neighbourhood of Laodicea, where the gospel had been introduced but a short time before, and where believers were personally unknown to the apostle.<sup>3</sup>

This opinion is equally unsupported by external authority. If different copies were differently addressed, some evidence would be found of this in the manuscripts; each church would watch with a jealous care over the honour conferred on it by the apostle. But no manuscript has been found with a different address; no church except Ephesus is mentioned. Besides, if the Epistle had been circular, this would have been noted in the address: the words *ἐν Ἀσίᾳ* or some similar expression would have been added, as *τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ* is in Second Corinthians, and *ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας* is in Galatians. The entire omission of the address, as Meyer observes, would

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 489.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 46.

constitute the Epistle not circular, but catholic.<sup>1</sup> Besides, this opinion is in entire variance with the whole spirit of the Epistle. There are sufficient specialities about it to prove that it was written to one particular church. The apostle hears of the faith and love of those whom he addresses; he is acquainted with their spiritual condition; he desires them not to faint at his tribulations for them; and he sends Tychicus to make known unto them all things, and to comfort their hearts (Eph. i. 15, iii. 13, vi. 21, 22).

The conclusion arrived at is, that the title of this Epistle, *πρὸς Ἐφέσιους*, is correct. The external evidence is decidedly in favour of *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*; and the internal arguments which have been brought to bear against this reading, even if they were much stronger than they are, would not be sufficient to shake it. There is nothing in the Epistle to favour the idea of its having been written to a number of churches. The opinion that the Epistle was written to the Ephesians was adopted by all the Fathers of the Christian Church, and has in recent times been adopted by Whitby, Doddridge, Wieseler, Kirchofer, Meyer, Schenkel, Alford, Davidson (old edition), and Eadie.

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The special occasion of writing this Epistle seems to have been the mission of Tychicus into Asia. Paul had written a letter to the church of Colosse, with a view to the refutation of certain errors that had sprung up in that church, and was about to send it by Tychicus and Onesimus. He embraced this opportunity of sending Tychicus to the neighbouring church of Ephesus, with which he was so intimately connected, not only to impart oral communication concerning his affairs, and to receive information concerning their state (Eph. vi. 21, 22), but also to deliver an epistle, in which he exhorted them to stand firm in the faith of the gospel. It would also appear that the apostle had lately received information of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints (Eph. i. 15); and this was a further inducement to take this

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 13.

opportunity of expressing his gratitude to God on their behalf, and his earnest prayers for their spiritual welfare.

The object which the apostle had in view in writing was very general, namely, to strengthen the faith and encourage the hopes of the Ephesians. He appears to have had no errors of doctrine to correct, and but few faults in practice to reprove.<sup>1</sup> There are no traces of Jewish Gnostic errors, as there are in the cognate Epistle to the Colossians.<sup>2</sup> The Epistle is not polemical, but entirely doctrinal and practical. The apostle does not aim at the suppression of error, but at the establishment of truth.

#### IV. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is divided into two distinct parts. The first part is mainly doctrinal (chap. i.-iii.), and the second part mainly practical (chap. iv.-vi.).

In the first part of the Epistle, the apostle, after saluting the Ephesians, renders thanks to God in their behalf for all the spiritual blessings conferred on them in Christ, for their election to eternal life, their acceptance in the Beloved, the manifestation of divine grace, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of an eternal inheritance (chap. i. 1-14). He expresses his earnest desires for them in prayer, beseeching God that they might be still further enlightened in the knowledge of His will, and in those unspeakable blessings which were conferred upon them (chap. i. 15-23). He is then led to contrast their former condition as Gentiles with their present condition as Christians: formerly they were, as Gentiles, strangers to the covenants of promise; but now, as Christians, they are admitted into all the privileges of God's children, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and builded together as a great spiritual temple, a habitation of God through the Spirit (chap. ii. 1-22). This leads him to discourse on the great mystery of the call of the Gentiles to be

<sup>1</sup> *Nullum speciatim errorem aut vitium refutat aut redarguit, sed generatim incedit.*—BENGEL'S *Gnomon* on Eph. i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The only allusion to false doctrine is in Eph. iv. 14.

fellow-heirs with the Jews, and sharers of the promised blessing, thus exhibiting to the heavenly host the manifold wisdom of God (chap. iii. 1-12). And he concludes this doctrinal part of the Epistle by again praying that they might make further progress in the knowledge and experience of the love of Christ, and so be filled with all the fulness of God (chap. iii. 13-21).

In the practical part of the Epistle, the apostle exhorts the Ephesians to cultivate unity, to recollect that each had his appointed calling and gifts from Christ, all conducive to the edifying of the Church, and not to allow themselves to be carried away by every wind of doctrine (chap. iv. 1-16). He exhorts them to renounce their former heathen conduct, and to cultivate all the virtues of the Christian character; to avoid falsehood, anger, theft, and corrupt communication; to mortify their irascible passions, and to practise gentleness and forbearance; to guard against all sensual lusts, and to be pure in thought and action (chap. iv. 17-v. 19). Then follows an exhortation to a Christian performance of the duties of domestic life (chap. v. 20-vi. 9). The apostle then represents believers in a noble metaphor as warriors, exhorting them to array themselves with the whole armour of God, and contend against the powers of evil (chap. vi. 10-20). He informs them of the mission of Tychicus, and closes the Epistle with his apostolic benediction.

The date of this Epistle has already been determined, when we considered the Epistle to the Colossians. The place of writing was Rome, and the time toward the close of the second year of Paul's Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 63.

#### V. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

This Epistle, by reason of its long sentences and its numerous parentheses and digressions, is unusually difficult of interpretation.<sup>1</sup> The style and diction are attended with considerable obscurity. "Each single word," observes Michaelis,

<sup>1</sup> Alford observes that "this Epistle is by far the most difficult of the writings of St. Paul;" but this is an extreme view of the subject. The Epistle to the Romans is at least as difficult to comprehend.

“is perfectly intelligible; but the sentences are so long, and the members of which each sentence consists are at the same time so short, that they are frequently capable of many different constructions, of which we cannot easily determine which is the right one. If a passage of this Epistle were taken unpointed, some would place the commas in one place, some in another; and what increases the difficulty is, that in our common editions of the Greek Testament the points are placed with much less judgment in this Epistle than in any other part.”<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar characteristic of this Epistle is *sublimity*.<sup>2</sup> No epistle has been so differently estimated. Those who reject it consider its inferiority to the other epistles of Paul as an evidence of spuriousness; whilst those who accept it assign to it a high position. It deals with heavenly things,—with the glorious mysteries of Christianity,—with those inestimable blessings which Christ has conferred on our race. The apostle appears to labour to find expressions sufficiently strong to describe the privileges of believers: in no other epistle does he make such a frequent use of superlatives; for example, what sublimity, and force of expression, and fulness of meaning, are contained in that noble prayer which Paul offers up for his converts: “That God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. iii. 16–19). This is one of those epistles which, in order to be understood, must be spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii. 14); experience of the blessings described is essential for their comprehension. There is a deep spirituality pervading the Epistle, a comparative want of objectiveness, distinguishable indeed in all the epistles of the captivity, but here most strongly marked, forming the link of

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Rerum sublimitatem, adequans verbis sublimioribus, quam ulla unquam habuit lingua humana.*—GROTIUS.

connection between the writings of Paul and those of the Apostle John—between Pauline and Johannean Christianity.

This Epistle has been commented on by Rückert (Leipzig, 1834), Harless (Erlangen, 1834; second edition, 1860), Olshausen (Königsberg, 1860), De Wette (Leipzig, 1843), Stier (Berlin, 1848), Meyer (Göttingen, 1853; fourth edition, 1867), Bleek (Berlin, 1865); and in our own country by Ellicott (London, 1855; second edition, 1859), Eadie (London, second edition, 1861), and Davies (London, 1866).

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### CONNECTION BETWEEN EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS.

It is undeniable that a closer connection exists between these two than between any other two of Paul's epistles. They are allied by points of resemblance which nowhere else occur in the writings of the apostle. Opposite opinions have been entertained regarding this connection and these points of resemblance by those who consider one Epistle as the original, and the other as the copy or imitation. Mayerhoff gives the preference to the Epistle to the Ephesians, whilst he considers the Epistle to the Colossians to be a spiritless abridgment, written in a style and diction unworthy of the apostle.<sup>1</sup> De Wette, on the other hand, gives the preference to the Epistle to the Colossians, and supposes the Epistle to the Ephesians to be a diffuse enlargement, rich in words, but poor in thoughts, full of repetitions, digressions, and unconnected sentences.<sup>2</sup> The former questions the authenticity of the Colossians, the latter the authenticity of the Ephesians, —both judging the Epistles, not according to the external evidence for their genuineness, but from their own subjective points of view. Baur and Schwegeler, combining the objections of Mayerhoff against the Colossians, and those of De Wette against the Ephesians, reject both Epistles, and consider them to be post-apostolic writings of the second cen-

<sup>1</sup> *Der Brief an die Kolosser mit vornehmlich Berücksichtigung d. Pastoralbriefe geprüft*, p. 105 ff.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, pp. 313, 319.

tury;<sup>1</sup> and certainly with greater consistency, for these two Epistles are so intimately related that they must stand or fall together. But, as has already been proved, the external evidence in their favour is convincing, and the internal evidence is by no means defective; and it is now proposed to show that even this intimate connection between them, so far from being an objection against either, is rather an argument in favour of the authenticity of both.

De Wette, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, has given a table of parallels, fully drawn out, between these two Epistles.<sup>2</sup> The table is instructive, but open to some remarks. It is a list of points of resemblance, some of which are merely verbal; attention is paid to the mere sound of the words, rather than to the connection or dissimilarity of the ideas. Even where the same word or phrase is used in both Epistles, in different connections and with reference to different subjects, the passages are noted in the table as parallels. A careful perusal of this table will show that there is such a combination of similarity and dissimilarity—similarity in expression, and dissimilarity in ideas—as to prove that the one Epistle could not have been a copy of the other, but that there was in both an untrammelled exercise of thought. And, further, these parallels are often overdrawn; passages being marked as showing resemblance which have only one word in common,—as, for example, Eph. ii. 1 compared with Col. i. 21. Still the points of resemblance between the Epistles are undoubtedly very evident and numerous. The following is a table of parallels, taken from De Wette, omitting those where the resemblances are slight and obscure:<sup>3</sup>—

DOCTRINAL PORTIONS.		PRACTICAL PORTIONS.	
Eph. i. 7.	Col. i. 14.	Eph. iv. 1.	Col. i. 10.
Eph. i. 10.	Col. i. 20.	Eph. iv. 2-4.	Col. iii. 12-14.
Eph. i. 15-17.	Col. i. 3. 4.	Eph. iv. 15, 16.	Col. ii. 19.
Eph. i. 18.	Col. i. 27.	Eph. iv. 22-24.	Col. iii. 8, 9.
Eph. i. 21.	Col. i. 16.	Eph. iv. 31.	Col. iii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 1 ff.; Schweigler's *Nachapost. Zeital.* vol. ii. p. 330 ff.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, pp. 313-318.

<sup>3</sup> Similar tables are given by Meyer, *Epheser*, p. 23 f.; Davidson, *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 344, old edition; Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*, Ephesians, No. I.; Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 309 f.

DOCTRINAL PORTIONS.		PRACTICAL PORTIONS.	
Eph. i. 22, 23.	Col. i. 18, 19.	Eph. iv. 32.	Col. iii. 12.
Eph. ii. 5.	Col. ii. 13.	Eph. v. 6.	Col. iii. 6.
Eph. ii. 11.	Col. ii. 11.	Eph. v. 15, 16.	Col. iv. 5.
Eph. ii. 16.	Col. i. 20.	Eph. v. 19, 20.	Col. iii. 16, 17.
Eph. iii. 2, 3.	Col. i. 25, 26.	Eph. v. 22.	Col. iii. 18.
Eph. iii. 7.	Col. i. 23.	Eph. vi. 1.	Col. iii. 20.
		Eph. vi. 5-8.	Col. iii. 22-25.
		Eph. vi. 9.	Col. iv. 1.
		Eph. vi. 18-20.	Col. iv. 3, 4.
		Eph. vi. 21, 22.	Col. iv. 7, 8.

In judging of these points of resemblance, it is to be observed that sometimes the same sentences occur in both Epistles; but more frequently the same words and phrases are common to both. The following passages are *verbatim* the same, or the same with a very slight variation:—Eph. i. 7 and Col. i. 14; Eph. i. 10 and Col. i. 20; Eph. iii. 2 and Col. i. 25; Eph. v. 19 and Col. iii. 16; Eph. vi. 22 and Col. iv. 8. In these passages, not only are the ideas the same, but even the precise words, evidently proving that there is here more than an accidental resemblance. There are also numerous examples of the same words and phrases found in both Epistles, several of them being peculiar to these Epistles, though at the same time they may be found in different connections. Thus, we have the following phrases in both Epistles:—ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης, Eph. i. 18 and Col. i. 27; τὸ πλήρωμα, Eph. i. 23 and Col. i. 19; περιτομή χειροποίητος, Eph. ii. 11, and περιτομή ἀχειροποίητος, Col. ii. 11; ἀποκαταλλάξαι, Eph. ii. 16 and Col. i. 20; τὸ μυστήριον, Eph. iii. 3 and Col. i. 26; ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος, Eph. iv. 22 and Col. iii. 9.

In general, it is correct to say that in the Epistle to the Ephesians the ideas contained in the Epistle to the Colossians are expanded. But it is erroneous to affirm that the Ephesians is only an expansion of the other Epistle; on the contrary, it sometimes happens, as Meyer observes,<sup>1</sup> that the expansion is found in the Colossians, and the abbreviation in the Ephesians,—as, for example, Eph. i. 15, 16, compared with Col. i. 3-6; Eph. ii. 16 compared with Col. i. 20; Eph. iv. 32 compared with Col. iii. 12, 13.

But with these evident points of similarity between the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, there are also strong

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 24.



points of dissimilarity; indeed, so great a dissimilarity as to constitute them very different Epistles in their nature and tendencies. The designs which the apostle had in writing these Epistles are different. The Colossian church was tainted with error; false teachers of a Jewish-Gnostic character had corrupted the church with their errors and ascetic practices; and it was to refute these errors and correct these practices that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians. Nothing of this kind seems to have existed in the church of Ephesus: it was comparatively free from error; the false teachers had not yet established themselves there; and hence Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, not so much with a view to refute error, as to exhort believers to continue steadfast in the faith. Hence it happens that, although there is much that is common to both, there is also much that is different. In the Colossians there are warnings against false philosophy, the worship of angels, and ascetic practices, which are not to be found in the Ephesians. The nature of Christ is prominently brought forward in the Colossians, in opposition to the errors of false teachers, whereas it is merely incidentally mentioned in the Ephesians (Eph. i. 10, 21, 22). On the other hand, the doctrines of election and the unity of the church, so prominent in the Ephesians, are omitted in the Colossians.<sup>1</sup> There is also, as may be seen by glancing at the table, a greater resemblance in the practical (Eph. iv.-vi.; Col. iii., iv.) than in the doctrinal portions of the Epistles (Eph. i.-iii.; Col. i., ii.). In the practical portions there is a strong similarity in the exhortations; the same prohibitions and commands; the same inculcation of social and domestic duties: the similarity is generally not merely one of words, but of ideas. In the doctrinal portions it is otherwise: here different subjects are treated; the same words and phrases may be employed, but they are in different connections: the resemblance is in language rather than in ideas.

The relation between these two Epistles is generally explained from the fact that Paul wrote them at the same time, to churches not far distant from each other, and requiring

<sup>1</sup> For the dissimilarity between these Epistles, see Reuss' *Geschichte d. heil. Schrif. N. T.* pp. 103, 104.

similar admonitions and exhortations. And this explanation appears perfectly sufficient ; it is verified by the experience of daily life. In letters written at the same time to different correspondents, upon similar subjects, there is often much that is common both of thought and language. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, his mind was still occupied with those sentiments which he had just committed to writing in an Epistle to the Colossians: his thoughts were running in the same direction. So also these two churches were in a somewhat similar moral condition: the exhortations which were given to the one equally applied to the other; the same vices had to be avoided, and the same virtues cultivated; the same corrupt customs of oriental heathenism had to be renounced; and hence the apostle, fresh from writing to the Colossians, gives the same exhortations to the Ephesians. Indeed, the resemblance between these two Epistles is of the very nature that would occur between two contemporaneous letters written on cognate subjects. Even Baur does not consider that such a resemblance proves a diversity in the authorship,—that the one is an imitation of the other,—but admits that the two Epistles may have been written by the same person. “That,” he observes, “the Epistle to the Ephesians stands in a secondary relation to the Epistle to the Colossians, is evident; but whether it was written much later, and had a different author, may well be doubted. Might not both Epistles have come together, as twin-brothers, into the world?”<sup>1</sup>

The resemblance between these two Epistles is not without example, though certainly not to the same extent, in Paul's writings. The Epistles to the Romans and Galatians similarly resemble each other: peculiar words and phrases are common to both; the same train of thought is often indulged in. Nearly a year elapsed between the composition of these two Epistles; had only a few days intervened, who can doubt that the resemblance would have been still greater,—probably as great as that between the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians?

This resemblance affords no argument against the authen-

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 47.

ticity of either Epistle. The similarity in the time of composition and in the moral condition of the churches sufficiently accounts for it. Nor can it be successfully maintained that either the one or the other exhibits poverty of thought; and the specialities in each Epistle prove that the one is not taken from the other. "The similarity of the two Epistles," observes Neander, "is of such a kind, that we see in it the work of the same author, and not an imitation by another hand. Let us remember that Paul, when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, was still full of those thoughts and contemplations which occupied his mind when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossians: thus we can account for those points of resemblance in the second, which was written immediately after the first."<sup>1</sup> Let it be granted that the Epistle to the Ephesians is in some respects an expansion of the Epistle to the Colossians; yet it is rash to conclude that this infers a servile imitation: the more natural conclusion appears to be that it was Paul himself, who adapted what he wrote to the Colossians to the necessities of the Ephesians.<sup>2</sup> The idea of a forger or imitator is beyond probability. Such an one could not have written the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was apparently destitute of any special purpose, the language of which was similar to that of the Colossians, but the ideas very different. Such an adept of the Pauline style would have borrowed from other epistles, and not restricted himself to one; and the particular purpose he had in view would have appeared more distinctly on the face of this Epistle.<sup>3</sup>

So far from this resemblance being an objection to the authenticity of either Epistle, Paley states it as an internal evidence of the authenticity of both.<sup>4</sup> He first proves that these Epistles were contemporaneous, and then shows that their nature coincides with this fact. "The Epistle to the Ephesians," he observes, "and the Epistle to the Colossians, import to be two letters, written by the same person, at or

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Harless rightly observes, that the assertion that the Ephesians is only a verbose expansion of the Colossians can only be proved, if it were shown that it had only more words and not more ideas, and that it had only the same, but not a different design, from the Epistle to the Colossians.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's *Epheser*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Ephesians, No. I.

nearly at the same time, and upon the same subject, and to have been sent by the same messenger. Now everything in the sentiments, order, and diction of the two writings corresponds with what might be expected from this circumstance of identity or cognation in their original." This he shows by a variety of particulars. He observes that the same expressions, and sometimes whole sentences, might be expected in both Epistles; for such expressions and sentences as were yet fresh in the author's mind from the writing of the first would be repeated in the second letter. Often also the author would find himself employing some principal terms, but in a different order from that in which he had already used them. A certain similarity in the train of the author's thoughts might also be expected. All these points of resemblance, as may be seen by an inspection of the table of parallels, occur in these two Epistles. "The argument," observes Paley, "stands thus: No two other epistles contain a circumstance which indicates that they were written at the same, or nearly at the same time. No two other epistles exhibit so many marks of correspondency and resemblance. If the original which we ascribe to these two Epistles be the true one,—that is, if they were both written by St. Paul, and both sent to their respective destinations by the same messenger,—the similitude is, in all points, what should be expected to take place."

These two Epistles are similar, and yet dissimilar: similar in their language and practical exhortations; dissimilar in their design and mode of doctrinal treatment. The Epistle to the Colossians is polemical, and aims at the refutation of heresy; the Epistle to the Ephesians is dogmatic, and serves to the establishment of truth. The one is special, and deals with the errors of the Jewish Gnostics; the other is general, and is designed for the edification of believers. The one is a Christian apology; the other is a doctrinal treatise on election and grace. "Paul's Epistle to the Colossians," observes Alford, "is his caution, his argument, his protest—is, so to speak, his working-day toil, his direct pastoral labour; and the other is the flower and bloom of his moments, during those same days of devotion and rest, when he wrought not so much in the Spirit, as the Spirit wrought in him. So that

while we have in the Colossians system defined, language elaborated, antithesis and logical power on the surface; we have in the Ephesians the free outflowing of the earnest spirit, to the surface-reader without system, but to him that delves down into it, in system far deeper, and more recondite, and more exquisite,—the greatest and most heavenly work of one whose very imagination was peopled with things in the heavens, and even his fancy wrapt into the visions of God.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 42.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

**T**HE Epistle to the Philippians is well attested both by external and internal evidence. Polycarp (A.D. 116), in an epistle addressed to this very church of Philippi, written about fifty years after, makes mention of it. "Neither I," he observes, "nor any like me, can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was among you, with those who then lived, taught accurately and firmly the word of truth; and when absent wrote to you epistles, into which if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered unto you."<sup>1</sup> And again: "But I have neither seen nor heard any such things in you, among whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are named in the beginning of his Epistle; for he glories over you in all the churches which then alone knew God."<sup>2</sup> In the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons (A.D. 177), preserved by Eusebius, there is the following distinct allusion: "They were also so zealous in the imitation of Christ, who, though in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6).<sup>3</sup> Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "As Paul

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Philippens.* c. 3: Οὐτε γὰρ ἐγὼ οὔτε ἄλλος ἡμῶς ἐμοὶ δύναται κατακολουθεῖν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ ἐνδόξου Παύλου· ὃς γενόμενος ἐν ὑμῖν κατὰ πρόσωπον τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων, ἐδίδαξεν ἀκριβῶς καὶ βεβαίως τὸν περὶ ἀληθείας λόγον. ὃς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολὰς, εἰς ἃς ἐὰν ἐγκύπτεται, δυνηθήσεσθε οἰκοδομεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑμῖν πίστιν.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* c. 11: Ego autem nihil tale sensi in vobis, vel audiivi, in quibus laboravit beatus Paulus; qui estis in principio epistolæ ejus. De vobis enim gloriatur in omnibus ecclesiis quæ Deum solæ tunc cognoverant.

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 2: Οἱ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτου τινος ζήλωται καὶ μιμηταὶ Χριστοῦ ἐγένοντο, ὃς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ.

also says to the Philippians: 'I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, acceptable, well-pleasing unto God'" (Phil. iv. 18).<sup>1</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194) says: "Paul confesses of himself, 'Not as though I had attained, or were already perfect'" (Phil. iii. 12).<sup>2</sup> And Tertullian (A.D. 200): "Of which hope he (Paul), being himself in suspense, when he writes to the Philippians, says, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead'" (Phil. iii. 11).<sup>3</sup>

The internal evidence is equally strong. "No epistle of the apostle," observes Schenkel, "according to our observations, bears the impress of authenticity in such unmistakeable characters as the Epistle to the Philippians."<sup>4</sup> If the Epistle to the Ephesians bears clearly the impress of Paul's style, the Epistle to the Philippians bears no less clearly the impress of Paul's character. The intense devotion to Christ (Phil. i. 21), the ardent affection for his converts (Phil. i. 7, 8, iv. 1), the earnestness in prayer for their spiritual welfare (Phil. i. 4), the womanly tenderness (Phil. iii. 10), the delicate courtesy displayed in the reception of the gifts of the Philippians (Phil. iv. 14-19), the noble elevation above all earthly cares (Phil. iv. 12), the personal humility combined with the assertion of apostolic authority (Phil. iii. 4-11), and the liberality of mind (Phil. i. 18), are all distinguishing features in the character of the great apostle. So also the style is Pauline: there are the same breaks, parentheses, and digressions that occur in his other epistles; and the description of the Christian life as a race (Phil. iii. 13, 14) is a favourite figure with the apostle, and peculiar to his writings.<sup>5</sup> Nor

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* iv. 18. 4: Quemadmodum et Paulus Philippensibus ait: "Repletus sum acceptis ab Epaphrodito, quæ a vobis missa sunt, odorem suavitatis, hostiam acceptabilem, placentem Deo."

<sup>2</sup> *Padaq.* i. c. 6: Αὐτοῦ ἀπολογούντες τοῦ Παύλου περὶ ἑαυτοῦ οὐχ ὅτι ᾗδεν ἔλαβεν, ᾗ ᾗδεν τιτιλίωμαι.

<sup>3</sup> *De resurrect. carn.* c. 23: Ad quam (sc. spem resurrectionis) pendens et ipse quum Philippensibus scribit: "si qua," inquit, "concurram in resurrectionem, quæ est a mortuis." For additional references, see Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 216-220: Lardner's *Works*; and Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. ii. pp. 386, 387.

<sup>4</sup> Schenkel, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xii. 1, 2, may be regarded by some as an exception to this remark, though others see in it a proof of Pauline origin.

can any possible motive be assigned for forgery or imitation. The Epistle treats of no controversial points, it has no special design, and there is a freshness and simplicity about its whole tone beyond the power of imitation. Schwegeler, indeed, supposes that it has a conciliatory design to unite the Pauline and Petrine Christians; and he entertains the strange notion that Euodia and Syntyche, mentioned in Phil. iv. 2, are symbolical: that Euodia represents the Jewish Christian, and Syntyche the Gentile Christian party; and that the true yoke-fellow (σύζυγος) is Peter, who is here represented as the fellow-labourer (the syzygy) of Paul.<sup>1</sup> Such an opinion needs only to be mentioned to carry with it its own refutation.

The undesigned coincidences between this Epistle and the other Pauline Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles are few, but, so far as they go, convincing. In the Epistle, Paul mentions that he was accustomed to receive gifts from the Philippians (Phil. iv. 15-18); and in Second Corinthians, we are incidentally told that the Macedonians supplied his wants when at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9). In the Epistle, Timothy is conjoined with Paul, and the apostle asserts that the Philippians knew by experience his value, seeing that as a son with a father he had served with him in the gospel (Phil. ii. 22); and in the Acts we learn, not from any direct assertion, but from a comparison of passages, that Timothy was with Paul when he introduced Christianity into Philippi (Acts xvi.). In the Epistle, Paul refers to the sufferings which he endured when at Philippi (Phil. i. 30); and we learn from the Acts that he was there scourged and thrown into prison. In the Epistle, we are informed that Paul, though a prisoner, had considerable liberty in preaching the gospel, so much so that his bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace, and in all other places (Phil. i. 23); and this corresponds with the account of his Roman imprisonment in the Acts, for we are there told that for two years he preached the kingdom of God, and taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him (Acts xxviii. 31).<sup>2</sup>

Olshausen observes that the Epistle to the Philippians

<sup>1</sup> Schwegeler's *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, ii. p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> For further instances, see Paley's *Hore Paulinæ*, chap. vii.



belongs to the few writings of the New Testament whose genuineness has never been questioned.<sup>1</sup> Since his days, however, this Epistle has been attacked by the school of Tübingen. Baur and Schwegler both reject it.<sup>2</sup> Their opinion, however, has not been endorsed by all their followers. Hilgenfeld maintains the authenticity of the Philippians. The objections of Baur have been answered by Schenkel, Lange, Reuss, and Dr. Davidson, and at still greater length by Wiesinger in his continuation of Olshausen's *Bibelwerk*;<sup>3</sup> besides by Lünemann and Brückner in two special treatises.<sup>4</sup>

The objections of Baur are not formidable. They are as follows:—1. The Epistle contains Gnostic ideas and expressions, and therefore must belong to the second century. The only passage, however, adduced in proof of this assertion is Phil. ii. 6–8: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Here, according to Baur, we have a description of Sophia, the Valentinian Æon, who aimed at an equality with God; and besides, the expressions “form (μορφή) of a servant,” “fashion (σχήμα) as a man,” have a docetic meaning.<sup>5</sup> But the doctrine contained in these words is the Pauline doctrine of the humiliation and obedience of the Son of God (Gal. iv. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 9). The words οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο, according to the context, denote that although Christ was in the possession of the divine nature, yet He did not eagerly assert it, but made Himself of no reputation; instead of appearing in His divine glory, He took upon Himself the form of a servant. Nor have the words a

<sup>1</sup> Wiesinger *On the Philippians*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 50 ff.; Schwegler's *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 133 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Schenkel, *An die Philipper*, p. 111; Lange's *Apost. Zeitalt.* vol. i. p. 30 ff.; Reuss' *Geschichte N.T.* p. 124; Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. i. pp. 197–202; Wiesinger *On the Philippians*, pp. 8–22.

<sup>4</sup> Lünemann, *Pauli ad Phil. epist. contra Baurum defendit*; Brückner, *Epist. ad Phil. Paulo auctori vindicata contra Baurum*.

<sup>5</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. pp. 50–59.

docetic meaning. The apostle is recommending the example of Christ's humility as a pattern to the Philippians; but if Christ were not actually, but only apparently man, the example would lose its entire force. 2. Baur objects to the Epistle on account of its poverty of thought. "Tender and pleasing," he observes, "as the thoughts and sentiments are, it is not to be overlooked that a monotonous repetition, a want of internal connection, and a certain poverty of thought, appear to have oppressed the author, so that he excuses himself, 'To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.'"<sup>1</sup> He also attempts to prove that what is Pauline in the Epistle is borrowed from Paul's other epistles, and especially from Second Corinthians. But this mere subjective reason depends entirely on the objector's own standard: to other minds the Epistle does not display any poverty of thought, and certainly there is no want of naturalness. There is no close resemblance between it and Second Corinthians; and the many Pauline expressions contained in it afford a strong presumption that Paul was the author. 3. Baur deduces an opinion adverse to the Epistle from the mention of Clement (Phil. iv. 3). This Clement he supposes to be the disciple of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, the supposed author of the Clementine Homilies, and whom he thinks the primitive Church confounded with Flavius Clement, the relative of Domitian. Hence the mention of the gospel having penetrated into Caesar's household, as if some of the relatives of the emperor had embraced Christianity. "It is not without design," he observes, "that the author places here the Roman Clement, that genuine disciple of Peter, as a fellow-labourer by the side of Paul: he was to form a new bond of union between the two chief apostles."<sup>2</sup> But this objection proceeds on an entire mistake. The Clement in the Epistle is not a member of the church of Rome, but of the church of Philippi, and seems to have been one of the presbyters of that church; so that it is extremely doubtful if he be the same as he who afterwards became Bishop of Rome.<sup>3</sup> 4. Baur objects that

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 70 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See in Lightfoot *On the Philippians* an interesting note on Clement, pp. 166-169.

there are in the Epistle un-Pauline particulars and expressions. Paul receives gifts from the Philippians, whereas in the First Epistle to the Corinthians he declares that he acted upon the principle of preaching the gospel without charge, and that he would take no support from the churches (1 Cor. ix. 14, 15).<sup>1</sup> But Paul there refers specially to the church of Corinth, and we learn from the Second Epistle to that very church that he did take contributions from other churches (2 Cor. xi. 9). The description of the Judaizing teachers is said to be severe and coarse (Phil. iii. 2).<sup>2</sup> But it is even less severe than 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, and is analogous to what is said in Gal. v. 12. And with regard to the un-Pauline expressions,<sup>3</sup> as has already been observed, it is unreasonable to limit the apostle to certain phrases; and besides, it is most unfair to argue that the Pauline expressions are a proof of imitation, and the un-Pauline expressions a proof of invention by another hand: so that it would seem, whether the expressions were Pauline or not, they equally prove the spuriousness of the Epistle.

The unity of the Epistle has been questioned. Heinrichs and Paulus suppose that it is composed of two letters,—the first containing chap. i.—iii. 1 as far as the words *ἐν Κυρίῳ*, and also including chap. iv. 21–23; and the second commencing with *τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν*, chap. iii. 1, and ending at chap. iv. 20. They suppose that the first letter was addressed to the Church in general, and the second to the bishops and deacons. Weisse divided the Epistle differently: the first letter included chap. i.—iii. 3, and the second chap. iii. 4–iv. 23, whilst he supposes that the beginning of the second letter is lost.<sup>4</sup> The opinion of Heinrichs and Paulus rests on the words, *Τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν Κυρίῳ* (Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, Phil. iii. 1), which are regarded by them as the conclusion of an epistle. But this expression is altogether insufficient ground on which to build such an opinion. The same apparently valedictory terms *τὸ λοιπὸν* occur in 1 Thess. iv. 1, at a similar distance from the close of that Epistle. Some (Grotius, Rheinwald) suppose that the apostle

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 87, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Weisse, *Philos. Dogm.* vol. i. p. 144.

intended to conclude his Epistle with these words, but was afterwards led to add a supplement; but even this supposition is unnecessary.

Bleek considers that we have in the Epistle evidence of another letter which the apostle wrote to the Philippians, and which is now lost. "It may, I. think," he observes, "with tolerable certainty be inferred from chap. iii. 1 (*τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν*) that Paul had written a letter to the Philippians previous to the one that has come down to us, and after his last visit. This, indeed, we might naturally suppose to have been the case, when we consider the warm affection subsisting between the apostle and the church, and their communicating with him in his necessity."<sup>1</sup> This opinion has also been adopted by Wiesinger and Meyer.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing improbable in such a supposition, but the words adduced do not warrant it. "To write the same things to you" may indeed refer to what the apostle had written in a former epistle, but the phrase may also allude to the oral communications which the apostle made when at Philippi,—a meaning adopted by Calvin, Beza, and Rheinwald.—It is also affirmed that Polycarp mentions a plurality of epistles. In his Epistle to the Philippians, he observes that Paul, when absent, wrote to them epistles (*ὅς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς*).<sup>3</sup> But these words are indefinite, and even Bleek does not depend on them. In another portion of his letter, Polycarp speaks of the Epistle of Paul in the singular, and it was not unusual to employ *ἐπιστολαί* to denote one letter.<sup>4</sup> Lardner supposes that by *ἐπιστολάς* Polycarp intends the Epistle to the Philippians and the two Epistles to the Thessalonians.<sup>5</sup> If Paul had written another epistle to the Philippians, it must have been lost before the time of Polycarp; for if it survived so long, it would have been transmitted to us.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to the N. T.* vol. ii. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Wiesinger *On the Philippians*, p. 23; Meyer's *Philippian*, p. 5; and on Phil. iii. 1, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Polycarp, *ad Philippians*. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* c. 11. For the use of *ἐπιστολαί* to denote a single letter, see Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. i. p. 328.

<sup>6</sup> See Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, on "The lost Epistles to the Philippians," pp. 136-140.

## II. THE CHURCH OF PHILIPPI.

Philippi was situated about ten miles from the sea, with which it communicated by its port Neapolis. Its original name was Crenides, or the Fountains, from the abundance of springs in the neighbourhood. It was rebuilt and fortified by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who called it Philippi, after himself (B.C. 358). In the neighbourhood were gold mines, which were worked by Philip with such advantage, that it is said, by means of the wealth they furnished him, he acquired the supremacy of Greece. Philippi is celebrated in history as the battle-field where the destiny of Rome was decided by the victory of Augustus and Antony over the republican forces of Brutus and Cassius. Augustus constituted it a Roman colony, and conferred on it the name of Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis. It is called in the Acts the first city of the district of Macedonia (*πρώτη τῆς μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις*, Acts xvi. 12), which cannot mean that it was the capital of Macedonia, for that was Thessalonica; nor the chief town of the first part of Macedonia (*Macedonia prima*), for that was Amphipolis; nor that *πρώτη* was an honourable title conferred on it, as was the case with several cities of Proconsular Asia, for no such title has been found on its coins; but the words are to be understood geographically, that Philippi was the first city of Macedonia at which Paul arrived, inasmuch as at that period Neapolis did not belong to Macedonia, but to Thrace.<sup>1</sup> To Christians, Philippi is especially interesting as the first city in Europe where Paul preached the gospel: the bloody victory of Augustus and Antony pales before the peaceful triumph of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christianity was introduced into Philippi by Paul during his second missionary journey. Arrived in the course of his travels at Alexandria Troas, he was admonished by a vision to cross the Ægean Sea to Macedonia. Accordingly, accompanied by three fellow-labourers,—Silas, who had gone with him from Antioch; Timothy, whom he had taken with him from Lystra; and Luke, who had joined him at Troas,—he landed at Neapolis, and without halting, proceeded to Philippi. Here

<sup>1</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. pp. 114, 115.

Paul preached the gospel at first to certain women, Jewesses and proselytes, who worshipped at a *proscucha* outside of the city. His first convert was Lydia, and many others believed. The expulsion of a demon from a female slave was the occasion of his being scourged and imprisoned; and after his miraculous deliverance, he left the city. It would appear that his stay was short; and the church which he left was small. Luke, and probably Timothy, remained behind, and under their fostering care the church increased and prospered. Paul kept up a regular correspondence with the church which he had founded. The Philippians contributed twice to his support when he was at Thessalonica, and at least once when he was at Corinth. The messengers of the apostle frequently visited the city, and brought reports of the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and of their affection toward himself. During his residence of three years at Ephesus, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts xix. 22), and the church of Philippi would not be overlooked. At length, five years after his first visit, the apostle came again to Philippi on his way to Corinth (Acts xx. 1); and on his return from Corinth, before he set out on his last journey to Jerusalem, he paid them a third visit, and remained among them during the days of unleavened bread (Acts xx. 6). And we learn, from this Epistle, that he proposed again to visit them, whenever he was released from imprisonment (Phil. ii. 24).

The church of Philippi was chiefly of Gentile composition, as is evident from the manner in which circumcision is mentioned (Phil. iii. 2, 3). This entirely corresponds with the narrative in the Acts. There were few Jews at Philippi; they had no synagogue, but only a *proscucha* at the water-side, where certain Jewish women and proselytes met for worship. It would also appear that the church was then suffering from persecution; the apostle exhorts them not to be terrified by their adversaries, but to count it an honour that they were called to suffer for the sake of Christ (Phil. i. 28-30). Although Christianity was not then declared to be an illicit religion, yet the Christians would be exposed to many annoyances from their heathen neighbours, and especially in such a city as Philippi, which had shown its hatred to Christianity by

its treatment of the apostle. There were also certain internal disorders in the church, not, however, arising from the proselytizing zeal of false teachers, but from some private quarrels between certain of its influential members (Phil. iv. 2). Notwithstanding this partial disunion, the church of Philippi was inwardly in a most flourishing condition. None of Paul's epistles is so full of commendation, so free from censure. No doubts are expressed of the steadfastness of their faith; and the warnings given are not directed against existing errors, but threatened dangers. No church exhibited such a strong affection for the apostle: they ministered repeatedly to his necessities; indeed, they appear to have had the peculiar honour of doing so, or at least were honoured by the apostle with his acceptance of their gifts. And this affection was reciprocal: the church of Philippi was Paul's favourite church; to them he opens his heart, and on them he lavishes his affections. There is a cordiality and intimacy expressed in this Epistle greater than in any other of Paul's epistles.

Some suppose that the church of Philippi was not altogether pure—that the Judaizing element was by no means wanting. Storr, Eichhorn, Rheinwald, Matthies, and others, conceive that the Judaizing teachers had propagated their errors among the Philippians; that the church was divided on doctrinal points; and that a Jewish faction was formed adverse to the apostle; in short, that the church of Philippi was, like the churches of Corinth and Galatia, split into parties. Hence the repeated exhortations to unity; hence the severe and emphatic denunciations of Judaizing tendencies: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Phil. iii. 2); hence the tenderness with which the apostle mourns over the moral defections of his converts: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. iv. 18, 19). But this opinion is entirely erroneous. No polemical design is discernible in the Epistle. If the faith of the Philippians had been so perverted, and their moral conduct so corrupt, as this opinion supposes, the Epistle would

not have been so highly commendatory, so free from all those censures and rebukes which pervade the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. Besides, from the absence of Jews in the city, the Jewish element must have been comparatively small. Paul here rather warns them against a threatened danger, than censures them for existing errors. When he wrote this Epistle at Rome, he himself was exposed to the annoyances and attacks of the Judaizers, and hence the forcible manner in which he cautions the Philippians against their machinations. Nor does the apostle, in adverting to the immoralities then prevalent, allude to the Philippians in particular, but merely makes a general observation that there were many who thus turned the grace of God into licentiousness. The Philippians, as a church, were comparatively sound in the faith and pure in morals; and therefore the apostle could exhort them to steadfastness in words of commendation and affection: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Phil. iv. 1).

About forty or fifty years after this Epistle was written, Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom at Rome, passed through Philippi, and was warmly received by the Christians in that city.<sup>1</sup> Polycarp wrote to the Philippian church his celebrated epistle. This is also an epistle of commendation: there are no warnings against false doctrine, no appearances of defection; the church of Philippi appears still to have maintained its high character for purity in faith and conduct. After this it is seldom mentioned in the history of the church; even the city itself gradually disappears, and its site is now occupied by a wretched village still bearing its ancient name, corrupted into Filiba. "Of its destruction or decay," observes Professor Lightfoot, "no record is left; and among its ruins travellers have hitherto failed to find any Christian remains. Of the church which stood foremost among all the apostolic communities in faith and love, it may literally be said that not one stone stands upon another. Its whole career is a signal monument of the inscrutable counsel of God. Born into the

<sup>1</sup> Ignatius was martyred, according to some, A.D. 107; or according to others, A.D. 115.



world with the highest promise, the church of Philippi has lived without a history, and perished without a memorial.”<sup>1</sup>

### III. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

No special design is manifest. The Epistle is not, as some suppose, polemical, and directed against the errors of the Judaizing heretics; rather it is the expression of the apostle's love to his favourite church, and of his gratitude for their repeated acts of kindness. The Philippians had repeatedly sent contributions to the apostle. In the beginning of the gospel, on the first introduction of Christianity among them, when the apostle departed from Macedonia, they were the only church that showed their gratitude and affection by ministering to his wants. In Thessalonica they had sent once and again to his necessities (Phil. iv. 15, 16). They were doubtless the brethren which came from Macedonia who supplied his wants in Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9). And now again, when he was imprisoned at Rome, notwithstanding their great distance, they sent Epaphroditus their messenger with further contributions. “I have all,” writes the apostle, “and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (Phil. iv. 18). This renewed expression of their love made a deep impression upon the apostle. Epaphroditus was about to return, and the apostle embraced the opportunity of writing to the Philippians this letter of thanks, in testimony of his approbation of their conduct.

It is surprising that Paul should have been allowed by the Christians at Rome to be in want, and have been obliged to receive supplies from such a distance as Philippi. But we do not know all the circumstances of the case. Paul refused to receive pecuniary assistance where his doing so might be misinterpreted, and impede the progress of the gospel: on this principle he acted when at Corinth, and he may also have done so at Rome. Besides, in other cities he supported himself in part by the labour of his own hands; whereas, as a

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, p. 64.

prisoner, he would be prevented doing so at Rome, and consequently his wants would be greater. The church of Rome certainly fell short of the generosity of the Philippians. Paul himself complains of their selfishness and want of devotion: "All seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21). Paul was a prisoner, and perhaps persecution had commenced, or at least was threatening, and the love of many had waxed cold.

The object of this Epistle was to return thanks to the Philippians for their gifts: it was a letter of gratitude. But, besides this object, there was evidently another design: the Epistle is also admonitory. Paul seeks to reconcile the differences which had arisen in the Philippian church: he exhorts to unity (Phil. iv. 2). He also warns them against threatened error—the artifices of the Judaizing teachers (Phil. iii. 2, 3). He had abundant experience how these men followed his footsteps, and sowed their tares among the good seed of the word; and now at Rome he felt himself opposed and hindered by their exertions; and hence he feared lest his beloved church of Philippi—that church which had hitherto manifested such fidelity and affection—might be corrupted by them. The Jewish teachers were at present outside the church of Philippi, but they might soon obtain an entrance into it.

The bearer of this Epistle was Epaphroditus. Paul describes him as his brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but their messenger (*ἀπόστολος*), and he who ministered to their wants (Phil. ii. 25). He had come from Philippi with the gift of the Philippians to Paul, and was now on the point of returning.<sup>1</sup> Epaphroditus had been attacked by some dangerous illness, which had deeply affected both the apostle and the Philippians. This sickness was connected with the promotion of the gospel: it was for the work of Christ that he was nigh unto death (Phil. ii. 30). Probably he had exerted himself beyond his strength in the diffusion of Christianity: he had waxed confident by reason of the bonds

<sup>1</sup> As already observed, Epaphroditus and Epaphras, although the names may be the same, are different persons: the one was a native of Philippi (Phil. ii. 25), and the other of Colosse (Col. iv. 25).

of the apostle, not regarding his life in the cause of Christ. He had now, to the great joy of the apostle, recovered, and had expressed his natural desire to return to Philippi.

#### IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Philippians admits of no distinct divisions: the doctrinal and practical parts are interwoven. The apostle, after the usual salutation, expresses his affectionate remembrance of the Philippians, his confidence in their continued obedience, and his earnest prayers for their progress in knowledge and holiness (chap. i. 1-11). He informs them of his condition at Rome, that the gospel was rather advanced than retarded by his imprisonment; that there was a crisis in his condition, that it was about to be decided whether he should be liberated or condemned; and that, although ready either for life or death, yet the probability was that he should be set at liberty (chap. i. 12-26). He exhorts them to cultivate all Christian virtues, not to be terrified at the persecutions to which they were exposed, to be united with one another in love, to avoid all strife and vainglory, and to aim at humility,—imitating in this respect the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, although in the form of God, for their sakes humbled Himself to the death of the cross (chap. i. 27—ii. 11). He exhorts them to be more earnest in working out their salvation; not only to hold fast, but to hold forth, the word of life, and to be examples of all that is holy in the midst of a wicked world (chap. ii. 12-18). He then returns to personal matters; he promises soon to send Timothy, holds out an expectation of his own coming, and mentions that in the meantime he sends their messenger Epaphroditus (chap. ii. 19-30). He warns them against false teachers of a Judaizing tendency, shows the falseness of their calumnies against himself, and the vanity of their boasting; even his own attainments were as nothing; he renounced all dependence on himself, and trusted entirely on the righteousness of Christ; he continually pressed forward toward higher attainments in the divine life (chap. iii.—iv. 1). He urges Euodia and Syntyche—probably influential members of the church—to be reconciled, and subjoins

various admonitions to Christian moderation and contentment (chap. iv. 2-9). He returns thanks to the Philippians for their seasonable liberality, expresses his hopes that God will reward them, and concludes the Epistle with his apostolic benediction (chap. iv. 10-23).

#### V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The date of this Epistle has been already determined in considering the Epistle to the Colossians. The place of writing was Rome, and the time was toward the close of Paul's imprisonment of two years in that city. These points have seldom been called in question. Oeder supposes that the Epistle was written during the apostle's residence of a year and a half at Corinth (Acts xviii. 11);<sup>1</sup> but for this supposition there is no foundation. This Epistle was written when the apostle was in imprisonment, and there is no mention of his being so at Corinth. Others (Paulus, Böttger, Thiersch) refer the Epistle to the imprisonment at Cæsarea. The apology (ἀπολογία, Phil. i. 17) was that before the procurator Felix; the palace (πραιτώριον, Phil. i. 13) was Herod's judgment hall (πραιτώριον τοῦ Ἡρώδου, Acts xxiii. 35). This opinion has already been fully discussed, and it has been shown that all "the epistles of the captivity"<sup>2</sup> belong not to the Cæsarean, but to the Roman imprisonment. Even Meyer, who asserts that the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written from Cæsarea, assigns the Philippians to Rome.<sup>3</sup> Caesar's household (οἰκία Καίσαρος, Phil. iv. 22) points to Rome; and it was at Rome, and not at Cæsarea, that the apostle expected the final decision of his trial, whether his imprisonment should terminate in life or in death.

It has also been shown that the Philippians was the last of the "epistles of the captivity."<sup>4</sup> Paul had already spent a considerable time at Rome. This is evident from the notices

<sup>1</sup> Schenkel's *der Brief an die Philipper*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> The reader is reminded that by the "epistles of the captivity" are meant Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's *Philipper*, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>4</sup> This is opposed to the view of Professor Lightfoot.

given concerning Epaphroditus. Three or four journeys must have occurred. The Philippians had heard of Paul's arrival at Rome. Epaphroditus had been sent by them with contributions. He had fallen sick, and the Philippians had heard of his sickness. Epaphroditus had heard how much they had been affected by the information (Phil. ii. 25, 26). This interchange of messages must have occupied a considerable time.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the gospel had made considerable progress at Rome: it had penetrated into the palace of Nero. It would also appear that Paul's imprisonment was drawing to a close: there was every probability that some definite resolution regarding it was about to be formed. Indeed, it is not improbable that this Epistle was written during the interval between the apostle's trial and the public declaration of the sentence. He speaks of his apology (Phil. i. 17); he weighs the alternatives of life and death, and expresses his hope of a speedy deliverance: "I trust in the Lord that I also myself will come shortly" (Phil. i. 24). Alford supposes that there was at this time a change in the mode of Paul's imprisonment to the worse; that he was removed from his own hired house to the prætorium, or barrack of the prætorian guards attached to the palace, and put in stricter custody, with threatening of immediate peril of his life. This change, he supposes, arose from the altered circumstances in the imperial government. Burrus, the wise and moderate prætorian præfect, was dead, and was succeeded by the unprincipled Tigellinus; Nero had divorced Octavia and married Poppæa, a proselyte to Judaism; Seneca had lost his moral influence, and Nero had now commenced his career of crime.<sup>2</sup> All these are, however, mere suppositions: it cannot be proved that these events coincided with the termination of Paul's imprisonment; and although the apostle expected a crisis in his fate, yet he looked forward with confidence to restoration to liberty (Phil. i. 25, 26).

We have here some insight into the apostle's condition and the state of the Christian church at Rome. Although a prisoner, yet a certain degree of liberty was granted him in preaching the gospel. He was not indeed permitted to go

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Philippians, No. V.

<sup>2</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 31.

where he pleased; he was confined to his own hired house, but none were forbidden to come to him. The messengers of the churches came to and went from him. He had also with him fellow-labourers, such as Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Timothy, and Luke, who under his superintendence preached the gospel at Rome. His imprisonment was the means of increasing their zeal and earnestness. "Many of the brethren of the Lord," writes the apostle, "waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. i. 14). There were saints in Cæsar's household (Phil. iv. 22). It is not to be understood from this that any of the relatives of Nero, or of the distinguished officers of his court, embraced Christianity; that, as is fancifully imagined by some, either Poppæa or Seneca were converts; but that some of the household slaves, either by coming in contact with Paul through the medium of the prætorian guards, or by means of some of his fellow-labourers, had been induced to declare themselves Christians. It was a great triumph of the gospel, that it had secured for itself a place in the palace of the Cæsars.<sup>1</sup>

There, however, appears to have been a faction in the Roman church opposed to Paul: some preached Christ through envy and strife, of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to his bonds (Phil. i. 15, 16). The church of Rome was chiefly composed of Gentile Christians, but the Jewish element was strong among them; the Judaizers had obtained a footing. Indifference also to a considerable extent prevailed; men sought to advance their private interests, instead of the interests of Jesus Christ; Paul had no such sympathizing friend among all the converts at Rome as Timothy (Phil. ii. 20, 21). What had become of those numerous friends to whom he sent such tender greetings in his Epistle to the Romans, we know not.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the church of Rome, by increasing in extent, had decreased in purity and

<sup>1</sup> See an interesting note on "Cæsar's Household," in Lightfoot *On the Philippians*, pp. 169-175. See also Reuss' *Geschichte N. T.* p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Lightfoot supposes them included in the saints of Cæsar's household. "We are," he observes, "led to look for them in the long list of names saluted by St. Paul some years before in the Epistle to the Romans."—*On the Philippians*, p. 171.

zeal; a great sifting season was at hand; a fiery trial was necessary to purify them, and that fiery trial soon overtook them in the Neronian persecution.<sup>1</sup>

## VI. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

Nowhere do we see so deeply into the heart of Paul. As the Epistles to the Corinthians reveal to us the internal nature of the Corinthian church, so the Epistle to the Philippians discloses to us the inner character of the great apostle. He gives full vent to the expressions of his affection for his Philippian converts; he mentions his earnest prayers for their spiritual welfare, his tender solicitations, his joy at the stedfastness of their faith and the purity of their conduct. The whole Epistle is a mixture of love and joy,—love for his converts, and joy at their spiritual welfare. The apostle and his converts are united in the bonds of the gospel: their love is reciprocal, and the joy of the one is the joy of them all. They feel themselves one in Christ,—one in their inmost being,—their joy and their love one. Well may this Epistle be called the epistle of joy. *Summa epistolæ: Gaudeo, gaudete* (Bengel).<sup>2</sup>

Another distinguishing quality is the comparative freedom from doctrinal discussions: it is the least dogmatic of all the apostle's letters. Paul is the theologian of Christianity. Most of our proofs of doctrine are derived from his writings: the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians are especially dogmatic. But as there were no errors of doctrine to correct in the church of Philippi,—no Judaizing or Gnostic teachers to combat,—there is here a comparative want of the dogmatic element. Christianity is exhibited in its results,—in the influence which it ought to have upon our lives and conduct,—in constituting us living epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men. Here we find the grand summary of apostolic practice couched

<sup>1</sup> See Reuss' *Geschichte N. T.* p. 123, who, however, states the matter too strongly: he represents Paul as feeling himself to the last somewhat isolated among his Roman friends: "in Rom blieb er zuletzt mit seinen fremden Freunden vereinzelt."

<sup>2</sup> "This epistle of love," observes Meyer, "may be called the apostle's *swan song*."

in these eloquent and comprehensive words: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8).

The most important commentaries on this Epistle are those of De Wette (Leipzig, 1847), Meyer (Göttingen, 1847; third edition, 1865), Wiesinger (Königsberg, 1850; translated into English in Clark's Theological Library), Ewald (Göttingen, 1857); and in our own country, Ellicott (London, 1857; second edition, 1861) and Lightfoot (London, 1868; second edition, 1869).

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#### PAUL'S ROMAN IMPRISONMENTS.<sup>1</sup>

In the Epistle to the Philippians, Paul expresses considerable confidence that his case was about to take a favourable turn, and that he would soon be restored to liberty. It is probable that his long-deferred trial had at last taken place, and the sentence of acquittal or condemnation was about to be pronounced; and, as if he had received some revelation from heaven, Paul felt assured of a favourable issue: "Having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy in faith: that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus for me by my coming to you again" (Phil. i. 25, 26). He promises to send Timothy to the Philippians so soon as his fate shall be determinéd, and he holds out to them the expectation of a visit from himself:

<sup>1</sup> This subject has been already discussed by the author in his *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. ii. pp. 451-456, and the present dissertation is in some respects an expansion of that discussion. The subject is also treated in Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, pp. 87-97; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, Appendix II.; and Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 29-39,—in support of the theory of two imprisonments; and in Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 286-315; Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. i. pp. 384-401; and Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 96-106 (old edition),—in support of the opinion of one imprisonment.



"But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly" (Phil. ii. 23, 24). And even in an earlier epistle he mentions the same expectation of deliverance; for, writing to Philemon, a native of Colosse, he says, "But withal prepare me also a lodging; for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you" (Philem. 22). Now the question is, Were these expectations fulfilled? Was Paul, after the expiration of his two years' imprisonment, restored to liberty, and did he revisit the scenes of his former labours? The strong expectations of the apostle are not in themselves conclusive; they may afford a presumption, but nothing more. The apostle may not have spoken by revelation; the future of his life may have been concealed from him; his expectations may have been disappointed; circumstances may have occurred which altered the whole aspect of affairs; the trial may have taken an unfavourable turn, and the influences employed against Paul may have prevailed. In this very Epistle to the Philippians, he seems to admit the possibility of such an unfavourable issue: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Phil. ii. 17).

Nor does the conclusion of the Acts of the Apostles afford us much assistance in the solution of the question. The history ends abruptly, without any mention of the subsequent fate of the apostle: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all who came in unto him, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). What happened after the lapse of these two years, the historian does not inform us. Some suppose that Luke designed to write a third treatise;<sup>1</sup> others that he carried down the history to the point of time at which he was writing, and that no change in Paul's condition had occurred;<sup>2</sup> and others that he had accomplished the purpose which he intended in the composition of his work,—the history of the diffusion of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Luke did not mention the fate of Paul, because it was well known to the immediate readers of his history; and he specifies "two whole years," because at their close some important change took place in the apostle's circum-

<sup>1</sup> So Heinrichs, Ewald, and Meyer.

<sup>2</sup> So Alford and Schaff.

<sup>3</sup> So Baumgarten, De Wette, and Lekebusch.

stances.<sup>1</sup> If that change were martyrdom, the probability is that Luke would not have omitted it; but if it were the liberation of the apostle, and his entrance upon a fresh career of missionary labours and journeys, and if, when the Acts of the Apostles was written, he were still engaged in preaching the gospel, the omission is more easily accounted for.<sup>2</sup> The conclusion of the Acts then supports, though only slightly, the opinion that Paul was released from confinement. But still it is admitted that it does not prove anything; it can with no degree of certainty be affirmed from it, that Paul's imprisonment terminated with these two years: it may have been that his condition was unchanged, and that Luke had nothing further to relate.

The Christian Fathers from the fourth century were almost unanimous in their opinion that Paul, after suffering an imprisonment for two years at Rome, was restored to liberty; but in recent times the question has been much debated. Some hold that after the lapse of two years, Paul was tried and acquitted (A.D. 63); that he then left Rome, and for several years preached the gospel in Macedonia, Proconsular Asia, Achaia, Crete, and perhaps accomplished his intended journey to Spain (Rom. xv. 24); that he was arrested and imprisoned for the second time at Rome, and suffered martyrdom, towards the close of the reign of Nero (A.D. 68). Others maintain that Paul was never released, but that his imprisonment terminated with martyrdom. Baronius, Hug, Mosheim, Michaelis, Feilmoser, Schott, Credner, Heidenreich, Guericke, Gieseler, Neander, Neudecker, Bertholdt, Bleek, Baumgarten, Bunsen, Ewald, Delitzsch, Olshausen, Huther, Wiesinger, Kirchhofer, Lange; and of English divines, Usher, Pearson, Lardner, Whitby, Doddridge, Paley, Macknight, Alford, Humphry, Lewin, Ellicott, Davies, Howson, Wordsworth; and Dr. Hackett of America, are among the advocates for the hypothesis of two imprisonments. Whereas, on the other side of the question, are to be named Petavius, Schrader, Schmidt, Hensen, Eichhorn, Matthies, Winer, De Wette, Wieseler, Baur, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, Thiersch, Reuss, Schenkel, Hausrath, Schaff,

<sup>1</sup> So Wieseler, Lekebusch, and Bleek.

<sup>2</sup> See Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. p. 62.

Ebrard, Renan; and of distinguished English divines, only Davidson.

The positive arguments in favour of a second Roman imprisonment may be arranged under two heads: the argument derived from the tradition of the Church, and the argument derived from certain allusions in the Pastoral Epistles.

I. Among the traditions of the Church there is the early and important testimony of Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96). "Paul," he observes, "also obtained the reward of his patience, having been imprisoned seven times, having been scourged, having been stoned. Having preached the gospel in the East and in the West, he received the glorious reward of his faith, having taught the whole world righteousness, and having come to the extremity of the West, and having borne witness before the rulers. Thus he departed out of the world, and went into the holy place, having given a striking example of patience."<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed that the text of the Epistle of Clement, found only in one manuscript, namely the Codex Alexandrinus of the New Testament, is defective, and the lacunæ have in several places to be supplied by conjectural emendation.<sup>2</sup> Still, however, in this portion of the Epistle, the sense may be made out with tolerable accuracy. The chief point is, What is to be understood by the extremity or boundary of the West to which Paul came? (ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθών.) Some (Ernesti, Schrader, Lardner) suppose that Rome is here meant, as it was at one extremity, namely, at the beginning of the West. But this cannot be its meaning in this connection, as Clement, after mentioning that Paul had preached in the East and in the West, adds that he came to the extremity of the West, which evidently implies that he had proceeded farther into the West. Others (Baur, Schenkel) think that the expression is used subjectively with reference to Paul; that the apostle had reached the terminus or goal of the West appointed

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Rom. *Ep. ad Cor.* i. c. 5: Διὰ ζῆλον ὁ Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ἔπασχεν, ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, παιδεύσεις, λιβασθεῖς. Κῆρυξ γενόμενος ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, το γινώσκον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν· δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων. Οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἐπορεύθη, ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.

<sup>2</sup> By Young (Junius), Wotton, Cambridge 1718; and Jacobson, Oxford 1838 (fourth edition, 1863).

to him, namely Rome.<sup>1</sup> But such a figurative and rhetorical meaning is unnatural. Wieseler considers that the words have no reference to locality; and as the reading was then thought to be doubtful, he would substitute ὑπὸ for ἐπὶ. He would accordingly translate the words ὑπὸ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως—"before the highest tribunal of the West."<sup>2</sup> But not to insist that such a rendering is in itself objectionable, it is now an ascertained fact that ἐπὶ is the correct reading of the manuscript, there being here no lacunæ.<sup>3</sup> It is to be remembered that to Clement, who wrote from Rome, the phrase "the extremity of the West" would denote some country west of Rome, perhaps Spain, which the apostle proposed to visit (Rom. xv. 20). Ewald, although he rejects the Pastoral Epistles, and consequently the argument derived from them, yet from the testimony of Clement maintains that the apostle was released from his Roman imprisonment, and journeyed to the West. "These words of Clement," he observes, "in their entire connection, are so clear that one cannot comprehend how in our times they could be so much misunderstood, or rather perverted."<sup>4</sup>

The next testimony is that of the Muratorian canon (A.D. 170). The words, according to the corrupt text, are, "Acta autem omnium apostolorum sub uno libro scripta sunt. Lucas obtime Theofile conprindit, quia sub præsencia ejus singula gerebantur, sicute et semote passionem Petri evidenter declarat, sed profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis;"<sup>5</sup> which have been rendered as follows: "The Acts of all the Apostles are written in one book. Luke relates to the excellent Theophilus the events of which he was an eye-witness, as also in a separate place he evidently declares the martyrdom of Peter, but (omits) the journey of Paul from the city to

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 255 ff.; Schenkel in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 525-530. Schaff agrees with Wieseler—Schaff's *Apostolic Church*, vol. i. p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 59, and note; Meyer *On the Romans* (translated by T. & T. Clark), vol. i. p. 18. Tischendorf also attests the existence of ἐπὶ.

<sup>4</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 631.

<sup>5</sup> See Westcott *On the Canon*, pp. 466-473; and Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 35.

Spain." The text is both defective and corrupt, and is consequently difficult of interpretation. In order to make sense of it, critics have felt themselves obliged to supply *omittit* after *proficiscentis*, to which they are led by the use of the adversative conjunction *sed*; so that what the writer is supposed to mean is, that although Luke elsewhere adverts to the martyrdom of Peter (perhaps in Luke xxii. 31–33), he omits entirely the journey of Paul to Spain. Wieseler supposes that the journey to Spain is here denied, because Luke has omitted all mention of it. But the more probable meaning is, that the journey of Paul to Spain is here taken as a fact, although not recorded by Luke in his history. The sense, however, is ambiguous, and the corrupt state of the text detracts from the value of this testimony.

Eusebius (A.D. 315) is the first Father who distinctly mentions Paul's release from captivity. "Paul," he observes, "after pleading his cause, is said (λόγος ἔχει) to have again gone forth to preach the gospel, and after a second visit to the city he finished his life with martyrdom. While he was a prisoner, he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions both his first defence and his impending death. Hear, on these points, his own testimony concerning himself: 'In my former defence no one was present with me, but all deserted me. May it not be laid to their charge! But the Lord was with me, and strengthened me, that through me the preaching of the gospel might be fulfilled, and all nations might hear it; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.' He plainly intimates in these words—that on the former occasion he was rescued from the lion's mouth, that the preaching of the gospel might be accomplished—that it was Nero to whom he referred by this expression, probably on account of his cruelty. Therefore he did not subsequently subjoin any such expression as 'He will rescue me from the lion's mouth,' for he saw in spirit how near his approaching end was. Hence after the expression, 'and I was rescued from the lion's mouth,' he adds, 'the Lord will rescue me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom,' indicating the martyrdom that he would soon suffer. . . . Thus much we have said to show that the martyrdom of the apostle did not

take place at that period of his stay at Rome when Luke wrote his history.”<sup>1</sup> From these words it appears that Eusebius asserts a twofold imprisonment of Paul at Rome. To this, however, it is objected that he states this fact not as his own opinion, but as a tradition or report: “it is said” (λόγος ἔχει). But Eusebius uses this expression to denote what was the opinion of the Church; and he asserts that it was his own opinion, and confirms it by a citation from 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.<sup>2</sup> It is no argument against his testimony that he uses the words of the Epistle incorrectly, understanding by ἐρρύσθην ἐκ στόματος λείοντος the apostle’s deliverance from his first imprisonment; because it is on the ground of the apostle’s release that he gives this interpretation; not conversely, that he infers the apostle’s release from the statement in the Epistle.<sup>3</sup>

After the time of Eusebius, the fact of a second imprisonment is frequently mentioned. Chrysostom says, “Paul, after a residence in Rome, departed for Spain;”<sup>4</sup> and Jerome tells us that “Paul was dismissed by Nero, that he might preach the gospel in the West.”<sup>5</sup> These Fathers, however, lived at too distant a period to be cited as authorities.

Upon the whole, the testimony of ecclesiastical tradition is decidedly in favour of a second imprisonment. If the words of Clemens Romanus were unambiguous; if he had distinctly affirmed that Paul came to Spain, or to some country to the west of Rome, as he is supposed to have meant, the question would be decided; for Clement must have known the fact, as he lived in Rome itself in apostolic times. This argument derived from the traditions of the Church is confirmed by the still stronger argument derived from the Pastoral Epistles: indeed, so much so, that if the authenticity of these Epistles be admitted, the release of Paul from his first Roman imprisonment must be regarded as an ascertained fact of history.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Kirchhofer’s *Quellensammlung*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> See Huther’s *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 31; Conybeare and Howson’s *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 539.

<sup>4</sup> Chrysostom on 2 Tim. iv. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

<sup>6</sup> The argument which follows depends on the assumption of the authenticity of these Epistles,—a point which will hereafter be considered.

II. There are allusions to journeys and incidents in the Pastoral Epistles which do not coincide with what is recorded in the Acts, and which can only be accounted for by the supposition that Paul was released from his imprisonment, and again visited the East. The minute consideration of these journeys and incidents is reserved until the date of each of these Epistles is considered in the special introductions to them. Meanwhile, it is sufficient to observe that in each of the three Epistles there are such journeys and incidents alluded to.

In the First Epistle to Timothy, Paul says: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia" (1 Tim. i. 3). Now, in the only journey of the apostle from Ephesus to Macedonia recorded in the Acts (chap. xx. 1), Timothy was not left behind, but accompanied, or rather preceded, the apostle into Macedonia. This is evident from his being associated with Paul in the superscription to Second Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 1), which was written at that time.

In the Second Epistle to Timothy—admitted by all who hold its authenticity to have been written at Rome toward the close of the apostle's life—Paul mentions having left certain articles with Carpus at Troas, which he wished Timothy to bring with him to Rome (2 Tim. iv. 13). But if Paul were not released from imprisonment, and did not revisit the East, it was more than five years since he had been at Troas, and Timothy had been repeatedly with him since. In the same Epistle, the apostle mentions that he had left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. iv. 20). But Trophimus accompanied the apostle from Miletum to Jerusalem, and was the innocent occasion of his arrest (Acts xxi. 29); and on his voyage to Rome it does not appear that Trophimus was with him, nor did the ship touch at Miletum: so that on neither of these occasions was he left at Miletum.

In the Epistle to Titus, the difficulties are still more insuperable. Mention is made of an evangelistic visit which the apostle paid to Crete, on which occasion he left Titus behind him (Tit. i. 5). But the only time, according to the Acts of the Apostles, that the apostle was at Crete, was on

his voyage to Rome; and he was then a prisoner, his stay was short, and he had no opportunity of preaching the gospel. In the same Epistle, Paul mentions his intention of spending the winter at Nicopolis (Tit. iii. 12),—in all probability, the city of that name in Epirus; but of this there is no mention, and for its accomplishment there is no room, in the Acts of the Apostles.

All these journeys and incidents are outside of the Acts, and, on the assumption of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles, must have occurred after the release of the apostle from his Roman imprisonment. All attempts to make them agree with the narrative of Paul's journeys have signally failed. The only plausible hypothesis is that of Wieseler.<sup>1</sup> He supposes that the circumstances relate to a journey of the apostle, not recorded in the Acts, made during his residence of three years at Ephesus. The same opinion had been previously advanced by Mosheim and Schrader: the former supposes that Paul, about the commencement of that residence, after his expulsion from the Jewish synagogue (Acts xix. 10), made an excursion to Macedonia and Crete, which occupied nine months; and the latter places the supposed journey toward the close of the Ephesian visit, and supposes that it occupied two years.<sup>2</sup> Wieseler frees the hypothesis from all the glaring defects which were attached to the views of his predecessors. According to him, Paul, after labouring for two years at Ephesus, departed from it on a journey of visitation,—first to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3), and then to Corinth, and returned to Ephesus by Crete, where he left Titus (Tit. i. 5); and he further supposes that it was after his final departure from Ephesus, as mentioned in Acts xx. 1, that he proposed spending the winter in Nicopolis (Tit. iii. 12), a city of Epirus, in the province of Achaia (Acts xx. 3), where Titus was to join him. Wieseler further supposes that the First Epistle to Timothy was written during the course of this journey, the Epistle to Titus on his return to Ephesus, and

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 347–354.

<sup>2</sup> Schrader supposes that Paul went to Macedonia, Corinth, Crete, Nicopolis in Cilicia, Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, and back to Ephesus: *Der Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 100 ff.



the Second Epistle to Timothy at the close of his imprisonment.<sup>1</sup>

The hypothesis is most ingeniously supported and drawn out, and recommends itself by its plausibility:<sup>2</sup> it is, however, exposed to several objections. It supposes that Paul's residence at Ephesus was interrupted by a distant journey that must have occupied a considerable time, which seems at variance with the apostle's assertion to the Ephesian elders, that for the space of three years he had not ceased to warn every one (Acts xx. 31). It supposes that the apostle, shortly before he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians, had been in Corinth itself, which would take away the occasion for writing that Epistle. It supposes that Timothy must have remained a short time alone at Ephesus, during the period of Paul's absence; whereas the directions given in the Epistle to him imply a lengthened superintendence. And it supposes that Titus, contrary to the directions in the Epistle (Tit. i. 5), must have left Crete almost immediately, as we find him shortly after engaged in a mission to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xii. 18), from which mission the apostle, after leaving Ephesus, anxiously expected his return (2 Cor. ii. 13). The statement that Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. iv. 20) can only be made to correspond with the narrative in the Acts by a most arbitrary supposition. Wieseler supposes that Trophimus sailed with the apostle for Rome, in order as a witness to testify to his innocence, but left at Myra (Acts xxvii. 5, 6), with the understanding that he should proceed in the Adramyttian vessel to Miletum.<sup>3</sup>

But besides the journeys and incidents already adverted to, some critics (Huther, Guericke, Alford, Ellicott, Howson)<sup>4</sup> lay

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Davidson, in his former edition, agrees in all essential points with Wieseler, except that he omits the unrecorded visit to Corinth: *Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 13 ff. Schaff also agrees in essential points.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler invests all his hypotheses, however contrary they may be to the received opinions of the Church, with a wonderful plausibility. His *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters* is one of the most ingenious books in German theology.

<sup>3</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 466, 467. Grotius, contrary to all authorities, proposes to read *ἐν Μελίτη* (in Malta) instead of *ἐν Μελίτη*.

<sup>4</sup> Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 29; Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 353; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 87; Ellicott *On the Pastoral Epistles*, Introduction, p. 19; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, pp. 655, 656.

peculiar stress upon the nature and character of the Pastoral Epistles. They argue that the heresies mentioned in these Epistles imply a development of false doctrine, which could only occur in the later days of the apostle. They are not the same as those heresies which disturbed the churches of Galatia and Corinth; but are of a Jewish-Gnostic type,—a development of the errors combated in the Epistle to the Colossians. There is a close resemblance between these heresies and those we read of in the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude. These errors had not infected the Ephesian church at an early period: for in his farewell address at Miletum, their rise was a matter of prediction, not yet of fulfilment (Acts xx. 29, 30); and even in the Epistle to the Ephesians, written from Rome, there is no allusion to such errors.<sup>1</sup>

It has been further observed (Michaelis, Paley, Wordsworth), that there is a remarkable difference between the imprisonment in which the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were written, and the imprisonment mentioned in Second Timothy; from which it has been inferred that these imprisonments were not the same. When the former Epistles were written, Paul was surrounded by many friends from whom he sent salutations to the churches; but in Second Timothy he complains that at his first answer no man stood by him, but all men forsook him (2 Tim. iv. 16). In the former Epistles, Timothy was with Paul at Rome, and unites with him in writing the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; but in Second Timothy, he is requested to come with all haste (2 Tim. iv. 9, 21). In the former Epistles, salutations are sent from different persons than those mentioned in Second Timothy: Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia (2 Tim. iv. 21) are not mentioned in any of Paul's epistles. In the former Epistles, Paul is represented as enjoying a certain degree of liberty, in conformity with what we read in the Acts,—that he dwelt in his own hired house; whereas, in Second Timothy, he

<sup>1</sup> Thus Alford observes: "No amount of ingenuity will suffice to persuade us, that there could have been, during the long sojourn of the apostle at Ephesus in Acts xix., such false teachers (as those mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles). No amount of ingenuity, again, will enable us to conceive a state of the Church like that which these Epistles disclose to us, at any time of that period, extending from the year 54 to 63, during which the other Epistles were written."

is in close confinement; and it is mentioned in praise of Onesiphorus, that when he was at Rome he was not ashamed of the apostle's chains, but sought him diligently, and found him (2 Tim. i. 16, 17). In the former Epistles, Paul looked forward to his liberation from confinement, and to his speedy departure from Rome; but in Second Timothy, the only release which he expects is martyrdom: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 11).<sup>1</sup> Still this difference in the surroundings and feelings of the apostle while writing is rather a presumption than a conclusive proof in favour of a second imprisonment. The main stress of the argument lies in the want of correspondence between the journeys and incidents recorded in the Pastoral Epistles and the history of the apostle given us in the Acts.

Those who adopt the hypothesis of only one imprisonment have no positive arguments to produce. They rest their opinion on the mere negative ground that the theory of two imprisonments has not been proved. Two objections are, however, adduced by them which require consideration.

Paul, in his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus, states his conviction (*οἶδα*) that they would see his face no more (Acts xx. 25); whereas, according to the supposition of a second imprisonment, he must again have visited Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3).<sup>2</sup> It must be candidly admitted that, if the theory be true, Paul did revisit Ephesus. It will not do to avoid this admission, as Bishop Wordsworth does, by asserting that Paul expresses a hope to see Timothy himself, but does not say that he intends to see Ephesus (1 Tim. iii. 14).<sup>3</sup> The natural meaning of the words is, that Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, when he departed from that city to go to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3). Besides, in the Second Epistle to Timothy, mention is made of his having been at Troas and Miletum. Paul, then, was again in Proconsular Asia, and it can hardly be supposed that he should be in the immediate neighbourhood of Ephesus without visiting it. But admitting this, there is

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, the Second Epistle to Timothy, No. 1.; and Michaelis, *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 165, 166.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 15 (old edition).

<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth *On St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 431.

no force in the objection. Paul expresses in still stronger terms (*πεποιθως οἶδα*) than those used at Miletum, his confidence that he would revisit Philippi (Phil. i. 25), and consequently be released from his imprisonment. Either in the one case or in the other, the apostle was mistaken in his confidence: if he was released from his imprisonment, he was mistaken when he said to the Ephesian elders that he should see their faces no more; if he was not released, he was mistaken when he wrote to the Philippians that he would come and see them again.

A still more plausible objection against the hypothesis of a second imprisonment is drawn from the fact that Timothy is spoken of in the Pastoral Epistles as a young man.<sup>1</sup> In the First Epistle to Timothy, Paul says, "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. iv. 22); and in the Second Epistle, he warns Timothy against youthful lusts (2 Tim. ii. 22). But on the supposition that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and that the two Epistles to Timothy were written some years after (A.D. 67), it must have been sixteen years since Timothy first joined the apostle (A.D. 51). It is to be observed that when Timothy joined Paul he was probably very young. A similar caution against despising him is given in First Corinthians: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man despise him" (1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11). And he is throughout the epistles spoken of as a young man, "serving with the apostle as a son with a father" (Phil. ii. 22). Supposing that he was eighteen when he joined Paul, he would be only thirty-four when the apostle wrote these Epistles to him. And among the ancients such an age was regarded as young. Paul himself was called a young man (Acts vii. 58) when he was probably thirty-five.<sup>2</sup> Besides, we must take into account the important office which Timothy was to occupy, and the high authority entrusted to him as superintendent of the church of Ephesus. The age of thirty-four would be considered young for such a position.

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 312; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 30 ff. (old edition).

<sup>2</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. p. 263.

The reasons, then, in favour of a second imprisonment decidedly preponderate, and raise the opinion almost to an historical certainty.<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed, that in recent times, all those who deny the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles, with the exception of Ewald and Credner,<sup>2</sup> likewise deny the reality of a second imprisonment; whereas those who admit the genuineness of these Epistles, with the exception of Wieseler, Schaff, and perhaps a few others, are maintainers of a twofold imprisonment.

The remainder of the life of the apostle is involved in obscurity. His two years' imprisonment ended in the spring of the year 63, and he must have been released before the summer of the year 64, when the great persecution of the Christians in the reign of Nero occurred. In all probability he visited Philippi, Colosse, Ephesus, perhaps Spain, went into Crete, where he left Titus, and purposed spending a winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. All detailed statements of his journeys rest on unsupported conjecture. Huther supposes that the apostle accomplished all this in one year; that he was released in the spring of A.D. 63, and perished in the Neronian persecution of A.D. 64;<sup>3</sup> but the time allowed is evidently too short. Dean Howson supposes that five years intervened between Paul's first and second imprisonment; and that he suffered martyrdom, in accordance with the testimony of Jerome, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Nero (A.D. 68). He thus arranges Paul's supposed journeys: Immediately on his liberation, Paul left Rome by the usual route, crossing the Adriatic from Brundisium to Dyrrachium, and then by the Egnatian road to Philippi (Phil. ii. 24); he then journeyed to Proconsular Asia, and visited Colosse (Philem. 22), Laodicea, and Ephesus. From Ephesus he undertook his long premeditated journey to Spain, where he remained two years, returning in A.D. 66. Departing again from Ephesus, he went to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3), where he wrote the First Epistle to Timothy. From that he went to Crete (Tit. i. 5), returned to Ephesus, and wrote the Epistle to Titus.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, on the assumption of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte*, p. 631; Credner's *Gesch. des N. T. Canon*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 37.

Leaving Ephesus for the last time, he journeyed by Miletum, where Trophimus was left sick (2 Tim. iv. 30), by Troas, where he left his parchments (2 Tim. iv. 13), and by Corinth, where Erastus remained behind (2 Tim. iv. 20), to Nicopolis in Epirus, where he intended to winter (Tit. iii. 12). Here it is supposed that he was arrested and sent for trial to Rome, where he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy.<sup>1</sup> All this is, however, purely conjectural; and the frequency with which the apostle is made to visit Ephesus, shows how unlikely is the route described.<sup>2</sup> Any attempt to fill up the outline of Paul's life after his first Roman imprisonment must be sure to fail. If the statement of Jerome concerning the date of Paul's martyrdom be correct, there was an interval of several years, sufficient to accomplish all those journeys incidentally alluded to in the "Pastoral Epistles," and even to pay a visit to Spain, which we know Paul intended to make, and which, if the usual interpretation of the words of Clemens Romanus be correct, he actually accomplished.

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 547 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Guericke gives the following route: From Rome to Philippi, Crete, Miletum, Ephesus, Troas, Macedonia, Corinth, and wintered at Nicopolis; then Italy and Spain, from which he was sent as a prisoner to Rome.—*Isagogik*, pp. 363, 364.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.



### I. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

THE First and Second Epistles to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus, are known by the name of the "Pastoral Epistles," because they are official letters addressed to Paul's fellow-labourers, and contain instructions concerning the government of the Church and its office-bearers. They comprise a distinct class of epistles, and differ in many respects from the other writings of Paul. The connection between them is so close as to prove that they must have been written about the same time, and with a similar intention. There is a similarity in their contents: the descriptions given of the heretics, and the directions concerning ecclesiastical government, are almost identical in each. There is a still greater similarity in their language: words and phrases frequently occur in each which are not found, or at least but rarely, in the other writings of Paul; and what is still more remarkable, there is a certain definite peculiarity of expression even when the ideas are familiar in the other epistles. Examples of this will present themselves to every reader of the Pastoral Epistles. The salutation of First and Second Timothy<sup>1</sup> is threefold—*χάρις, ἔλεος, εἰρήνη*, whereas in the earlier epistles it is twofold: *εὐσέβεια* is used to represent the nature of the Christian life; *σώφρων* and its derivatives are prominently brought forward as Christian virtues; *μῦθοι, ζητήσεις*, and *γενεαλογίαι* are employed to denote false doctrine, and *ὑγιής* and its derivatives to denote right doctrine; *ἐπιφάνεια*, instead

<sup>1</sup> The reading of Tit. i. 4 is doubtful.

of *παρουσία*, is the term employed to denote the second advent; *δεσπότης*, instead of *κύριος*, is used for an earthly master; and *πιστός ὁ λόγος* is a favourite expression to introduce any important declaration (1 Tim. i. 15, iii. 1, iv. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 11; Tit. iii. 8).<sup>1</sup> Hence also the objections which are brought against these epistles—being entirely of an internal nature, relating to their matter and diction—apply to all. First Timothy has certainly been most objected to, and it is true that some of the objections adduced do not apply with equal force to either of the other two Epistles; but with most critics, these Epistles are made to stand or fall together. It is therefore of advantage to discuss the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles together, as we shall thus escape an otherwise unavoidable repetition.

The external evidence in favour of the Pastoral Epistles is by no means defective; indeed, is as strong as that in favour of most of Paul's other letters. Various supposed allusions in the works of the early Fathers, especially Clemens Romanus and Ignatius, have been given by Lardner and Kirchofer; but these are so uncertain, that they can hardly be adduced as proofs. There is, however, a sentence in the Epistle of Polycarp (A.D. 116) which appears to be an evident allusion to First Timothy: "The love of money is the beginning of all evils. Knowing, therefore, that as we brought nothing into the world, so neither can we carry anything out, let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness" (1 Tim. vi. 7, 10).<sup>2</sup> Baur evades the force of this testimony by the gratuitous assumption that Polycarp did not here quote from First Timothy, but that the author of First Timothy quoted from the Epistle of Polycarp.<sup>3</sup> Hegesippus (A.D. 173) is represented by Eusebius as saying: "When the sacred choir of the apostles became extinct, then the combinations of impious error arose by the fraud of false teachers, who henceforth attempted to preach their science falsely so called (*ψευδώνυμον γνῶσιν*)

<sup>1</sup> For a list of similar words and phrases in these epistles, see Huther's *Pastoral-briefe*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Philippens*, c. 4: 'Ἀρχὴ δὲ πάντων χαλεπῶν φιλαργυρία· εἰδότες οὖν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰσηνέγκαμεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐξενεγκεῖν τι ἔχομεν ὀφλισσώμεθα τοῖς ὄπλοις τῆς δικαιοσύνης. Other supposed references are to be found in chaps. 5, 9, and 12.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 137.



against the gospel of truth" (1 Tim. vi. 20).<sup>1</sup> Here also it is admitted that the coincidence of language is not accidental; but the argument is met by Baur in the same convenient manner, by asserting that the words in the Epistle are taken from Hegesippus.<sup>2</sup>

After this, the testimony in favour of the Epistle is direct and incontrovertible. Irenæus (A.D. 178) writes: "Some, having rejected the truth, brought in lying words and vain genealogies which minister questions, as the apostle says, rather than godly edifying which is in faith" (1 Tim. i. 4).<sup>3</sup> "Of Linus Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy" (2 Tim. iv. 21).<sup>4</sup> "As Paul says, A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject" (Tit. iii. 10).<sup>5</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194) observes: "Of which the apostle writing, says, 'O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called'"<sup>6</sup> (1 Tim. vi. 20). "This doctrine the apostle thus recognising as divine, says, 'Thou, O Timothy, from a child hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation'"<sup>7</sup> (2 Tim. iii. 15). "Some mention Epimenides the Cretan, whom the Apostle Paul recognises as a Greek prophet, and also mentions him in his Epistle to Titus after this manner: 'One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars'"<sup>8</sup> (Tit. i. 12,

<sup>1</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 32: 'Ὡς δὲ ἱερὸς τῶν ἀποστόλων χωρὸς διάφορον εἰλήφει τοῦ βίου τίλος, . . . τηλικαῦτα τῆς ἀθείου πλάνης τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐλάμβανεν ἡ σύστασις, διὰ τῆς τῶν ἱεροδιδασκάλων ἀπάτης, οἱ καὶ . . . τῷ τῆς ἀληθείας κηρύγματι τὴν ψευδώνυμον γυνῶσιν ἀντικηρύττειν ἐπιχειροῦν.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* i. 1. 1: Τὴν ἀλήθειαν παραπιμπόμενόν τινες, ἐπισάγουσι λόγους ψευδεῖς καὶ γενεαλογίας ματαίας, αὐτίνες ζητήσεις μᾶλλον παρέχουσι, καθὼς ὁ ἀπόστολος φησὶν, ἢ οἰκοδομὴν Θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 3. 3: Λίνου Παύλος ἐν ταῖς πρὸς Τιμόθεον ἐπιστολαῖς μνύνηται.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 3. 4: 'Ὡς καὶ Παῦλος ἔφησιν αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοῦνσίαν παραιτοῦ.

<sup>6</sup> *Strom.* ii. c. 11: Περὶ ἧς ὁ ἀπόστολος γράφει, ὃ Τιμόθεε, φησὶν, τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον, ἐκτριπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενόφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδανύμου γνώσεως.

<sup>7</sup> *Admonit. ad Gent.* chap. ix.: Σὺ δέ, ὦ Τιμόθεε, ἀπὸ βρέφους τὰ ἱερά γράμματα οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμεινα σοι σοφίας εἰς σωτηρίαν.

<sup>8</sup> *Strom.* i. c. 14: Οἱ δὲ Ἐπιμενίδην τὸν Κρήτην, ὃν Ἑλληνικὸν αἶθε προφήτην, οὗ μνύνηται ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Τίτον ἐπιστολῇ, λέγων οὕτως: Εἰπὶν τις ἐξ αὐτῶν τοῖος προφήτης οὕτως, Κρήτες αἱ ψεύται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.

13). Tertullian (A.D. 200) observes: "Paul used this word (*depositum*) to Timothy, 'O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust' (1 Tim. vi. 20); and again, 'That good thing which is committed to thee keep'"<sup>1</sup> (2 Tim. i. 14). "But of this we need say no more, if it be the same Paul who, writing to the Galatians, reckons heresies among the works of the flesh, and who directs Titus to reject a man that is a heretic after the first admonition; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself"<sup>2</sup> (Tit. iii. 10, 11). These three Epistles are also contained in the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170), and in the Peshito and Old Latin versions, made toward the close of the second century. Eusebius has no hesitation in placing them among the *ὁμολογούμενα*.

The Pastoral Epistles, however, did not receive a favourable reception from the heretics. They were omitted in the catalogue of Marcion (A.D. 140). The reason of this omission can hardly be that Marcion was ignorant of them,<sup>3</sup> considering his reception of the smaller Epistle to Philemon and the earlier testimony of Polycarp. It seems rather to have been from dogmatic reasons, as these Epistles were more opposed to the Gnosticism taught by him than the other Pauline Epistles. Nor is this omission of any value as an argument against the genuineness of these Epistles, as Marcion exercised extreme arbitrariness with regard to the books of Scripture, rejecting all except the Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul's epistles. Tatian (A.D. 175), another Gnostic, and the founder of the sect of the Encratites, received the Epistle to Titus, but rejected the two Epistles to Timothy. The probable reason for this was, that the Epistle to Titus represents the false teachers as Jews (Tit. i. 10, 14, iii. 9), and is not so directly antagonistic to Gnosticism as the two other epistles.

With regard to the internal evidence, it is admitted that the style and diction are somewhat different from that of Paul's

<sup>1</sup> *De præscript. hæret.* c. 25: Et hoc verbo usus est Paulus ad Timotheum: "O Timothee, depositum custodi." Et rursus: "Bonum depositum serva."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* c. 6: Nec diutius die isto, si idem et Paulus, qui et alibi hæreses inter carnalia crimina enumerat, scribens ad Galatas, et qui suggerit, hominem hæreticum post primam correptionem recusandum, quod perversus sit ejusmodi et delinquat ut a semetipso damnatus.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 138-140.

other epistles; still, as will afterwards appear, the difference is not so great but that it may be accounted for from the circumstances under which they were written. The character of the great apostle is distinctly impressed upon these Epistles,—the same fervour of spirit displayed in numerous parentheses and digressions, the same tendency to run off at a word, the same humility and self-depreciation, the same earnest desire after the spiritual welfare of his converts, the same habit of alluding to his own sufferings for the gospel, and the same vehemence in expression as are seen in the other epistles, are traceable in these. There are also specialities and allusions which are so natural and apparently so unimportant, that they would never have occurred to a forger: as, for example, the apostle's fatherly anxiety about the health of Timothy (1 Tim. v. 23); and the reference to the cloak, books, and parchments which he had left behind him at Troas, and which he desired Timothy to bring with him to Rome (2 Tim. iv. 13).<sup>1</sup> Nor could there be any possible motive for forgery. The design could not have been to combat the Gnostics of the second century, otherwise their errors would have been more clearly stated; nor is there any trace of an attempt to support hierarchical pretensions, as the ecclesiastical government described is of the simplest kind, and no distinction is made between bishops and presbyters.<sup>2</sup> The Epistles are what they profess to be—directions sent for the guidance of two of Paul's trusty friends in the circumstances in which they were placed.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding these proofs, none of Paul's epistles have been more attacked in recent times. Schmidt<sup>4</sup> was the first to question the genuineness of First Timothy. In this he was followed by Schleiermacher.<sup>5</sup> The objections of this eminent

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson also advert to the numerous persons mentioned in these Epistles, amounting in all to twenty-two. If these Epistles were forged, as De Wette supposes, about A.D. 90, some of these persons would be alive and detect the forgery.

<sup>2</sup> This point—the absence of all motive for forgery—is well stated by Guericke, *Neutestamentliche Isagogik*, p. 376.

<sup>3</sup> For additional internal marks of genuineness, see Paley's *Hore Paulinae*, chap. xi.-xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Schmidt's *Einführung*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ueber den sogenannten ersten Br. des Paulus an den Tim. Ein Sendschreiben an Gass*, Berlin 1807.

theologian were purely of a subjective nature. He considered the First Epistle to Timothy to be a compilation of the Second Epistle and the Epistle to Titus. He alleges that it bears the impress of a later time; that its language is un-Pauline, and its sentiments are weak and unconnected; that there is no place in the life of the apostle for its composition, and that it is destitute of all personal references.<sup>1</sup>

Eichhorn perceived that most of these objections applied with equal force to the other two Epistles, and hence he regarded them all as spurious.<sup>2</sup> He considered that they contain notes or recollections of Paul's teaching concerning the government of the Church, which were reduced to writing by some of the zealous disciples of the apostle after his death. Schott even went the length of considering that the author was Luke.<sup>3</sup> Eichhorn was followed by De Wette, who, however, rested his argument on mere negative criticism, dwelling chiefly upon the style, diction, and sentiments of the Epistles as un-Pauline.<sup>4</sup> But, as Baur remarks, these mere negative objections are insufficient,—the impossibility that Paul is the author of these Epistles is not so great as to overbalance the contrary supposition. It is necessary to bring forward positive data which will transfer them from the apostle's time to another age.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, Baur in his *Apostel Paulus*, and at still greater length in his *Pastoralbriefe des Apostel Paulus*, undertakes to prove that the Pastoral Epistles were written after the death of Paul. He supposes that they were directed against Gnosticism, and particularly the form of it inculcated by Marcion; and that they were written about the middle of the second century. His arguments are as follows: The form of error opposed is Gnosticism, as developed in the second century; the government and external institutions of the Church mentioned are post-apostolic; the circumstances alluded to in the Epistles cannot be made to correspond with the life of Paul; and the words and phrases are un-Pauline. According to Baur, these Epistles were written from Rome by moderate

<sup>1</sup> The objections of Schleiermacher were fully answered by Planck, Wegscheider, and Beckhaus.

<sup>2</sup> *Einleitung in N. T.*

<sup>4</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 336 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Schott's *Isagoge*, p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 4.

Paulinists, with a view to correct the extreme Pauline views of the Montanists, and to reconcile Petrine and Pauline Christianity. He supposes that the first of them in date was Titus, then Second Timothy, and last of all First Timothy, which was a combination of the two other Epistles. In these views Baur was followed by his disciple Schwegeler, who regarded the Pastoral Epistles as written against the Gnostics, especially the Valentinians and Marcionites.<sup>1</sup>

Several other German critics reject the Pastoral Epistles, either in whole or in part. Credner, Neudecker, and Ewald regard them all as spurious. Usteri,<sup>2</sup> Lücke, and Bleek<sup>3</sup> reject the First Epistle to Timothy, whilst Neander expresses himself as doubtful. "I confess," he observes, "that I am not convinced of the genuineness of the First Epistle to Timothy with the same certainty as of the Pauline origin of all the other Pauline Epistles, and of the two other Pastoral letters, and the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians."<sup>4</sup> Reuss expresses himself with uncertainty concerning First Timothy and Titus, but strongly maintains the genuineness of Second Timothy.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Davidson, in the new edition of his *Introduction to the New Testament*, argues against all three Epistles: his views in general correspond with those of De Wette. These objections have been answered with great acuteness by Huther, in his introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, and at still greater length by Wiesinger. So also there are replies to them by Alford in his *Prolegomena*, and by Professor Plumptre in his article on First Timothy in *Smith's Dictionary*.

One great objection brought against the Pastoral Epistles is, that the incidents mentioned in each of them do not corre-

<sup>1</sup> Schwegeler's *Nachapost. Zeital.* vol. ii. pp. 138-153.

<sup>2</sup> Usteri, *Entwicklung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 82 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 338.

<sup>5</sup> He observes: "Among all the Pauline Epistles attacked by criticism, none (next to the Epistle to Philemon) bears the stamp of genuineness so evidently as Second Timothy."—*Geschichte der heiligen Schriften N. T.* p. 113. Bleek makes the same remark with reference to Second Timothy: "Genuineness is stamped on the letter throughout, so clearly and unmistakeably that we cannot for a moment entertain the idea of its being a forgery."—*Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 73.

spond with the history of Paul as recorded in the Acts. It is readily acknowledged that this is the case; all attempts to make them correspond—though many of them are most ingenious, especially the hypothesis of Wieseler—have ended in failure. If, then, it could be proved that the life of Paul terminated with his two years' imprisonment at Rome, or that he was never released from that imprisonment, the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles must be relinquished. "The supposition of a second Roman imprisonment," observes Olshausen, "is the only way in which the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles can be proved. This concession alone can solve the serious difficulties."<sup>1</sup> But on this supposition, the objection arising from the want of historical data is at once removed; because the history of Paul in the interval between his first and second imprisonments is unrecorded, and it cannot be proved that he did not make those journeys alluded to in these Epistles. And, as has been elsewhere shown, there exist traditional notices of Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment.<sup>2</sup>

The objections brought against the Pastoral Epistles may be arranged under three heads: 1. The heretics mentioned are anti-Judaic Gnostics, who lived after the death of Paul. 2. The polity and institutions of the Church referred to are post-apostolic. 3. The words, phrases, and sentiments of the Epistles are un-Pauline.

1. The first objection is, that the heretics of the Pastoral Epistles are anti-Judaic Gnostics. It is on this objection that Baur lays the chief stress of his argument.<sup>3</sup> He supposes these heretics to be the followers of Marcion (A.D. 140). According to him, the endless genealogies (1 Tim. i. 4) refer to the æons of the Valentinians; the command to abstain from meats rests on the Gnostic view of matter as the seat of sin; the prohibition to marry corresponds with the views of Marcion; the teachers of the law are Antinomians, who depreciated the law; and the phrase, "the oppositions of science, falsely so called" (*ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως*, 1 Tim.

<sup>1</sup> Wiesinger *On First Timothy*, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> See dissertation on Paul's Roman imprisonments.

<sup>3</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 10–29; Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 109 ff.

vi. 20), points to the work of Marcion termed *Ἀντιθέσεις*. The doxologies contained in the Epistles, and the Christology, are also regarded as Gnostic. 1 Tim. iii. 16 is a series of Gnostic and anti-Gnostic propositions antithetically arranged.

But such a view of the subject is certainly unnatural. It is especially unnatural to consider the teachers of the law (*νομοδιδάσκαλοι*, 1 Tim. i. 7), not as Jewish teachers who maintained the permanence of the law, but anti-Judaic Gnostics who taught that the law was not from God, and who were called "teachers of the law" merely because they were continually speaking about the law. When the writer of the Epistle asserts that the law is good (*καλὸς ὁ νόμος*, 1 Tim. i. 8), he is not arguing, as Baur asserts, against the Gnostics, who held the contrary opinion, and denied the divine authority of the law, but conceding the point to those teachers of the law against whom he writes; for he adds, "if a man use it lawfully." Besides, the express assertions in the Epistles, that the heretics were those of the circumcision, and their errors Jewish fables (Tit. i. 10, 14), at once show that they were not written against the anti-Judaic Gnostics of the second century. It is to be observed that this extreme view of Baur concerning the character of these heretics, and the late origin of these Epistles, is not entertained by De Wette and Dr. Davidson.<sup>1</sup>

2. The second objection brought against the Pastoral Epistles is, that the church polity contained in them is post-apostolic. "A second point," observes Baur, "which is to be taken into account in the criticism of the Pastoral Epistles, refers to what is related in them concerning the government and external institutions of the Church."<sup>2</sup> Mention is made of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. A prominence is given to church government which is nowhere else to be found in Paul's genuine epistles. Baur admits that *ἐπίσκοποι* and *πρεσβύτεροι* are names applied to the same persons; but he asserts that they are so called from different points of view. As presidents of small congregations, they were bishops; as compared with each other, they were presbyters. We have here,

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 190-192 (new edition).

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 112.

according to him, the germ of Roman episcopacy: the Epistles were written with a hierarchical tendency.<sup>1</sup>

But the church polity in these Epistles is extremely simple, and shows no trace of a post-apostolic development. Deacons were a very early institution, apparently owing their origin to the election of the seven almoners in the church of Jerusalem (Acts vi.);<sup>2</sup> and although there is no mention of the origin of presbyters, yet there is frequent allusion to them in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul ordained elders in every church which he had founded (Acts xiv. 23), and at Miletus he called to him the elders of the church of Ephesus (Acts xx. 17). The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed to the bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1). And even in those few epistles which Baur admits to be genuine, there is mention of the diaconate (*διάκονια*), of teaching, and of the gifts of church government (Rom. xii. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 28). The identity of bishops and presbyters as stated in First Timothy and Titus is a proof of the early age of these Epistles; for, as is seen from the Epistles of Ignatius, the bishops were regarded, in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles, as forming an ecclesiastical order higher than that of the presbyters. At the same time, the qualifications of the bishop—that he must not be a novice, and that he must be apt to teach—show that these Epistles must have been written at a late period in the life of the apostle, after the churches had been for some time in existence.<sup>3</sup>

In the First Epistle to Timothy there is a description of a supposed ecclesiastical institution composed of widows (1 Tim. v. 3–16), which is regarded by the objectors to this Epistle as post-apostolic. Schleiermacher considers them to be deaconesses. Baur proceeds further: he thinks that two classes of widows are here distinguished—widows indeed, and those who were only widows by an official designation. From a passage in one of the epistles of Ignatius, he shows that the

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 78–96.

<sup>2</sup> See author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 210, 211. It is not maintained that the office of "the seven" was precisely the same as that of the deacons, but that the latter office grew out of the former.

<sup>3</sup> See Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 63.



term *χήρα* was applied to virgins (*παρθένους τὰς λεγομένας χήρας*) who devoted themselves to the service of Christ;<sup>1</sup> and he thinks that the allusion in the Epistle is to this ecclesiastical institution of the second century.<sup>2</sup> But this distinction is not borne out by the passage in question. It must be evident to every attentive reader, that only actual widows are here mentioned. If we are to suppose that it is the ecclesiastical office of deaconess that is here adverted to, still it is erroneous to consider this office as post-apostolic. Phœbe is mentioned as a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea (Rom. xvi. 1). It is, however, disputed whether these widows were deaconesses. Mosheim, with whom Alford partially agrees,<sup>3</sup> thinks that they were employed in spiritual offices,—a species of female presbyters; as, for example, in the education of orphans and the instruction of female catechumens. But the probability is, that “the admission into the number” (1 Tim. v. 9) referred to a list of those widows who were to be supported by the funds of the Church,—an institution similar to that of which mention is made in the church of Jerusalem (Acts vii. 1).<sup>4</sup> This agrees with the description given. A widow was not to be taken into the number under threescore years; if a widow had children or grandchildren, they were to support her, and the Church was not to be burdened; the Church was to relieve them that are widows indeed.

3. The third objection, which is chiefly insisted upon by De Wette, is, that the Pastoral Epistles are full of un-Pauline words and phrases.<sup>5</sup> De Wette gives a long list of peculiar

<sup>1</sup> Ignatius, *ad Smyrn.* c. 13. The passage in Ignatius is suspected of being an interpolation. There are no writings in the post-apostolic age about which there is so much dispute as the Ignatian Epistles. Buusen considers those contained in the Syriac version—namely, the epistles to Polycarp, to the Ephesians, and to the Romans—as only genuine, and the other four as spurious.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 43–48; *Apostel Paulus*, vol. ii. p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> These widows might perhaps be expected, in return for the bounty of the church, to devote their time to the education of orphans, attention to strangers, and ministering to the sick, under the superintendence of the elders and deacons, but without any official character (1 Tim. v. 10). See Jacob's *Ecclesiastical Polity of the Church*, pp. 166–171; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 153, 154; Huthier's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 64–67; Davidson's *Ecclesiastical Polity of the N. T.*, pp. 179–181.

<sup>5</sup> De Wette's *Einkitung*, pp. 326, 327.

words—the *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* found in these Epistles.<sup>1</sup> Similar lists are given by Dr. Davidson in his new *Introduction*, and by Conybeare and Howson in an appendix to their *Life and Letters of St. Paul*.<sup>2</sup> And certainly it is in this point that the chief objection to these Epistles lies. It must be admitted that their phraseology and diction are somewhat different from that of Paul's other epistles. This point, however, has been frequently overstrained. The number of these *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* is not greatly out of proportion; in the First Epistle to Timothy there are 81, in the second 63, and in the Epistle to Titus 44. In the other epistles of Paul similar peculiar expressions occur. Thus, it is said that in the Epistle to the Galatians there are 57, in the Epistle to the Philippians 54, and in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, taken together, 143.<sup>3</sup> Besides, this is a most uncertain test. It is unreasonable to restrict such a fervid writer as Paul to a certain number of words; his mind was not stationary; words would certainly be employed by him in his later which do not occur in his earlier epistles. The circumstances under which these Epistles were written must also be taken into account. Peculiar errors are mentioned which would occasion the employment of new words in order to describe and refute them. Church government, and the qualifications and duties of ecclesiastical office-bearers, which are dwelt upon only in these Epistles, would necessitate a difference in language. The Epistles were not addressed to communities, but to private friends, and therefore would admit of greater freedom in epistolary correspondence. And probably several years intervened between them and the other letters of Paul. Such considerations as these, if they do not entirely remove the difficulty, at least greatly diminish its force.

But De Wette also objects that there are not only un-Pauline words, but un-Pauline sentiments; the doctrine contained in the Epistles is not that of Paul. Good works are

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, pp. 336, 337.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. ii. pp. 182-184; Conybeare and Howson's *St Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 663, 664.

<sup>3</sup> Oosterzee's *Pastoralbriefe* in Lange's *Bibelwerk*, p. 3; Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 380.

strongly insisted on, if not to the exclusion, at least to the depreciation of faith.<sup>1</sup> The same objection is urged by Dr. Davidson.<sup>2</sup> This difference in doctrine does not appear; on the contrary, the Epistles are eminently Pauline in sentiment. It is surely not un-Pauline to insist strongly on the necessity of holiness; and it is to be expected that, after the foundation had been laid, this feature of Pauline Christianity would appear most prominent in the later epistles. But while it may be admitted that a peculiar prominence is given to good works, yet these works are represented as springing from the grace of God, and as the effect of believing on Christ. The distinguishing Pauline doctrines of grace, and of the inefficacy of good works for justification, are as distinctly stated in these as in Paul's other epistles. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. iii. 5-7).

But not only are un-Pauline, but also Pauline expressions objected to. It is affirmed that the writer of these Epistles copied from the genuine epistles of Paul.<sup>3</sup> But certainly this is carrying fault-finding to an excess. Whether the expressions are Pauline or un-Pauline, they thus equally prove the spuriousness of the Epistles. The fair argument rather is, that the expressions used are Pauline, because Paul was the author of the Epistles. The resemblance is in no respects of such a nature as to excite the suspicion of forgery.

There are, however, several eminent critics who admit the genuineness of Second Timothy and Titus, but reject First

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. ii. p. 170: "Instead of *faith*," he observes, "having the specific importance which Paul gives it, the general idea of *godliness* or *piety* is put in its place."

<sup>3</sup> Davidson's *Introduction* (new edition), vol. ii. p. 180; see also Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 69.

Timothy. It is therefore necessary to attend to the special objections against this Epistle. They are best given by Bleek in his *Introduction to the New Testament*; <sup>1</sup> and are chiefly as follows:—1. The Epistle contains much that is akin to the two other Pastoral Epistles, to which it is inferior. But the resemblance may be accounted for by the supposition that First Timothy and Titus at least were written about the same time, and with similar designs. The resemblance is similar to that between the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and indeed is not so great. The inferiority of First Timothy is a mere matter of taste. 2. In 1 Tim. i. 20, Paul pronounces a sentence of excommunication against Hymenæus; whereas in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, Hymenæus is mentioned as a false teacher in Ephesus, who believed that the resurrection was already past; there is here an opposition which it is difficult to reconcile. But there is no discrepancy between these passages: Hymenæus might well be excommunicated by Paul, and yet remain at Ephesus as a teacher of false doctrine, outside of the Christian Church. 3. The words in 1 Tim. iv. 12, "Let no man despise thy youth," are inconsistent with the age of Timothy, as the Epistle must have been written many years after he had associated with Paul. This objection has already been met in the dissertation on Paul's Roman imprisonments, and it has been shown that Timothy need not have been more than thirty-four, which was comparatively young for so responsible an office. 4. In 1 Tim. v. 18, Christ's words contained in the Gospel of Luke, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7), are quoted as a declaration of Scripture. But it is by no means proved, as Bleek affirms, that Luke's Gospel was written after the apostle's death; and though improbable, there is nothing unapostolic in its being quoted by Paul as Scripture. It is, however, doubtful whether the words are a scriptural citation; they may be only a proverbial expression, quoted both by our Lord and Paul as such.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 84-90.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Calvin observes: "He does not quote this as a passage of Scripture, but as a proverbial saying which common sense teaches to all. In like manner, when Christ said the same thing to the apostles, He brought forward nothing else than a statement approved by universal consent."—CALVIN on 1 Tim. v. 18.

5. In 1 Tim. ii. 14, 15, it is said of the woman that she shall be saved through child-bearing (*σωθήσεται διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας*); it is strange to affirm that child-bearing should be given as the ground of the salvation of the woman. But these words are confessedly difficult to understand, so that no objection can be founded on them. If they allude, as many critics affirm, from the presence of the definite article (through the child-bearing), to the incarnation of Christ,—His being made of a woman,—then not only is the objection entirely removed, but a great truth declared, that as by woman sin entered into the world, so by woman came redemption.<sup>1</sup>

As the result of the whole of this long discussion, it is to be remarked that the external evidence in favour of these Epistles is clear and convincing, and is not weakened by their rejection by certain heretics; that the internal evidence is also considerable; that the objections brought against the Epistles are not of such a nature as to overcome the evidence in their favour; and especially, that the attempt of Baur to prove them to be writings of the second century entirely fails.

## II. THE PERSON ADDRESSED.

Timothy was the offspring of a mixed marriage: his mother, whose name was Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5), was a Jewess, and his father a Greek. He was a native not of Derbe, as some suppose,<sup>2</sup> but of Lystra (Acts xvi. 1). He was probably converted by Paul along with his mother on the apostle's first visit to that town (Acts xiv. 8). On the second missionary journey, when Paul came again to Lystra, he chose Timothy as his companion, probably in the capacity of minister or attendant to himself and Silas, as formerly Mark was to himself and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 5). In order to remove all occasion of offence, Timothy was circumcised by the apostle, because it was well known that his father was a Greek. Timothy after-

<sup>1</sup> Others explain the verse by supposing that the term *τεκνογονία* refers not to the mere bearing of children, but to the religious training of children.

<sup>2</sup> The opinion of Wieseler, who founds on Acts xx. 4, uniting *Δεφύβας* with *καὶ Τιμόθεος*.

form of godliness, but were strangers to its power; covetous men, who supposed that godliness was gain, and who made their religion a pretext to advance their temporal interest. Although they strove about the law, yet it was merely to advance their theoretical views, not to practise its holy commandments. Whether they were actually licentious in their conduct does not clearly appear, although it seems to be implied.<sup>1</sup>

There is a striking resemblance between the heretics mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles, and those mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. Like them, they were Jewish teachers, dissimilar to the Judaizers whom the apostle encountered in the early portion of his ministry, and against whom he wrote in the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians. Error had changed its nature; it had passed that stage of development. The heretics mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians and in the Pastoral Epistles did not insist on the indispensableness of circumcision; they were not strict Pharisees, who carefully guarded against all admixture of foreign elements: on the contrary, their Judaism was combined with philosophical speculation. Nor were they, as Michaelis<sup>2</sup> and Ritschl<sup>3</sup> suppose, Essenes, or, as others think, Therapeutæ: for although there are some elements in common between them and these Jewish sects, yet in many points they differ; and besides, the Essenes do not seem to have spread beyond the confines of Judea, and the Therapeutæ were confined to Egypt. Wiesinger thinks that they were Jews, who spent their time in idle and unprofitable speculations about Jewish genealogies, with which speculations were combined many foolish and unprofitable myths and legends. "It was not," he observes, "an opposition of a dogmatic kind,—a heresy properly so called,—but rather certain perversities, as well of a theoretical as of a practical kind, which are to be viewed as proceeding chiefly from Jewish Christians, and which in themselves did not directly contradict the faith, but which might easily lead to a

<sup>1</sup> See Guericke's *Isagogik*, pp. 366, 367.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 79–83. So also Heinrichs, Wegschneider, and in part Credner.

<sup>3</sup> Ritschl, *Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*, p. 233.

falling away from the faith."<sup>1</sup> Hence the endless genealogies (*γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις*, 1 Tim. i. 4), which the apostle censures, are Jewish registers. But if the error of these false teachers was of this comparatively innocuous form,—rather superstition than positive heresy,—the apostle would not have censured it with such extreme severity; nor would such a form of error ever prevail in a church so greatly composed of Gentile converts as was the church of Ephesus. The false teachers had certainly a Jewish element in their heresy, but combined with that there was also a Gentile element which recommended it to the Gentile Christians: it was a combination of Judaism and Gentile philosophy.

The heretics in the Pastoral Epistles, then, were, like the Colossian heretics, Jewish theosophists. The Jewish religion was then in a state of disintegration, and thus assimilated to itself foreign elements from many quarters. Hence these heretics busied themselves about spirits, entertaining notions similar to the angelolatry condemned in the Epistle to the Colossians. Their endless genealogies probably resembled the Gnostic doctrine of æons, rather than the Jewish cabbalistic fancies. In short, they were Jewish Gnostics, forming a transition to the true Gnostics of the second century. They were intermediate between the Judaizers and the Gnostics proper; with the former they still adhered to the permanence of the Mosaic law, and with the latter they adopted their speculations about spirit, holding views somewhat similar to those of the Jewish Gnostic, Cerinthus, though not so fully developed. "The germ of a Judaizing Gnosticism," observes Neander, "or a Judaizing theosophic-ascetical tendency, such as shows itself in the two Epistles to Timothy, must *à priori* be presupposed as existing at this period, as the heresies of the second century point back to such a tendency gradually evolving itself out of Judaism."<sup>2</sup>

Still the views of the Jewish Gnostics in the Pastoral Epistles must not be mistaken for those of the true Gnostics of the second century. The heresy in the Pastoral Epistles

<sup>1</sup> Wiesinger's *Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles*, p. 193 (Clark's translation).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Wiesinger, p. 163.

arose from a corruption of Jewish Christianity with philosophy; whereas pure Gnosticism had its origin in a corruption of Gentile Christianity. There is not the slightest trace of the Demiurge as the creator of the world, or of any depreciation of the Jewish religion, as not proceeding from God; which were characteristic features of true Gnosticism. Nor do the heretics in the Pastoral Epistles appear to have inculcated Doceticism: there is nothing to lead us to suppose that they considered the manifestation of Christ as an appearance merely, but not a reality; whereas the Gnosticism of the second century is decidedly docetic. In all these points these heretics differed from true Gnostics: error had yet to take another phase—to be still further developed—before it manifested itself in pure Gnosticism.<sup>1</sup>

The heresies referred to in the Pastoral Epistles bear the most striking resemblance to the errors combated in the Epistle to the Colossians; they are the same Jewish Gnostic errors, though in a more advanced stage. “This tendency,” observes Huther, “agrees in essentials with that combated in the Epistle to the Colossians. The difference is only that this heresy was at the time of the composition of the Pastoral Epistles in a stage of further development: the doctrine of angels had already received the form of emanations, and the contrast between spirit and matter was yet more marked, whilst the selfish motives in the followers of the heresy were more prominently brought forward.”<sup>2</sup>

Timothy had been left by Paul at Ephesus to refute error,—to charge some that they should teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies (1 Tim. i. 3, 4). He had also been commissioned to settle the government of the church—to select and ordain elders and deacons. With a view to these points the Epistle was written, conveying the instructions of the apostle. The design of the Epistle may be regarded as twofold—to instruct and charge Timothy to oppose false teachers who were subverting the doctrines of the gospel, and to impart to him directions concerning church government.

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, p. 76; Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 53, 54.

<sup>2</sup> Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 55.



## IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

No definite order or proper division can be discerned in the Epistle: it is written with all the freedom of one writing to his friend. After the salutation, the apostle reminds Timothy that the purpose for which he was left behind at Ephesus was to oppose certain false teachers whose principles he characterizes (chap. i. 1-11). He thanks God that he who had been before a persecutor was appointed a minister of that glorious gospel (chap. i. 12-17). He charges Timothy to hold fast by the faith, and to refute gainsayers (chap. i. 18-20). Directions follow in respect of public prayer, and the behaviour of men and women at public worship (chap. ii.). The qualifications of bishops or presbyters and deacons are described (chap. iii.). The apostle then returns to the false teachers, and further describes the nature and tendency of their teaching, and Timothy's conduct with reference to them: he must warn the brethren against them, and not allow his youth to lessen the weight of his censures or the force of his opposition (chap. iv.). His conduct with reference to the elder members of the Church is stated, with a special reference to the case of widows, who, if destitute, are to be supported by the funds of the church (chap. v. 1-16). Timothy is instructed how to behave toward the presbyters, and rules are given for the selection of persons for ordination and official appointment in the church (chap. v. 17-25). To this are added observations concerning slaves, cautions against covetousness, exhortations to be given to the rich; and the Epistle closes with the apostolic benediction (chap. vi.).

## V. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

We have already stated that the date of First Timothy must be placed after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment. The only intimations of time given us in the Epistle are that Paul, when on his way to Macedonia, left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3), and that he expected soon to return (1 Tim. iii. 14). But, along with these data, we must take into consideration the fact that the three Pastoral Epistles

were composed nearly at the same time, as is proved from the similarity of their contents and diction. All these considerations fix the time to a period after Paul's first imprisonment.

Various contrary opinions have been maintained. Calvin supposes that the Epistle was written after Paul's first visit to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19),—a supposition utterly untenable, as the church of Ephesus was at that time hardly founded, and as the apostle did not then go into Macedonia, but to Jerusalem. Others (Theodoret, Grotius, Michaelis, Heinrichs, Lardner, Hug) think that it was written on Paul's departure from Ephesus after his three years' residence in that city (Acts xx. 1). On that occasion certainly he went from Ephesus into Macedonia; but several insuperable objections are opposed to this opinion. Timothy was not left behind (1 Tim. i. 3); he had been previously sent by the apostle into Macedonia (Acts xix. 22) and Achaia (1 Cor. iv. 17); and although he may have returned before Paul's departure, yet he was with him in Macedonia when the apostle wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 1), and accompanied him into Achaia and Asia. Besides, the apostle had not then the intention of returning soon to Ephesus (1 Tim. iii. 14), but of proceeding to Corinth, and thence to Jerusalem. Others (Schrader, Mosheim, Wieseler, Reuss, Schaff, Davidson, first edition) suppose that the Epistle was written during the apostle's three years' residence at Ephesus, when he made an excursion, not recorded in the Acts, into Macedonia and Greece. This opinion has been discussed in the dissertation on Paul's Roman imprisonments, and there shown to be inadmissible. Others (Berthold, Matthies) think that the Epistle was written during the return of the apostle from Achaia to Macedonia on his way to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 3).<sup>1</sup> They suppose that Timothy was sent from Corinth to Ephesus, and that the apostle wrote to him instructions from some place in Achaia or Macedonia. In order to support this view, *πορευόμενος* in 1 Tim. i. 3, against all rules of grammar, is made to refer not to Paul, but to Timothy: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when thou wentest into Macedonia." And whereas Luke mentions

<sup>1</sup> See Wiesinger's *Commentary*, p. 351 ff.; Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 12-14.

Timothy as accompanying Paul to Troas (Acts xx. 4, 5), it is asserted that Luke is somewhat inaccurate in his statement. In order to make the history accord with their opinion, an error must be ascribed to the evangelist. In short, every attempt to fix the date of this Epistle before Paul's Roman imprisonment completely fails.

The Pastoral Epistles were almost contemporaneously written; and as Second Timothy was written when Paul was a second time a prisoner at Rome, and in prospect of martyrdom, it follows that they were composed toward the close of the apostle's life (A.D. 68 ?). The First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus were written in the interval between the first and second imprisonments; and the Second Epistle to Timothy during the second imprisonment. It is impossible to say whether First Timothy or Titus was written first. Conybeare and Howson suppose that it was First Timothy, but the reason which they assign is not convincing. "In the Epistle to Titus," they observe, "we find that Paul had lately left Crete, and that he was now about to proceed to Nicopolis in Epirus, where he meant to spend the approaching winter; whereas in First Timothy he meant soon to be back to Ephesus, and he was afterwards at Miletus and Corinth between First Timothy and Second Timothy. Hence Titus must have been written later than First Timothy."<sup>1</sup>

The place of writing cannot with any precision be determined. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus when he went into Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3); hence it is generally supposed that it was written from some place in Macedonia or in the neighbourhood. In the superscription at the end of the First Epistle, it is said to have been "written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana."<sup>2</sup> But this is of no authority: it probably arose from a desire to identify this Epistle with the epistle from Laodicea (ἐπιστολὴ ἐκ Λαοδικείας, Col. iv. 16). Thus Theophylact observes, "This Epistle was the First Epistle to Timothy, for it was written from Laodicea."

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 662.

<sup>2</sup> A geographical division existing in the fourth century.

## VI. PECULIARITIES OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

Paul's Epistles, as has already been observed, are divisible into three classes, marked by distinct peculiarities,—the early Epistles, the Epistles of the captivity, and the Pastoral Epistles. These three Epistles, then, constitute the third class of the Pauline Epistles. They were probably written four or five years after the Epistle to the Philippians, the nearest to them in date, which may account for the difference of style between them and that Epistle. They differ in their contents from Paul's other epistles; they treat chiefly of the government of the Church. Christianity had already been for some time established in the different cities, and hence Christians required to be formed into a regular society, with their proper office-bearers. The qualifications of bishops and deacons could now be more definitely determined. So also, as has already been observed, there is greater prominence given to good works. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity having been laid, the superstructure was now to be erected; those who believed in Christ were enjoined to be careful to maintain good works. But still the great Pauline doctrines of salvation by grace, and of the inefficacy of good works for justification, were maintained; holiness is described not as the cause of justification, but the effect (Tit. ii. 13–15). The Epistles also contain painful forebodings: the apostle foresees the corruptions that were to prevail, the heresies that were to arise, the defections from the pure doctrine; abundant symptoms of which were seen in the errors of the false teachers at Ephesus. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1–3): a prediction which received its fulfilment in the rise and growth of the Gnostic philosophy in the succeeding century, but which has a still deeper meaning, and probably yet awaits its complete fulfilment in the latter days. There is also in these Epistles a stronger spirit of authority. Here occur "the faithful sayings,"—declarations of gospel truth which cannot be gainsaid, but must be accepted as the axioms of Christianity.

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.<sup>1</sup>

The Pastoral Epistles afford most valuable materials for the study of the constitution of the Church. They impart to us information concerning the state of the Church in the apostolic age; mention the qualifications and duties of two orders of its office-bearers—presbyters and deacons; and lay down the broad principles of ecclesiastical polity.<sup>2</sup> These Epistles were not written for the sake of Timothy and Titus only, but were designed by the Holy Spirit who inspired them for the edification of the Church in all succeeding ages. They are not mere private letters, but official documents given by Him who is the Head of the Church.

Our Lord did not intend that His disciples should live separate and apart, but that they should associate together, and form themselves into a Church. He established a community, which, although in the world, was not of the world. The Church was, as its name (*ἐκκλησία*) imports, composed of those who were *called out* of the world. Now it is evident that every society requires some regulations for maintaining order and government, and the appointment of certain officers to secure fulfilment of these regulations, and to perform the various functions and duties to which such an association gives rise. Without these, the society could not exist for any time; it would inevitably fall into disorder, and would eventually be dissolved. The Church of Christ, being a society of men, is subject to the same laws: office-bearers are essential for its government and its very existence; for without some government, the Church could not as a community continue together. Accordingly, the apostles, under the authority of the Lord, appointed a ministry, consisting of various office-bearers in the Church.

<sup>1</sup> For further information on this subject, see Ritschl's *Entstehung der altkath. Kirche*; Dr. Jacob's *Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*; Professor Lightfoot's admirable dissertation on the Christian Ministry, attached to his *Commentary on the Philippians*; and *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, by Principal Campbell of Aberdeen,—a work which deserves to be more read than it is in the present day.

<sup>2</sup> “*In his duabus epistolis (First and Second Timothy) quasi in viva tabula depictum habemus verum Ecclesiæ regimen.*”—CALVIN.

This apostolic appointment of a ministry or office-bearers in the Christian Church was designed chiefly for the sake of order, and did not constitute any class of men into a separate or superior grade, intervening between Christ and His people. This was, in a certain sense, the case with the priestly order under the Old Testament dispensation. But the Christian ministry, though a divine institution, is no priesthood—no sacred and privileged class of men. They are never called priests in a technical sense; but “the ministers of Christ, and the stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. iv. 1). There is no mystical distinction between the clergy and the laity. The Christian priesthood, unlike the Levitical priesthood, is common to all believers. “Ye are,” says Peter, “a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. ii. 5). Free access is afforded to all men through Christ unto God; Christ is the only Mediator and Intercessor; His disciples are a consecrated people, set apart to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God. Ministers have now no priestly functions to perform. The one great sacrifice for sin being offered up, has done away with all those other sacrifices which were its types and emblems. There are now no consecrated places, no temples, no altars,—no resemblance, in short, between Christian ministers and the priests under the law.<sup>1</sup> Ministers are now taken from no privileged class, but chosen from among all believers. They bear a resemblance to the rulers of the synagogue, rather than to the officers of the temple.<sup>2</sup>

In the Pastoral Epistles there appear to be only two classes of office-bearers mentioned—deacons, and presbyters or bishops; but there are three passages in the earlier epistles of Paul which give a different and fuller enumeration. In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle says: “Having then gifts, differing

<sup>1</sup> Much confusion has arisen from the ambiguous nature of the English term “priest.” Philologically, it is the same as presbyter; but as used by us, it is equivalent to the Greek *ιερεύς*—one who offers sacrifices.

<sup>2</sup> The worship of the synagogue and of the temple was entirely distinct. The rulers of the synagogue were taken from the Jewish people in general; the priests of the temple were restricted to the descendants of Aaron. It is a gross mistake and perversion to assert, as some do, that the three orders of the Christian church—bishops, presbyters, and deacons—correspond to those of high priests, priests, and Levites under the law.

according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. xii. 6-8). In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle observes: "God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 28). And the enumeration in the Epistle to the Ephesians is as follows: "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). It is to be observed that all these titles refer to what has been denominated "the ministry of gifts;" the persons who occupied these offices were endowed with supernatural powers. This is evident in "miracles, gifts of healing, diversities of tongues," and also in the extraordinary nature of the offices of apostles and prophets; but even "the pastors and teachers" are mentioned with reference to special gifts of government and teaching. The offices enumerated in these earlier epistles are of a temporary character, instituted with a view to the first promulgation of the gospel, and not designed to be a permanent ministry for the good of the Church in all ages. A permanent ministry may have grown out of them. When these miraculous gifts became rare in the Church, the importance of permanent office-bearers would be more sensibly felt. Hence, then, it is in the later rather than in the earlier Pauline Epistles that the ordinary rulers of the Church are mentioned. Whilst the apostles and prophets of the earlier epistles have passed away, the presbyters and deacons of the Pastoral Epistles remain.

The rulers of the Church, then, may be arranged into two classes: those who were extraordinary, and whose ministry was temporary; and those who were ordinary, and whose ministry was permanent.

Among the extraordinary rulers of the Church are apostles,

prophets, and evangelists. The office of the apostle was to testify to the life of Christ, and especially to be a witness of His resurrection (Acts i. 22). The apostles had no local limitation; their commission was to preach the gospel to all nations. They were endowed with peculiar authority by Christ, and were the founders of His Church. Among those included in the apostleship are to be reckoned the twelve who were chosen by Christ when on earth, Matthias called to succeed Judas, Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, and probably his colleague Barnabas (Acts xiv. 14).<sup>1</sup> The office of a prophet was not so much to foretell the future, as to reveal the will of God. They were men gifted with inspiration, who delivered divine communications to the Church. Among the prophets mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles are Agabus (Acts xi. 28), Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul (Acts xiii. 1), and Judas and Silas (Acts xv. 32). Evangelists seem to have occupied an office similar to that of missionaries in modern times, except that they were endowed with miraculous powers for the diffusion of the gospel. They were set over no particular church, but preached the gospel among the heathen; they were itinerant preachers, and in a certain sense the substitutes of the apostles. Philip, who was "one of the seven," is called an evangelist (Acts xxi. 8), and Timothy is exhorted to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. iv. 5). Afterwards the name became appropriated to the four writers of the life of Christ. Hence the Apostle John is surnamed in a peculiar manner "the Evangelist," to distinguish him from John the Baptist.

The ordinary rulers of the Church mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles are two—deacons, and bishops or presbyters.

I. *The Deacons.*—The origin of the diaconate is generally referred to the election of the seven almoners in the church of Jerusalem. A complaint arose among the Hellenists that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration of food or money. To allay this discontent, and to provide for the better management of the charities of the Church, a new order of office-

<sup>1</sup> The term is also employed in the sense of messenger; thus the apostle speaks of the apostles of the churches (*ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν*, 2 Cor. viii. 23).



bearers was appointed. Seven men, whose qualifications were that they should be of good report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, were elected by the church, and appointed by the apostles over this business (Acts vi. 3). In this appointment many eminent writers see the institution of the diaconate. The expressions employed, *διακονία καθημερινῇ* (ver. 1), and *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις* (ver. 3), are considered to imply that the office is that of a deacon. The primitive Church generally supposed that we have here the account of the institution of the diaconate (Irenæus, Origen); and for this reason they limited the number of deacons in their churches to seven.<sup>1</sup> Others (Ritschl, etc.) suppose them to have been presbyters;<sup>2</sup> and others (Lange, etc.) think that the office of the seven was at a later period divided into the two orders of bishops and deacons.<sup>3</sup> Some (Olshausen, Neander, Meyer, Mosheim, Kuinoel, Cook) refer the origin of the diaconate to a still earlier period in the history of the Church, and suppose that the young men (*νεώτεροι*) mentioned in connection with the death of Ananias and Sapphira were deacons (Acts v. 6). Others think that the diaconate was a later institution, and that the office of the seven was merely temporary, to suit a present emergency.<sup>4</sup> It is observed that the name diaconate is never applied to it, and that when Philip, one of the seven, is mentioned, he is not called a deacon, but an evangelist. Perhaps it is nearest the truth, to suppose that the office of the seven is not the diaconate properly so called, but that this later office grew out of it. When the churches became numerous, men with functions somewhat similar to those of the seven were appointed to watch over the temporal concerns of the Church, and to administer its charities.<sup>5</sup> The first direct mention which we have of deacons is in the Epistle to the Philippians, which is addressed to the bishops and deacons of Philippi (Phil. i. 1).

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius informs us that in his time there were in the church of Rome only seven deacons, although there were forty-six presbyters, and numerous other office-bearers.—*Hist. Eccl.* vi. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ritschl's *Entstehung d. altkat. Kirche*, p. 355.

<sup>3</sup> Lange's *Apost. Zeit.* vol. ii. p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> So Chrysostom: *Homilies on the Acts*, Hom. xiv.

<sup>5</sup> See Gieseler's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 179.

The qualifications of deacons are mentioned with reference to the duties which they had to perform. They were to be grave and sober—men of good report. They were not to be greedy of filthy lucre, so that they might not be tempted to appropriate to themselves the funds of the Church. And they were to show a good example in the government of their households. These qualifications were first to be proved, and then they were to use the office of a deacon, being found blameless (1 Tim. iii. 8–10).

The duties of deacons seem to have been chiefly of a secular nature. They were to take charge of the temporalities of the Church, to see to the support of the poor and the sick, and to provide what was necessary for the maintenance of religious ordinances. As the seven almoners were appointed to be assistants to the apostles, so the deacons were similarly appointed to be assistants to the presbyters. It does not appear that preaching was one of their duties, and hence aptitude to teach is omitted in the list of their qualifications; but at the same time, as they came into constant contact with the sick and dying, numerous opportunities for communicating religious instruction would present themselves.<sup>1</sup> Some suppose that the diaconate was but a step to the higher order of the presbyterate: that before one could be a presbyter, he must first be a deacon. This opinion is founded on these words of the apostle: "They that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree (*βαθμὸν ἑαυτοῖς καλὸν περιποιούνται*), and great boldness in the faith (*πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει*) which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. iii. 13). But these words do not bear out the meaning which is put on them: they rather signify that the faithful deacon will earn to himself an honourable position in the church of which he is a deacon,—not that he shall secure ecclesiastical preferment, and be advanced to the presbyterate.<sup>2</sup>

It would also appear that there was an office of deaconess

<sup>1</sup> The order of deacons is not general in the Christian Church. Their duties were somewhat similar to those of the ruling elders in Presbyterian Churches and to the vestrymen in the Church of England.

<sup>2</sup> The word *βαθμός* was afterwards used to denote a step or degree in the way of promotion. See Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, in loco, pp. 153–155.

in the apostolic Church. Phœbe, the bearer of the Epistle to the Romans, is called the deaconess of the church of Cenchrea (οὐσαν διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς, Rom. xvi. 1). So also, in all probability, were Tryphena and Tryphosa, and the beloved Persis, who are described as labouring in the Lord (Rom. xvi. 12). And in the Epistle to the Philippians, mention is made of those women who laboured with Paul in the gospel (Phil. iv. 2). Some suppose, also, that the directions given in the First Epistle to Timothy are not addressed to the wives of deacons, but to the special order of deaconess (1 Tim. iii. 11).<sup>1</sup> Whether, however, the widows mentioned in that Epistle (1 Tim. v. 9-13) were deaconesses, is doubtful. The probability rather is, that the apostle alludes to those who were to be supported by the funds of the Church, although they might also be called upon to visit the sick and take care of orphans. The duties of the deaconesses would be to attend to the female portion of the Church. This was especially necessary in the East, owing to the great seclusion of the female sex; and besides, by the institution of deaconesses, an opportunity would be afforded for Christian women to exercise their gifts and graces in the cause of Christ. Thus, like those women who in the Gospels ministered of their substance to Christ, they would be enabled to devote themselves to His service, and to assist in the promotion of His gospel. To the deaconesses would be assigned the care of widows, the poor, and the sick, the religious education of children, and perhaps the instruction of female catechumens: they were "to bring up children, to lodge strangers, to relieve the afflicted, and diligently to follow after every good work"<sup>2</sup> (1 Tim. v. 10).

II. *The Presbyters*.—The title presbyter was doubtless borrowed from the synagogue, whose rulers were called elders (ἐλεῖν). The name is similar to the *γερουσία* of the Greeks, and the *senatus* of the Romans.<sup>3</sup> Whilst presbyter was of Jewish origin, bishop

<sup>1</sup> So Chrysostom, Theophylact, De Wette, Wiesinger. See Wiesinger's *Commentary*, p. 424. On the other hand, Huther regards them as the wives of the deacons—Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 152, 153.

<sup>2</sup> The order of deaconess has now fallen into a state of disuse, at least in the Protestant Church.

<sup>3</sup> So also the aldermen of our own country.

was derived from the Greek. Among the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, this title was conferred on those who were appointed as delegates from the parent city to its colonies. The title passed over to the Church, and was used among the Gentile Christians to denote their ecclesiastical overseers. Both names apply to the same office: *πρεσβύτερος* refers to the dignity of the office, and *ἐπίσκοπος* to its duties. Besides these two names, mention is made in the earlier Pauline Epistles of "pastors and teachers" (Eph. iv. 11). It is disputed whether these terms refer to the same office, or to two distinct classes of rulers. From the manner in which they are mentioned together, it has been argued that they refer to the same class of persons.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the pastors and teachers there alluded to are extraordinary rulers, endowed with miraculous gifts; but after these gifts were withdrawn, the work of ruling and teaching still remained. The pastors and teachers may thus be regarded as the same with the presbyters or bishops. The presbyters are exhorted to feed the Church of Christ (*ποιμαίνειν*, to do the work of a pastor, Acts xx. 28); and one of their qualifications is, that they should be apt to teach (*διδακτικός*, skilled in the work of a teacher). Thus, then, these four names—presbyter (*πρεσβύτερος*), bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*), pastor (*ποιμήν*), and teacher (*διδάσκαλος*)—would seem to refer to the same class of office-bearers in the Christian Church.<sup>2</sup>

It is now admitted by almost all writers on the subject, notwithstanding the difference in their views of ecclesiastical polity, that in the New Testament the names bishop and presbyter are synonymous. They never occur together in such a manner as would imply a reference to different orders: there is in Scripture no enumeration of a threefold ministry,—bishops, presbyters, and deacons,—such as frequently occurs in the ecclesiastical writings of the second century. On the contrary, bishops and presbyters are in several passages identical. Thus, at Miletus, Paul is represented as calling together the presbyters of Ephesus; yet he afterwards addresses them as

<sup>1</sup> If different officers were alluded to, we would have expected *τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας, τοὺς δὲ διδασκάλους*, in conformity with what precedes, "and some pastors, and some teachers." It is not, however, a point of much importance.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's *Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*, pp. 155-157.

bishops (Acts xx. 17, 28). In the Epistle to Titus, the names are applied to the same persons: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God" (Tit. i. 5-7). And in the First Epistle of Peter, the same identity is manifest: "The elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*) which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof" (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*, acting as bishops, 1 Pet. v. 1, 2). So also bishops and deacons are mentioned together in such a manner as to show that by bishops are meant presbyters, otherwise that important office would be omitted. The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed to the bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1). "Bishops here," observes Jerome, "must signify presbyters, because there could be no more bishops than one, properly so called, in one city." In the First Epistle to Timothy, the qualifications of bishops and deacons are enumerated; those of the bishops are similar to the qualifications of the presbyters in the Epistle to Titus; and in subsequent chapters of First Timothy, the elders are mentioned as if identical with the bishops. In the Epistle of Clemens Romanus, the earliest extant writing of the Fathers, there is no distinction between the bishops and presbyters. "The apostles," he observes, "appointed their first-fruits, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of them that should believe."<sup>1</sup> And again: "We should incur no slight guilt, if we eject from the bishopric those who have holily and unblameably presented the offerings. Blessed are the presbyters who have gone before, who have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure; for they have no fear lest any should turn them out of their place."<sup>2</sup> The two titles, then, were identical in the apostolic Church. "The title *ἐπίσκοπος*," observes Dean Alford, "as applied to one person superior to the *πρεσβύτεροι*, and answering to our bishop, appears to have been unknown in apostolic times."

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. ad Corinth.* c. 42.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* c. 44.

Baur admits that the titles apply to the same persons, but he asserts that they have a certain difference of meaning. "The ruler," he observes, "in so far as he is considered by himself, or in relation to the church at whose head he stands, is called *ἐπίσκοπος*, as one who like a shepherd has the oversight of the flock entrusted to him. But if several *ἐπίσκοποι* presiding over single congregations are taken together, and are designated by a common name, they are, as a rule, called *πρεσβύτεροι*."<sup>1</sup> Thus, according to him, *ἐπίσκοπος* refers to the ruler of a particular congregation, and *πρεσβύτεροι* to these rulers viewed conjointly. Hence he considers that the government of the Church was at first neither democratic nor aristocratic, but monarchical. According to him, Timothy and Titus do not so much represent the later relation of bishops to presbyters, as the relation of the archbishop to bishops.<sup>2</sup> But, even admitting that each congregation had only one presbyter or bishop, it does not follow that the government of the Church was monarchical: if the individual presbyter was independent of his brethren, we have the principle of independency; if he was not independent, but the presbyters of the several congregations were united as a common college, we have the principle of presbyterianism,—both of which forms are rather democratic than monarchical. It would, however, appear that the distinction advanced by Baur rests on no proper foundation. Each congregation had several elders attached to it. Titus was enjoined to ordain elders in every city (*κατὰ πόλιν*).<sup>3</sup> This is also more analogous to the government of the synagogue, which consisted of a plurality of elders (Acts xiv. 23, xv. 4, xx. 7; Phil. i. 1; Jas. v. 14).<sup>4</sup>

There is no account in Scripture of the origin of the eldership. It probably arose, like the diaconate, from the necessity of the case. Deacons, or at least officers similar to them, were instituted to relieve the apostles from the care of the poor, in

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 84, 85.

<sup>3</sup> That is, in every city considered singly: not one elder in each city. So also in the similar expression, *κατὰ ἐκκλησίαν*, in Acts xiv. 23; the meaning being, that Paul ordained several elders in each church.

<sup>4</sup> See Gieseler's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 91, note (Clark's translation).

order that they might restrict themselves to the ministry of the word. So, when churches were multiplied and the apostles were absent, it would be necessary that some individuals should be appointed to take the government of the church, to preserve order, and exercise a general superintendence. Both the name (*πρεσβύτερος*) and the office appear to have been borrowed from the synagogue. Such officers would first be appointed over congregations of Jewish Christians, and would be called by the name with which these Christians were familiar; whilst among the churches of Gentile Christians, the same office-bearers were called by the Greek name—bishops or overseers. The first notice which we have of presbyters is when the Christians of Antioch sent their offerings to the church of Jerusalem: we are informed that they sent them to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (Acts xi. 30). They are there mentioned as a well-known class of rulers, so that the office must have been instituted at an earlier period. When Paul and Barnabas, on their return, visited the towns where they had founded Christian churches, they ordained them elders in every church (Acts xiv. 23). And when a deputation was sent up from the church of Antioch to the church of Jerusalem, with reference to the controversy about circumcision, they were received by the apostles and elders (Acts xv. 4).

The qualifications of presbyters are mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. iii. 1–7; Tit. i. 5–9). They were to be blameless—possessed of an unblemished moral character. They were to rule their own households well, in order that they might be qualified to rule the Church of God. They were to be apt to teach—fitted to communicate instruction. They were not to be novices,—that is, new converts, persons who had recently embraced Christianity. They were to be the husbands of one wife; which cannot be a prohibition of polygamy, for that was not then prevalent among either the Jews or Greeks; nor is it likely that it was a prohibition of second marriages, on account of any peculiar sanctity in bishops: it is rather to be understood as an injunction against a bishop putting away his wife and marrying another, —a practice exceedingly common among both Jews and

Greeks, and which is not only forbidden to bishops, but prohibited by Christ Himself to all His followers.

The duties of presbyters, generally considered, consisted in the superintendence of the congregations over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Acts xx. 28). In particular, they were to govern and to teach. Government was their special province: they were bishops or overseers—pastors of the flock. It was their duty to preserve order in the Church, to admonish the unruly, to rebuke gainsayers, to keep the doctrine of the Church uncorrupt, and to preside over the public worship of the congregation. To these points their duties were probably at first restricted. It would appear, from the Epistles to the Corinthians, that any who felt themselves inspired with the gift of prophecy were at liberty to preach; inspired prophets were then the teachers of the Church: the office of preaching was not restricted to any body of men.<sup>1</sup> But when miraculous gifts were gradually withdrawn, the work of teaching became an important part of the duties of elders. Hence aptitude to teach is laid down in First Timothy as an indispensable qualification of a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 2); and in the Epistle to Titus it is required of an elder, “that he should hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince gainsayers” (Tit. i. 9). Some suppose that when the apostle says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine” (1 Tim. v. 17), two classes of elders are mentioned—ruling elders and teaching elders.<sup>2</sup> It would certainly appear from this, that there were elders who were not teachers. But that the apostle here distinguishes two classes of elders, is an assertion which can hardly be supported, especially as “apt to teach” (διδασκτικός) is assigned as a qualification of elders generally (1 Tim. iii. 2).

<sup>1</sup> “The capacity for instructing,” observes Gieseler, “was considered as a free gift of the Spirit (χάρισμα πνευματικόν), which manifested itself in many Christians, although in different modes (προφήτης, διδάσκαλος, γλώσση λαλῶν, 1 Cor. xii. 28–31, xiv.).”—*Church History*, vol. i. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> A distinction first made by Calvin. See Principal Campbell's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. pp. 176–180; Schaff's *Apostolic Church*, vol. ii. p. 212; Davidson's *Ecclesiastical Polity of the N. T.* pp. 181–194.



Although it is in general admitted that bishops and presbyters are equivalent terms, and that in the Pastoral Epistles the qualifications of only two orders—presbyters and deacons—are given; yet it is asserted that the third order is not omitted, inasmuch as Timothy and Titus occupied a position equivalent to that of modern bishops. Timothy was enjoined to ordain presbyters by the imposition of hands (1 Tim. v. 22); and Titus was left at Crete to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city (Tit. i. 5). “Timothy and Titus,” observes Bishop Wordsworth, “were not apostles, not being of directly divine appointment, as all the apostles, including St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas, were,—they were never so called; and they were not mere presbyters, for they are commanded by St. Paul to ordain, to charge, to rebuke presbyters, and to superintend the doctrine and conduct of both presbyters and deacons, and this with all authority (*μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*), but *Par in parem non habet imperium*.”<sup>1</sup> Hence he infers that they were superintendents of the clergy and laity similar to the apostles. It is admitted that Timothy and Titus were neither apostles nor presbyters, in the ordinary sense of these terms. They were evangelists sent by the apostle, either to plant Christianity in heathen countries, or to make regulations for the government of Christian churches. They belonged to the extraordinary rulers of the Church. Their office, alluded to in the Pastoral Epistles, was of a temporary character. Timothy was employed by Paul as one of the messengers of the Church, and he was soon called from Ephesus to Rome; and Titus was ordered, after he had arranged matters in Crete, to join the apostle at Nicopolis (Tit. iii. 12).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is probable that the position of Timothy at Ephesus and of Titus at Crete was one of the occasions of the rise of episcopacy; the temporary office was converted into a permanent office by the appointment of resident superintendents.

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus*, pp. 95, 96.

<sup>2</sup> “It is,” observes Professor Lightfoot, “the conception of a later age which represents Timothy as bishop of Ephesus, and Titus as bishop of Crete. St. Paul's own language implies that the position which they held was temporary. In both cases their term of office was drawing to a close, when the apostle writes.”—*On the Philippians*, p. 197.

A second argument in favour of episcopacy is derived from the position which James, the brother of the Lord, occupied in the church of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles, he appears as a person of great importance in the Church. Peter directs that information of his escape should be sent to him (Acts xii. 17); he presides over the celebrated council at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13); and Paul, on his arrival at Jerusalem, repairs to James and the elders (Acts xxi. 18). In the traditions of the Church, he is known as bishop of Jerusalem, and the most extravagant honours are conferred on him. Epiphanius tells us that Christ committed to him His throne on earth;<sup>2</sup> and Chrysostom affirms that he was made bishop of Jerusalem by Christ Himself.<sup>3</sup> It is argued that in this dignified position of James we have an example of a superiority over presbyters similar to that of the later bishop. But the superiority, which undoubtedly existed, may as well be accounted for from the consideration of the personal character of James. It is uncertain who he was—whether he was one of the apostles, James the son of Alphæus, or whether he was the real brother of our Lord, but not an apostle.<sup>4</sup> If he was an apostle, this at once accounts for his superiority, as such a superiority belonged to the apostleship. If he was not an apostle, still his relationship to the Lord, combined with his high personal character, would account for his position and influence in the church of Jerusalem. It is precarious to build a theory on this one instance, which admits of various explanations.

A third argument for episcopacy is derived from the angels of the seven Asiatic churches. These are addressed as the representatives of the churches, and as responsible for their spiritual character; each church has its own angel; and hence it is inferred that bishops, in the later sense of the term, are here described. There are different opinions concerning these apocalyptic angels. Some (Vitranga, Winer) suppose that they correspond to the deputies of the Jewish synagogue; others

<sup>1</sup> "James, the Lord's brother, alone," observes Professor Lightfoot, "within the period compassed by the apostolic writings, can claim to be regarded as a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term."—*On the Philippians*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Hæres.* 78. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Hom.* 78 on 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>4</sup> See a dissertation on James, the Lord's brother, in the author's *Commentary on the Acts*, vol. i. pp. 422-429.

(De Wette), that they are the guardian angels of these particular churches; others, that they represent the spirit of the churches; others (Bunsen), that they are a personification of the churches themselves; and others, that they are the rulers of the churches, either collectively as a body (Ritschl, Hengstenberg), or individually as actual bishops (Thiersch).<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that the last opinion, that they are the actual bishops of the churches, is the most plausible, and that there is a presumption here in favour of episcopacy.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, difficult to see how the bishop can be called the angel of the church.<sup>3</sup> A responsibility is assigned to him greater than that which can be properly attributed to any ruler; and besides, the symbolism of the whole book prevents us determining the meaning of its various figures with certainty.

It is an undoubted fact, that the system of episcopacy was developed soon after the apostolic age. There is a period of nearly half a century (A.D. 70-115), from the death of the apostles to the writings of the apostolic Fathers, which forms almost an entire blank in the history of the Church;<sup>4</sup> and it was during this period that episcopacy was developed. In the Epistle of Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96) there is no trace of it; but in the Epistles of Ignatius (A.D. 115) the three orders of bishops, presbyters, and deacons are distinctly stated, and the bishop is invested with a supreme authority over the other two. "Give heed," writes that Father, "to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. I give my life for those who are obedient to the bishop, to presbyters, to deacons."<sup>5</sup> It is true that the Ignatian Epistles are much interpolated, but

<sup>1</sup> For the variety of opinion concerning these angels of the churches, see Schaff's *Apostolic History*, vol. ii. pp. 221-223.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Lightfoot, however, takes a different view, and asserts that the angels in the Apocalypse could not possibly be bishops.—*Commentary on the Philippians*, pp. 197, 198.

<sup>3</sup> The bishop might be called the angel or messenger of God; but to call him "the angel of the church" conveys no intelligible meaning, unless the term be used in the sense of *guardian*, from the idea of guardian angels.

<sup>4</sup> The only exception is the short epistle of Clemens Romanus.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. ad Polyc.* vi. For other testimonies from the Ignatian Epistles, see Lechler's *Apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 522; and Ritschl, *Entstehung d. altkath. Kirche*, p. 403 ff.

still it must be acknowledged that episcopacy was developed at that early period. Several individual bishops are mentioned in the first half of the second century.<sup>1</sup> Nor are the causes of this development far to seek. The apostles, the acknowledged rulers of the Church, were dead. Dissensions among presbyters were frequent in different churches. The Gnostic heresy had arisen, and diffused its baneful influence. The faith once delivered to the saints was endangered. Besides these disturbances within the Church, there were also dangers without. The Roman Empire had become decidedly hostile. The decree of Trajan, making Christianity an illicit religion, was published; and persecution was now sanctioned and commanded by the civil government. In these circumstances, episcopacy was regarded as the safeguard of the Church—as a centre of unity and a source of strength, at a time when the Church was attacked by heresy within and persecution without. “Amidst circumstances so embarrassing,” observes Neander, “amidst conflicts so severe from within and from without, the influence of individuals distinguished for piety, firmness, and activity, would be particularly felt, and the general danger would increase their authority. Thus the permanent authority of individuals who, as moderators over the college of presbyters, were denominated bishops, might perhaps have grown up insensibly out of the circumstances of the times in which the Christian communities were multiplied. This may have been the case even in the absence of any *intentional* design of remodelling the earlier constitution of the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Rothe supposes that, though not stated in the New Testament, episcopacy is of apostolic authority, and was established by a second apostolic council, presided over by the Apostle John. He thinks that after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, and of James the brother of the Lord, the Apostle John, in

<sup>1</sup> As Ignatius, bishop of Antioch; Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna; Onesimus, bishop of Ephesus; Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 265. Professor Lightfoot traces three stages of development in episcopacy: the age of Ignatius, when the bishop was regarded as a *centre of unity*; the age of Irenæus, when he was looked upon as the *depository of primitive truth*; and the age of Cyprian, when he became the *vicegerent of Christ*.

concert with others of the twelve who yet lived, in order to provide against the want which would so soon be occasioned by the removal of all the apostles, instituted episcopacy, thus appointing bishops to be the successors of the apostles in the Christian Church. This, he considers, can give the only reasonable account of the immense difference in the constitution of the Church as represented in the Pastoral and Ignatian Epistles. This theory he supports by several very ingenious arguments, and thinks that he can discern traces of the truth of his hypothesis in the traditions of the Church.<sup>1</sup> The arguments, however, adduced by Rothe are not conclusive; and the traditions mentioned by him are vague and uncertain, and did not appear until a hundred years after the death of John. The change in the constitution of the Church is certainly apparently rapid; forty years, however, elapsed from the death of the apostles before there is any mention of it; and the circumstances in which the Church was placed toward the close of the first century sufficiently account for the change, without having recourse to the interposition of an apostolic authority. ✓

A common opinion entertained by writers of the Anglican school of theology, is that the later bishops are the successors of the apostles. The reason why bishops are not prominently mentioned in the New Testament is that the apostles were still alive; and it was not until the death of the apostles that the episcopal office acquired its full importance. The three orders of the ministry were, however, always in the Church: at first they were apostles, presbyters, and deacons; and afterwards bishops, presbyters, and deacons. According to this opinion, the apostles appointed their successors, and these again others; and so on, in a line of continued succession. Thus, as Paul appointed Timothy to be bishop, so Timothy was commissioned to entrust the same unto "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2).

But not to mention that no such unbroken line of apostolic succession can possibly be traced, the opinion has no founda-

<sup>1</sup> Rothe, *Die Anfänge der christl. Kirche*, pp. 354-392. For a statement of his hypothesis, see Lightfoot *On Philippians*, pp. 199-205; and for a refutation, see Ritschl's *Entstehung d. altkath. Kirche*, pp. 410-415.

tion in Scripture. No special powers are transmitted through the apostles. No special gifts are communicated through such a succession, no blessings conferred by it. Bishops are not the successors of the apostles, in the sense either of succeeding to their powers or of performing their duties. The apostolic office is different from the episcopal. The apostles were directly appointed by Christ, and were endowed with miraculous powers; they were at once prophets and evangelists—commissioned to give inspired communications, and to preach the gospel to all nations; they planted Christianity among heathen nations, and besides, exercised supervision over all the churches; they bore a more striking resemblance to the missionaries of the middle ages than to the bishops of recent times.<sup>1</sup>

As the result of the whole discussion, it may be inferred that the claim of episcopacy to be of divine authority appears groundless; and the theory that it was an institution of the apostolic age is, to say the least, doubtful: the arguments by which it is supported are not conclusive.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there does not appear to be anything contrary to episcopacy in Scripture. The orders of deacons and presbyters were instituted to meet existing emergencies in the apostolic Church; and so also the episcopal order was instituted to meet emergencies in the post-apostolic Church. There is no church on earth whose polity is precisely the same as that of the apostolic Church,<sup>3</sup> because the circumstances of the Church are now entirely altered: then it was in direct opposition to the civil government—the empire was heathen; now it is in agreement—the nation is Christian. And so also there is an equally great alteration in the state of society. As has been well remarked, “there is no Leviticus in the New Testament;

<sup>1</sup> See Lightfoot *On Philippians*, pp. 193, 194; Jacob, *Ecclesiastical Polity of N. T.* pp. 416–421; Principal Campbell's *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, Lecture v.

<sup>2</sup> Ritschl, after a careful discussion of the question, comes to the conclusion “that the origin of episcopacy in the ecclesiastical sense cannot be placed earlier than the time of Ignatius,” and that it did not originate with the apostles.—*Entstehung d. altk. Kirche*, p. 410.

<sup>3</sup> As is seen from the want in many churches of the order of deacons; the general disuse of the order of deaconess, and of a plurality of presbyters.

there are no apostolic constitutions truly so named." Ecclesiastical polity, as laid down by the apostle, is to a considerable extent general and expansive, and admits of a certain degree of modification suited to the times and to the circumstances and social state of different nations; and although presbyterianism appears to bear a closer resemblance to the church polity of the Pastoral Epistles, yet episcopacy perhaps derives some support from the Apocalypse; it may be a legitimate development of the principles laid down in Scripture, and it appears to have been a wise adaptation to the circumstances of the post-apostolic age.<sup>1</sup> "In all that relates to the outward life and polity of the Church," observes Dr. Jacob, "the apostles did not begin with promulgating a code of laws, and then shape the new community into conformity with them; still less did they record a series of fixed rules for the church government or ceremonial of future times. On the contrary, they began with the formation of Christian communities; necessarily giving them such directions as each case immediately required, but enforced as of general or permanent obligation only a few principles or obvious truths which admitted of great variety in their practical application; and leaving each community to exercise a large amount of independent discretion, and to develop its organization from within itself, if any further development should be necessary."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Episcopalians have no right to attack Presbyterians, nor Presbyterians Episcopalians, as if either the one system or the other were opposed to the word of God.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, p. 39.

## THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

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THE authenticity of this Epistle, and the objections urged against it, have already been considered. The special objections which do not apply to the other two Pastoral Epistles are unimportant, and refer chiefly to a supposed want of adaptation in the contents of the Epistle to the apostle's object in writing it: they will be examined when the *occasion of the Epistle* is considered. Meantime, it may be observed that no critic who has received either of the two other Pastoral Epistles, has rejected the Epistle to Titus.

### I. THE PERSON ADDRESSED.

The notices of Titus in Scripture are fewer than those of Timothy. He is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Some manuscripts and versions, indeed, read Titus Justus in Acts xviii. 7, as the name of that devout person in Corinth to whose house Paul repaired after he left the synagogue; but the reading is weakly attested, and is not accepted by any critic of eminence.<sup>1</sup> Different reasons have been assigned for this omission, the most probable being that Titus was never with Paul when Luke was in his company. Titus was a Greek by birth, and never became a proselyte to Judaism by circumcision (Gal. ii. 3). He was converted by Paul, who calls him "his own son after the common faith" (Tit. i. 3); and afterwards became one of the apostle's fellow-labourers

<sup>1</sup> The reading *Τίτου* is that of *ς*, *E*, *Arm.*, *Vulg.*; *Τίτου Ἰούστου* is found in *B*, *D* (corrected); whereas *A*, *D* (original), *G*, *H* read simply *Ἰούστου*. Wieseler is the only writer of eminence who appears to favour *Τίτου*, but even he does not accept it.



and attendants. Paul calls him "my partner and fellow-helper" (*κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ συνεργός*, 2 Cor. viii. 23). Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the celebrated council at Jerusalem, being one of the "certain others" (*τινας ἄλλους*) mentioned in the Acts (Acts xv. 2). On this occasion the Judaizing party of the Church demanded that he should be circumcised; but this demand was strenuously resisted by the apostle, in order that the liberty of the Gentiles from the Jewish law might be confirmed (Gal. ii. 1-5). Titus was afterwards employed in various missions to Corinth. He was the bearer of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and was sent by the apostle from Ephesus to examine into the state of the church at Corinth, to correct abuses, and to begin the collection for the saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor. xii. 18). Paul was anxious about the results of this mission; and when he departed from Ephesus, and came to Alexandria Troas, although a favourable opportunity presented itself of preaching the gospel, yet he left that city, because he found not Titus his brother, and went into Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 13). Here Titus met with him, and gave, upon the whole, a satisfactory account of his mission (2 Cor. vii. 6-13). From Macedonia, Titus was sent back to Corinth, at his own request, as the bearer of the Second Epistle, and in order to complete the collection for the church of Jerusalem which he had begun (2 Cor. viii. 6, 16, 17). He does not appear to have accompanied the apostle on his last journey to Jerusalem. After this, we hear nothing of Titus until Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment, when he accompanied the apostle on a missionary journey to the island of Crete. Here he remained behind to complete what the apostle was obliged to leave unfinished, and especially to appoint a regular ministry in the various churches of Crete (Tit. i. 5). His stay was temporary; for he is directed on the arrival of Artemas or Tychicus to repair to Nicopolis in Epirus, where the apostle designed to pass the winter (Tit. iii. 12). The last notice which we have of Titus is in the Second Epistle to Timothy, where it is said, "Titus is departed to Dalmatia" (2 Tim. iv. 10). From the manner in which this statement is made, some suppose that Titus, like Demas, forsook the apostle in the hour of his

trial;<sup>1</sup> but this is an unwarrantable and uncharitable inference. It is more probable that Titus was not with the apostle in Rome at his last imprisonment, but was sent by him from Nicopolis in Epirus to the neighbouring country of Dalmatia.<sup>2</sup>

The traditionary notices of Titus are unimportant, and not to be relied on. Eusebius mentions that he was the first bishop of Crete, as Timothy was of Ephesus,<sup>3</sup>—a tradition evidently occasioned by a misunderstanding of the temporary nature of the mission of Titus to that island. He is said to have been the apostle of the Dalmatians, and is regarded as the patron saint of Crete. According to tradition, he died in Crete as bishop of Gortyna, at the advanced age of ninety-four.<sup>4</sup>

Crete, the modern Candia, where Titus was left to establish the churches, is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean. It is, from east to west, about 150 miles long, with an average breadth of 30 miles. It is more celebrated in mythological than in real history. In ancient times it was exceedingly populous: Homer calls it *ἐκατόμπολις*, from its possessing a hundred cities. It was conquered by the Romans under Metellus Criticus (B.C. 67), and, along with Cyrene in Africa, converted into a Roman province. We learn from Tacitus, Josephus, and Philo, that it was the residence of numerous Jews. Tacitus tells us that the Jews were of Cretan origin,<sup>5</sup> probably confounding them with the Philistines, who appear to have come from Crete.<sup>6</sup> Josephus mentions that the pseudo-Alexander, the pretended son of Herod the Great, landed at Crete,

<sup>1</sup> So Macknight and Alford. Conybeare and Howson also observe: "We are unwilling to suppose that Titus could have yielded to such unworthy fears, and may be allowed to hope that his journey to the neighbouring Dalmatia was undertaken by the desire of Paul."—Vol. ii. p. 573. There are really no grounds for such suspicions.

<sup>2</sup> Oosterzee mentions an ingenious conjecture of Märcker, that Titus is no other than Silas, and that his full name was Titus Silvanus. This would account for the intimate relation in which Titus stands with the church of Corinth, and for his apparent omission in the Acts. But the fact that Silas was a Jewish, and Titus a Gentile Christian, is an insuperable objection to this hypothesis.

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, Jan. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 2: *Judeos Cretâ insulâ profugos.*

<sup>6</sup> 1 Sam. xxx. 14, comp. with Ezek. xxv. 16, Zeph. ii. 5. See Winer's *Wörterbuch*, "Philister;" and Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, "Cherethims."

and imposed upon the numerous Jews in that island.<sup>1</sup> And Philo observes, that not only are the continents full of Jewish colonies, but also the most celebrated islands, as Eubœa, Cyprus, and Crete.<sup>2</sup> The character which the apostle gives of the Cretans is far from being complimentary. He quotes the words of one of their own poets, and asserts that his testimony was true: *Κρήτες αἰὲ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί*: "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slothful bellies" (Tit. i. 12). This testimony is abundantly corroborated by similar assertions from ancient writers.<sup>3</sup> The poet whom Paul quotes is said by Theodoret and Theophylact to have been Callimachus; but Callimachus was of Cyrene, and Jerome tells us that he (Callimachus) borrowed from the Cretan poet Epimenides, who lived six hundred years before Christ, and was regarded as a prophet (*προφήτης*, Tit. i. 12).<sup>4</sup>

From the Acts, we learn that Paul touched at Crete on his voyage to Rome (Acts xxvii. 7). His residence at that time was short, the ship waiting only for a favourable wind; and besides, he was a prisoner, and was not at liberty to go into the interior of the island. Hence it is not surprising that there is no mention of Christians in Crete. These might have been there, residing in some other part of the island, and so Paul might not at that time have come in contact with them. From the Epistle to Titus, it would appear that Christianity had existed for some time in the island before the apostle's visit to it in company with Titus. There were churches in several cities; heresies had sprung up among them; and there were Christian men of approved character who could be appointed as bishops. There is nothing to lead us to suppose that Christianity was first planted on the occasion of this visit: neither Paul nor Titus was the founder of the churches

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xvii. 12. 1; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 7. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Alford refers to the work of Meursius on Crete, and gives numerous quotations from classical authors, such as Livy, Polybius, Plutarch, etc.—*Greek Testament*, vol. iii., Prolegomena, pp. 110, 111.

<sup>4</sup> See Matthiæ's *Greek and Roman Literature*, p. 42; Whitby's *Commentary*, on Tit. i. 12. Callimachus lived B.C. 280, and consequently three hundred years after Epimenides. Jerome tells us that he himself found the verse in the writing of Epimenides, *πρὸ χρησμών*. See also Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 16.

of Crete. Christianity in Crete rather appears to have been of early origin — perhaps introduced by converts made at Pentecost. Mention is made of Cretes in the list of nations who, on that memorable day, heard the apostles speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God (Acts ii. 11). The first converts would be Jews; and in all probability, the churches of Crete chiefly consisted of Jewish Christians, and thus in this respect were different from those churches which were founded by Paul. There does not, however, appear to have been any regular ministry: the churches were in a state of disorder, devoid of office-bearers, infected with heresy, and strongly tainted with the national character of the Cretans for falsehood, ferocity, and sensuality.

## II. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The immediate occasion of the Epistle was to communicate instructions to Titus regarding his superintendence of the churches of Crete (Tit. i. 5), and also to request him to come to Nicopolis before winter (Tit. iii. 12). The design of the Epistle may be regarded as twofold. The first and chief purpose was to impart directions to Titus concerning the appointment of office-bearers. In this Epistle, as in First Timothy, there is no distinction between bishops and presbyters (Tit. i. 5, 7); and, differing from First Timothy, there is no mention of deacons, as an order distinct from the presbyters. The ecclesiastical government to be established in Crete was of the simplest nature; in all probability, the church was not so highly organized as at Ephesus, so that there would be no need of deacons. The second design of the Epistle was to instruct and charge Titus to refute and oppose false teachers. It is more than probable that Titus met with much opposition; several despised him, and others openly attacked him. Paul, therefore, by this Epistle, invests him with his apostolic authority, and commands him to exhort and convince gainsayers, to stop the mouths of vain talkers and deceivers, to rebuke them sharply, and to reject heretics if not brought to repentance after two admonitions. "Paul," observes Calvin, "writes with this design, to arm Titus with his authority, that he may be

able to bear so great a burden; for undoubtedly there were some who fearlessly despised him, as being but one of the ordinary rank of pastors. Hence we may infer that this was not so much a private epistle of Paul to Titus, as a public epistle to the Cretans. It is improbable that Titus is blamed for having, with too great indulgence, raised unworthy persons to the office of bishop, or that, as an ignorant man and a novice, he is told what is that kind of doctrine in which he ought to instruct the people; but because due honour was not rendered to him, Paul clothes him with his own authority, both in ordaining ministers and in the whole government of the church.”<sup>1</sup>

De Wette objects that the contents of the Epistle do not correspond with the state of the church in Crete, and with the design of the apostle in writing. “The Epistle,” he observes, “does not correspond with its design, or the presupposed state of matters. 1. In churches which were not yet brought into order, and were destitute of elders, many false teachers are said to be present and active. 2. Titus, who was left behind in Crete, does not give information of these teachers to the apostle; but the apostle, who is absent, gives information to Titus, who is present. 3. The declaration in Tit. i. 12, 13 is unjust toward a population where Paul had found so great a susceptibility for the gospel, and the want of all thankful recognition is remarkable (comp. 1 Thess. i. 2). 4. An existence of Christianity in the island for some length of time is presupposed (Tit. i. 6). 5. The precepts in Tit. i. 6–9 are trivial; and the polemics against the false teachers, and the description of them in Tit. i. 10–16, iii. 9, are wholly vague; whilst the moral precepts in Tit. ii. 1–10, iii. 1, are superficial and trivial.”<sup>2</sup>

These objections are of no great weight. The supposition that Christianity was not recently introduced into the island, but had existed there for a considerable period, is a sufficient answer to most of them. This accounts for the existence and activity of false teachers, and for the apostle’s knowledge of them. The want of a regular ecclesiastical government is not

<sup>1</sup> Calvin’s *Introduction to the Epistle to Titus*.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette’s *Einleitung N. T.* p. 335.

remarkable, nor is the corrupt state of the churches which merited such a severe rebuke from the apostle in itself incredible. The national character of the Cretans was bad; and it was not to be expected that this character should all at once be eradicated among the converts to Christianity, especially when the noxious influence of false teachers is taken into consideration. It is also to be remembered that the Epistle was not primarily addressed to the Cretans, but to Titus; and therefore there was no necessity for a thankful recognition of the faith of the Cretans, especially if there was not much to commend in their character. The qualifications of bishops mentioned are not to be judged by what are deemed essential in the present day, but by the state of matters in the apostolic times; and viewing them in this light, far from being trivial, they are important, pertinent, and exhaustive. The nature of the false teachers was known to Titus; and therefore all that was necessary was to give prominence to their pernicious influences, in order to stir him up to an active opposition to them. And so far from the moral precepts being superficial and trivial, they are eminently Pauline, being connected with the hopes and privileges of the gospel: good works are throughout described, not as the cause of justification, but as the effects of faith.

The false teachers mentioned in this Epistle are similar to those alluded to in First Timothy, except that the Jewish element is apparently stronger among the false teachers of Crete than among those of Ephesus. They are described as those of the circumcision, and their doctrines are called Jewish fables (Tit. i. 10, 14). They are represented as vain talkers and deceivers, teaching things that they ought not; as being actuated by a desire of gain—diffusing errors for filthy lucre's sake: they were condemned by their own conscience; they appear to have been immoral, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness; they busied themselves about Jewish fables, and foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; they stirred up divisions in the church, subverted whole families, and turned away the disciples from the truth (Tit. i. 10–12, 14, iii. 9). Like the false teachers of Colosse and those mentioned in the Epistles to

Timothy, they were Jewish Gnostics, whose doctrines consisted of an admixture of Judaism with heathen philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

The bearers of this Epistle are said to have been Zenas and Apollos: "Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them" (Tit. iii. 13). This may possibly be the case; but the words do not necessarily imply it. Zenas and Apollos may have been already in Crete, or they may have had the intention of coming afterwards.

### III. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle admits of no regular division. The apostle, after saluting Titus, reminds him of the purpose for which he had left him in Crete—that he might ordain elders in every city; and in order to direct him, he mentions the qualifications of a bishop, especially that he must hold fast the sound doctrine, and be able both to exhort and to convince gainsayers (chap. i. 1–10). This leads him to describe the false teachers, who appear to have been of Jewish origin, and to remind him of the bad character of the Cretans, as it was described centuries ago by their own poet Epimenides (chap. i. 11–16). Next follow various rules of conduct for the different classes of Christians: the instructions which Titus was to give to the aged and the young; the exhortation to show himself in all things a pattern of good works; the admonitions to be given to slaves, that they should be faithful to their masters,—all founded on the fact that the great design of Christ's mission into the world was to purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (chap. ii. 1–15). Then follows the exhortation that Titus should command Christians to be obedient to their rulers, and forbearing toward all men; resting these duties on the manifestation of the grace of God in our regeneration and justification, and on the faithful saying that believers should be careful to maintain good works (chap. iii. 1–8). A caution is given to avoid vain and unprofitable questions, and a charge to excommunicate those false teachers who resolutely continued in their erroneous doctrine (chap. iii.

<sup>1</sup> See Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 42.

9-11). Then follow some personal notices; and the Epistle, like all Paul's other letters, concludes with the apostolic benediction (chap. iii. 12-15).

#### IV. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The historical notices in the Epistle itself which bear upon the date are three. 1. Paul and Titus had been in Crete, which Paul had left, leaving Titus behind (Tit. i. 5). We are not informed what time elapsed between Paul's visit to Crete and the date when he wrote the Epistle; but probably it was short, as it is not likely that the apostle would leave Titus long without instructions. This visit to Crete cannot possibly be that which Paul made on his voyage to Rome, as Titus did not then accompany him, nor was Paul at liberty to make his own arrangements with regard to wintering at Nicopolis.<sup>1</sup> 2. Paul expresses a design of wintering at Nicopolis (Tit. iii. 12), probably the celebrated city of that name in Epirus. 3. Mention is made in the Epistle of Tychicus and Apollos, as attendants on Paul (Tit. iii. 13). Tychicus is first mentioned as accompanying Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4); he was afterward employed by Paul during his Roman imprisonment, as the bearer of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; and he is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 12 as having been sent by the apostle to Ephesus. Apollos was not converted to Christianity until after Paul's first residence at Ephesus (Acts xviii. 24-28).

It has elsewhere been observed that the above circumstances, taken in connection with the fact that the Pastoral Epistles must all have been written about the same time, can only be accounted for on the supposition that the Epistle to Titus was written in the interval between Paul's first and second Roman imprisonments.<sup>2</sup> Contrary opinions are, however, maintained by several critics. These opinions may be classed into those which place the composition of the Epistle before, during, or after Paul's three years' residence at Ephesus.

<sup>1</sup> Grotius is the only eminent writer who identifies the visit to Crete mentioned in this Epistle with Paul's touching at Crete in his voyage to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> See dissertation on Paul's Roman imprisonments.



Several critics place the date of the Epistle before this residence of the apostle at Ephesus. Some (Michaelis, Townsend) suppose that it was written during Paul's residence of eighteen months in Corinth (Acts xviii. 1-18). Michaelis thinks that Paul made an excursion from Corinth to Crete, and that on his voyage back he was driven by a storm to Nicopolis in Epirus, where he spent the winter, and preached the gospel in Illyricum.<sup>1</sup> But this is inconsistent with the narrative in the Acts, which says that he remained (ἐκάθισε) all that time at Corinth; and although short excursions from it are admissible, yet not such a long voyage as to Crete, and a winter spent at Nicopolis, which would indeed leave little of the eighteen months to be spent in Corinth. And the reference in the Epistle to Apollos, who was not converted until afterwards, proves conclusively the untenableness of this opinion. Others (Hug, Hensen, Schott) think that the visit to Crete was made during Paul's voyage from Corinth to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 18, 19), and that the Epistle was written shortly afterwards. The Nicopolis where Paul proposed to spend the winter, was, according to this opinion, Nicopolis in Cilicia, to which it is supposed Paul proposed to repair after his visit to Jerusalem (Acts xviii. 21). Here also the gratuitous supposition has to be made, that Paul was driven out of his straight course by a storm to the coasts of Crete. The fact that Paul did not meet Apollos on his first residence at Ephesus, and so had not at that period made his acquaintance, is a sufficient refutation of this opinion. Others (Credner, Neudecker) suppose that the voyage to Crete was made on Paul's return from Jerusalem to Ephesus: an opinion which is wholly untenable, and contradictory to the narrative of the Acts, which gives a particular account of Paul's travels on that occasion (Acts xviii. 21-23).

Wieseler argues with great ingenuity and acuteness, that the visit to Crete alluded to in the Epistle was made during Paul's residence of three years at Ephesus, and that the Epistle to Titus was written on his return. This opinion has also been adopted, with some variations in the details, by Anger, Burton, Otto, Davidson (first edition), Reuss, and

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 37.

Schaff.<sup>1</sup> According to Wieseler, Paul, after having spent nearly two years in Ephesus, passed over into Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3), and thence to Corinth; from Corinth he sailed in company with Titus to Crete, whom he left behind on his departure; thence he returned to Ephesus, and from that city wrote the Epistle to Titus. Afterwards he sent Tychicus or Artemas to Crete, and requested Titus to return to him, and then sent him to Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 18). Wieseler also shows that, in all probability, both Tychicus and Apollos were then with the apostle at Ephesus, and could thus be employed by him as messengers to the churches.<sup>2</sup> This most ingenious hypothesis has already been discussed.<sup>3</sup> The omission of such an extensive journey in the Acts of the Apostles is a presumption against it. The residence of Titus in Crete must have been of short duration, as he is sent off immediately to Corinth. And besides, it must be supposed that Paul, shortly after writing the Epistle, altered his intention; for instead of enjoining Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, he requests him to return to Ephesus. This hypothesis, although it agrees with some particulars, and is certainly the most plausible of the views which dispense with a second imprisonment, yet entirely fails to answer all the conditions of the case.<sup>4</sup>

There are not many critics who suppose that the Epistle was written in the interval between Paul's departure from Ephesus and his imprisonment at Rome. Some (Baronius, Lardner) conceive that Paul visited Crete on his journey from Ephesus to Corinth (Acts xx. 1, 2), probably sailing from Macedonia to Greece. The time, however, will not admit of so long a voyage. Only a year elapsed between Paul's leaving Ephesus at Pentecost and his arrival at Jerusalem at the ensuing Pentecost, and three months of it were spent in Corinth. Lardner, indeed, gets over the difficulty by supposing that there was an interval of two years;<sup>5</sup> but the chronology of the Acts will not admit of that supposition. Others (Schmidt,

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. iii. p. 85; Reuss' *Geschichte N. T.* p. 75; Schaff's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 348-352.

<sup>3</sup> See page 362 of this work.

<sup>4</sup> See an able refutation of Wieseler's hypothesis by Huther, *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 18, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 294, 295.

Heinrichs, Matthies) think that Paul made an excursion to Crete during his residence of three months in Greece (Acts xx. 3), and that when he returned from Crete he spent the winter in Nicopolis. But these three months were the season of winter, when the ancients made no voyages. Besides, it is evident from the Epistles to the Corinthians that Paul spent that winter, not at Nicopolis, but at Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7), where his presence was so greatly required.

Thus, then, all the hypotheses which attempt to place the visit of Paul to Crete, and the composition of the Epistle to Titus, within the period recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, completely fail; and we are constrained to have recourse to our former hypothesis, that the visit was made and the letter written after Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment. At what particular time the visit to Crete was made, cannot be more exactly determined. It is probable that Paul, as he had resolved (Phil. ii. 24; Philem. 22), would immediately on his release repair to Macedonia, and from that to Proconsular Asia, and that he would at a later period sail to Crete. All this is, however, conjectural, as there are no certain data to go upon.

The Nicopolis, where Paul proposed to winter, is generally supposed to be in Epirus. It is a name common to several towns. Bleek mentions no less than eight towns, each of which has been supposed to be the Nicopolis in question: a town in Epirus, on the sea-coast; another in Macedonia, on the river Nestus, not far from Philippi; another in Thrace; another in Armenia, built by Pompey; another in Cilicia; another in Bithynia; another in Pontus; and another in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Titus would be well aware what town Paul meant, because he knew the route that he would take. The superscription at the end of the Epistle mentions Nicopolis of Macedonia: ἐγράφη ἀπὸ Νικοπόλεως τῆς Μακεδονίας; that is, Nicopolis on the Nestus. But this is a mere conjecture, and of no authority, though the objection to this opinion made by Michaelis and De Wette, that that city was built by Trajan, and consequently did not exist in the time of Paul,<sup>2</sup> appears to

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to the N. T.* vol. ii. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 33; De Wette's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 21.

be a mistake.<sup>1</sup> Nicopolis, the seaport on the coast of Epirus, is, on all accounts, the most probable. This city was built by Augustus in commemoration of his victory over Antony at Actium, and soon became a flourishing Roman colony. "Nicopolis," observes Strabo, "is well peopled, and is improving every day. It has a large territory, and is adorned with the spoils of war."<sup>2</sup> Here probably Paul spent his last winter before his arrest and martyrdom at Rome. Conybeare and Howson suppose that he was there arrested, and forwarded to Rome for trial.<sup>3</sup>

The place of writing cannot be determined. It was not Nicopolis, for the word ἐκεῖ (Tit. iii. 12) proves that Paul had not as yet repaired thither, but that he only proposed to go. Some (Guericke, Howson) suppose that it was Ephesus, to which Paul, after visiting Crete, returned in accordance with an intimation to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 14).<sup>4</sup> Others think that the Epistle was written in Macedonia or Achaia, or some country in the neighbourhood of Nicopolis.<sup>5</sup> These points must, however, be left undetermined, as there is nothing but vague conjecture on which to proceed.

<sup>1</sup> See Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, Nicopolis.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, vii. 7. 6. See also Merivale's *History of the Romans*, vol. iii. pp. 328, 329; Wordsworth's *Greece*, p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the same winter as is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 21. Paul may only have intended to spend the winter at Nicopolis, but may have been prevented from doing so by his arrest.—Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 573.

<sup>4</sup> Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 364; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 566.

<sup>5</sup> Huther's *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 41.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

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**T**HE authenticity of this Epistle, the person to whom it was addressed, and the character of the false teachers mentioned in it, have already been discussed in the remarks made on First Timothy. All that remains as requisite for the special introduction to this Epistle is to consider the occasion on which it was written, its contents, the date of its composition, and its distinctive peculiarity, as being the last epistle of the great apostle.

### I. THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

The Second Epistle to Timothy is not so official a letter as either the First Epistle or the Epistle to Titus. It contains no instructions relative to the appointment of office-bearers—no mention of the duties and qualifications of either bishops or deacons; and, on the other hand, there is a greater number of personal notices, salutations to individuals, and private intimations. Paul here addresses Timothy rather as his beloved son after the common faith, than as his representative in the church of Ephesus. The immediate occasion of the Epistle was to request Timothy to come with all haste to Rome. Paul's life was in imminent danger; he foresaw that his course was well-nigh run, and that he was about to suffer martyrdom; and he was anxious to see his beloved son in the faith before he suffered. "Do thy diligence to come unto me;" and again, with an earnest repetition of the request: "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. iv. 9, 21). He also desires him to bring Mark along with him, as being profitable unto him for the ministry (2 Tim. iv. 11),<sup>1</sup> supplying the place

<sup>1</sup> Mark was thus fully restored to the favour of Paul, after the dispute concerning him which occasioned the separation between Paul and Barnabas.

of those fellow-labourers who either were necessarily absent or had deserted him. As, however, his fate was uncertain, and as he might not survive until the arrival of Timothy, he writes this Epistle with a view to stir up and encourage that evangelist in his ministry; he exhorts him not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, to stand up boldly for the faith, and to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and he warns him against those false teachers, who were perverting the minds of the disciples, eating as a canker into the very life of religion (2 Tim. ii. 17). This Epistle, then, is a pastoral charge of the great apostle of the Gentiles, primarily designed for Timothy, but applicable to all ministers and to all congregations in the Christian Church. In all these Pastoral Epistles there are earnest exhortations to ministerial fidelity, and cautions and warnings against false teachers. The apostle exhorts his fellow-labourers not only to avoid these pernicious errors, but by sound doctrine, the manifestation of the truth, and the exercise of a wholesome discipline, to oppose and refute gainsayers.

There is a difference of opinion with regard to the place to which this Epistle was sent. The most common opinion is, that Timothy was still at Ephesus. In the First Epistle, mention is made of Hymenæus and Alexander, among the false teachers at Ephesus who had made shipwreck of their faith, and whom the apostle had excommunicated (1 Tim. i. 20). Now these two names occur again in the Second Epistle, as persons of whom Timothy was to beware: "Their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus" (2 Tim. ii. 17). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou also ware" (2 Tim. iv. 14, 15). Alexander was certainly a common name, and the individual here referred to might have been a different person from the Alexander mentioned in First Timothy; but Hymenæus is not so common, and he could hardly be different from the Hymenæus of 1 Tim. i. 20.

Michaelis, however, objects that there are two passages in this Epistle which prove that Timothy was not at Ephesus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. pp. 163, 164.

Paul says: "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus" (2 Tim. iv. 12). Hence it is argued that Timothy was not at Ephesus; for if he had been there, he would have known of the arrival of Tychicus without being informed of it by Paul. But to this it is replied, that the aorist ἀπέστειλα may be used according to the idiom of classical letter-writing, and signify, "I herewith send Tychicus to Ephesus,"—namely, as the bearer of this Epistle.<sup>1</sup> Or the words may mean, that Paul had sent Tychicus to supply the place of Timothy during his absence; but they do not necessarily imply that Tychicus had arrived at Ephesus before the Epistle. Again, Paul says: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20). Here it is argued, that if Timothy had been at Ephesus, he must have known this circumstance, as Miletum was not far distant; especially as Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts xxi. 29). But it is not necessary to suppose that Paul here writes to communicate information to Timothy, but rather to assign the reason why in the hour of his extremity he was left so destitute of friends; and why, consequently, it was so important that Timothy should come to him without delay.<sup>2</sup>

## II. THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

This letter is written with the freedom of epistolary correspondence, without any definite arrangement. After saluting Timothy, Paul expresses his earnest desire to see him, calling to remembrance the sorrow with which they had parted, and being assured of his unfeigned faith (chap. i. 1–5). He exhorts Timothy to increased activity and fidelity, to stir up those gifts which had been imparted to him, not to be afraid of those sufferings to which Christianity exposed its professors, but to reflect on the manifold grace of God, and on those future blessings which the gospel confers (chap. i. 6–14).

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 592.

<sup>2</sup> Michaelis supposes that Paul himself did not know in what city of Proconsular Asia Timothy would receive the Epistle he was writing to him, but entrusted it to a safe person to be delivered to Timothy wherever he found him. This opinion is partially adopted by Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii. p. 582.

He informs him of the desertion of the Asiatics, and of the kindness and fidelity of Onesiphorus, who at some personal risk visited him in his imprisonment (chap. i. 15-18). Timothy is directed to commit the doctrine, received from the apostle, to faithful men who should be able to teach others. He himself, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, was to endure hardness, to practise fortitude in suffering, even as the apostle himself endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain eternal salvation: he was to oppose all false teachers, especially those who denied the truth of the resurrection; but yet his opposition was to be conducted in the spirit of meekness, and with earnest prayer for the recovery of the offenders (chap. ii. 1-26). The apostle, with a prophetic spirit, indicates the moral corruption which would soon infect the Christian Church, describes the character of the false teachers, earnestly exhorts Timothy to hold fast the faith according as he had been taught, and to be deeply versed in the Holy Scriptures, so that he might be thoroughly furnished unto all good works (chap. iii. 1-17). Then follows a solemn charge to Timothy, as in the presence of Jesus Christ, the Judge of the quick and the dead, to perform his ministerial duties with all fidelity, as the time would soon come when error would overspread the Church, and sound doctrine be despised (chap. iv. 1-5). The apostle alludes in a most affecting manner to his approaching end; he foresees that his apostolic course is well-nigh run, and that the hour of his departure is at hand (chap. iv. 6-8). Then follow several personal notices, information concerning his fellow-labourers, messages, exhortations, salutations to Christians at Ephesus, and from Christians at Rome, an urgent request to come to him before winter, and finally the apostolic benediction, with which the Epistle concludes (chap. iv. 9-22).

### III. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

There are in this Epistle several chronological statements which determine its date. The apostle, when he wrote it, was in imprisonment at Rome (2 Tim. i. 16, 17). Mention is made of a journey to Miletum, where he left Trophimus,



and most probably to Corinth, where Erastus remained behind (2 Tim. iv. 20). Timothy is also requested to bring with him certain articles which the apostle had left at Troas (2 Tim. iv. 13).

It is evident that the imprisonment mentioned in this Epistle was a Roman imprisonment. Of Onesiphorus it is said: "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was at Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me" (2 Tim. i. 16, 17). Notwithstanding this express declaration, Oeder and Böttger suppose that it is the imprisonment at Cæsarea that is here mentioned. Oeder<sup>1</sup> translates the words *γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ*, "after he had been at Rome," which would be a remark wholly irrelevant; and Böttger<sup>2</sup> gets over the difficulty by supposing, contrary to all authorities, that the words are an interpolation.

The imprisonment here adverted to, then, is undoubtedly a Roman imprisonment; but whether it was the imprisonment mentioned at the close of the Acts, or a second Roman imprisonment, is a matter of dispute. Those who suppose that Paul was never liberated, of course assert that this Epistle was written during the so-called first imprisonment; an opinion also adopted by some, as Lardner and Hug, who believe in two imprisonments.<sup>3</sup> This opinion is adopted by Baronius, Hensen, Heinrichs, Matthies, Schrader, Wieseler, Reuss, Davidson (first edition), and others. The order in which the Epistles are to be arranged has been differently stated. Matthies places the Second Epistle to Timothy before the four Epistles of the captivity,—namely, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. Lardner and Hug place it after the Epistle to the Ephesians, and suppose it to have been written at the beginning of the two years' imprisonment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Conject. de difficilior. S.S. locis centuria*, p. 733.

<sup>2</sup> *Beitrag*, iv. 42 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 303, 304.

<sup>4</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 315. So also Reuss supposes that the Epistle was written at the commencement of Paul's two years' imprisonment, later than the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, which he refers to the Cæsarean imprisonment, but before the Epistle to the Philippians.—*Geschichte N. T.* p. 111.

But most of those critics, who consider this Epistle as belonging to that imprisonment, place it at the close of that period, and not only suppose that it was written later than the other four Epistles, but also after the two years mentioned in the Acts.<sup>1</sup> And certainly, if we are to limit the date of the Epistle to this Roman imprisonment, this last opinion must be considered as correct. Paul's friends were different: Timothy, whose name is conjoined with that of the apostles in three of the Epistles of the captivity, was absent; and salutations are sent from other persons who are not elsewhere mentioned. The imprisonment of the apostle was also entirely different. He no longer dwelt in his own hired house; he had to be sought out and found with difficulty; it was hazardous to visit him; and he looked forward, not, as in the Epistles to Philemon and the Philippians, to acquittal, but to martyrdom. His imprisonment had evidently taken a different turn: it was severer and stricter.

But it has already been shown, in the dissertation on Paul's Roman imprisonment, that there are insuperable objections connected with the opinion that this Epistle was written during the same imprisonment as that recorded in the Acts. The entire omission of Paul's former companions at Rome, with the exception of Luke, and the mention of new companions, would seem to prove that both time and circumstances were different. The statement that Paul had left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. iv. 20) cannot, as already observed, be made to harmonize with the account of Paul's journeys in the Acts, for although Trophimus was with Paul at Miletum (Acts xx. 4), yet, so far from being left behind sick, he accompanied the apostle to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 29); and therefore can only harmonize with the supposition of a second imprisonment. And the same remarks hold good with the statement made by the apostle concerning the articles left at Troas: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee; and the books, but especially the parchments" (2 Tim. iv. 13); as, on the supposition that Paul was not released from imprisonment, nearly five years

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction to N. T.* (old edition), vol. iii. p. 52; Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. p. 73; De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 330.

had elapsed since he had been at Troas, and Timothy had been with him in the interval.

Thus, then, we infer that the place from which the Second Epistle to Timothy was written, was Rome (2 Tim. i. 16, 17); and the time of writing was during Paul's second imprisonment, shortly before his martyrdom. "I am now," he writes, "ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6). A closer indication of time is given us in the request of the apostle, that Timothy should come to him before winter (2 Tim. iv. 21). Paul was probably put to death in the year 67 or 68, being the last year of the reign of Nero. It cannot be determined whether Timothy reached Rome in time to receive the last blessing of the apostle; but we cannot be wrong in fixing the date of the Epistle as the last year of the apostle's life, A.D. 67 or 68.

The route of the apostle after his release from his Roman imprisonment is a matter of conjecture, and consequently so also is the place of his arrest. Conybeare and Howson suppose that it was Nicopolis in Epirus, where, according to the Epistle to Titus, the apostle had designed to winter.<sup>1</sup> Neander thinks that Paul was arrested in Spain.<sup>2</sup> Lange supposes that it was Ephesus. He thinks that there are allusions to this event in the Epistle. "Some hints," he observes, "would lead us to the supposition that Paul was delivered up in Ephesus by this informer (Alexander the coppersmith) to the Roman authority. Why did Timothy take leave of him with many tears? Why did Paul leave Trophimus at Miletum sick? Does not his departure from Troas, leaving behind him his cloak and books, indicate a forced and hurried journey? And why is it said that Onesiphorus was prompted to minister to him at Ephesus?"<sup>3</sup> Others, again (Macknight, Michaelis), suppose that he ventured back to Rome, and was there arrested.<sup>4</sup> All these are mere conjectures on a point on which no certainty is attainable.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. 573.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> Lange's *Apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 396. So also Lewin's *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 933.

<sup>4</sup> Macknight's *Introduction to Second Timothy*; Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 176.

Paul mentions that he was almost alone at Rome.<sup>1</sup> Luke was the only one of his old companions with him (2 Tim. iv. 11). He indeed sends salutations from Rome to Timothy, from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren (2 Tim. iv. 21); but these persons appear to have been private members of the Roman church, who had never been employed as his fellow-labourers. He complains that they of Asia (*οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ*) had deserted him, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. i. 15). Demas, mentioned in other epistles as present with the apostle at Rome (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24), had forsaken him, having loved this present world; Crescens had gone, probably at the request of the apostle, to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10). Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 12), Trophimus had been left at Miletum sick, and Erastus remained behind at Corinth (2 Tim. iv. 20). Thus the apostle stood almost alone at Rome. This absence of his former friends may be accounted for from various causes. Some of them, as Demas and the Asiatics, had evidently deserted him through fear: they did not wish to expose themselves to danger; they dreaded persecution, perhaps martyrdom; they were ashamed of the apostle's chains. Others, as Titus and Tychicus, had been sent by the apostle himself on various missions to the churches. Others, who had formerly been with the apostle at Rome, as Timothy himself and Mark, were then in other parts of the world. But perhaps the great reason was, that, a few years before, the church of Rome had been broken up by the persecution under Nero. Many of those to whom the apostle had sent salutations in his Epistle to the Romans, and some from whom salutations were sent in the epistles written from Rome during his former imprisonment, must have perished in that fiery trial which laid waste the Church, when, according to Tacitus, vast multitudes were put to death. Three or four years had elapsed, and the fury of the persecution had abated, but still during the remainder of Nero's life it must have been dangerous to profess Christianity.

According to the Epistle, Paul had already undergone part

<sup>1</sup> Reuss refers this to the period of Paul's arrival at Rome, mentioned in the Acts, when he wrote this Epistle to Timothy in a state of depression.

of his trial. Probably he was accused of several supposed crimes; as, for example, the attempt to cause the Romans to apostatize from their national religion, treason against Cæsar, etc. On one of these charges he had been tried, and it would appear had successfully defended himself. Although deserted by his friends, yet the Lord Jesus had so strengthened and inspired him, that he was enabled to plead the cause of his Master in the public court. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17). It would appear that it was on this occasion that Alexander the coppersmith (ὁ χαλκεὺς) injured the apostle (2 Tim. iv. 14). Perhaps he appeared at Rome as a witness or accuser against him; or perhaps he acted the part of an informer at Ephesus, and by his means Paul was arrested.<sup>1</sup> The employment of informers (*delatores*), from the encouragement which they received from Nero, had then become a profession, and was amply rewarded. It is extremely doubtful whether this was the same Alexander, the Jew, who years before this stood up in the theatre of Ephesus to defend the Jews and accuse the Christians (Acts xix. 33): he seems rather to be the Alexander of 1 Tim. i. 20,—a false Christian, whom Paul had excommunicated, and who in this manner revenged himself. But although Paul had thus succeeded in defending himself against one charge, yet there were other charges; and he looked forward, not to acquittal, but to martyrdom. Still the trial might be prolonged, as was the case during his former imprisonment; and hence he wrote to Timothy to come to him. At length the trial actually took place—whether sooner than he expected, we know not—and the great apostle of the Gentiles, the prince of missionaries, was, like his Divine Master, condemned by the Romans, but, as a Roman citizen, was saved the horrors of crucifixion, and perished by the executioner's axe.

<sup>1</sup> See Lewin's *St. Paul*, p. 944; Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 576; Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 464.

The traditionary accounts of the martyrdom of Paul are less numerous than we would have expected, and are mixed with much fable.<sup>1</sup> We have the early testimony of Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96) in a passage already quoted, but he mentions neither the place nor the mode of martyrdom; and although he alludes to the death of Peter, yet he does not assert that both apostles perished together.<sup>2</sup> Dionysius of Corinth (A.D. 170) is the first who connects together the death of Paul and Peter. Writing to the Romans, he observes: "Thus also you, by means of this admonition, have mingled the flourishing seed that had been planted by Paul and Peter at Rome and Corinth. For both of these having planted us at Corinth, likewise instructed us; and having in like manner taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time (*κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν*)."<sup>3</sup> Tertullian (A.D. 200) observes, that at Rome Peter died by crucifixion like the Lord, and Paul by being beheaded like the Baptist.<sup>4</sup> Caius of Rome (A.D. 212) says: "I can show the trophies of the apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian road, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church;"<sup>5</sup> evidently alluding to the Vatican as the place of Peter's, and to the Ostian road as the place of Paul's martyrdom. Eusebius observes: "Paul is said to have been beheaded at Rome, and Peter to have been crucified under Nero. This account is confirmed by the fact that the names of Peter and Paul still remain in the cemeteries of that city even to this day."<sup>6</sup> And Jerome is still more explicit: he informs us that Paul was put to death on the same day with Peter, being beheaded in the fourteenth year of Nero (A.D. 68), and buried on the Ostian road.<sup>7</sup>

It is probably an historical fact that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome, and that by crucifixion; but that he suffered on

<sup>1</sup> For legends connected with St. Paul's death, see Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, Appendix IV.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist. ad Cor.* i. 5. See page 357 of this work. <sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Romæ Petrus passioni Dominicæ adequatur, Paulus Johannis exitu coronatur. — De Præscr. Heret.* c. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Hic ergo decimo quarto Neronis anno (eodem die quo Petrus) Romæ pro Christo capite truncatus sepultusque est in viâ Ostiensi.*

the same day with Paul, as Jerome informs us, is undoubtedly mythical. There is no mention of Peter in any of the epistles which Paul wrote from Rome; whereas, if he had been there, he would undoubtedly have been named. And it is evident from this Epistle, that, at the time of Paul's martyrdom, Peter was not at Rome. The date of Paul's martyrdom is uncertain; but admitting the fact of a twofold imprisonment, the statement of Jerome is probably not far from the truth, that he was beheaded in the fourteenth year of Nero (A.D. 68). The particular day fixed on in the legends of the Church is the 29th of June.

#### IV. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE.

The distinguishing characteristic of this Second Epistle to Timothy is, that it is, in all probability, the last epistle which Paul wrote,—certainly the last which has come down to us. It contains Paul's dying advice, written in the immediate prospect of martyrdom. He looks forward calmly to the grave, and, with the executioner's axe in the foreground, he pens this letter to his favourite disciple; he solemnly charges him before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, to be faithful to the charge committed to him (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2). We see here the very heart of Paul,—his affection for Timothy, his unquenchable zeal for the promotion of Christ's kingdom, the calmness with which he looks forward to the grave, the confidence with which he looks upward to heaven. Now old in years, and worn out with many trials, deserted in a great measure by his friends, he waits with calmness and with a certain degree of satisfaction his approaching martyrdom. He must, indeed, be destitute of all sense of what is truly noble and heroic in life who can read those last words of the aged apostle without emotion: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearance" (2 Tim.

iv. 6-8). His longing desire to see Timothy, the urgency with which he entreats him to come to him with all diligence, the sadness with which he mentions the desertion of his friends, the feeling of loneliness, the craving after human sympathy in this the hour of his trial, are all natural touches of the state of Paul's feelings, and vividly represent him before us as one who, although standing on the verge of heaven, was yet not raised above the common feelings of humanity.

The most important commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles are those of De Wette (Leipzig 1844), Huther, being a continuation of Meyer's commentaries (Göttingen 1850; third edition, 1866), Wiesinger, being a continuation of Olshausen's commentaries (Königsberg 1850; translated, with the exception of Second Timothy, in Clark's Theological Library), and in our own country, Ellicott (London, 4th edition, 1869).



## APPENDIX.

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### AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.<sup>1</sup>

**P**ALEY, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, omits all mention of the Epistle to the Hebrews, probably because he was doubtful whether it was justly to be considered as one of the epistles of Paul. And for the same reason, we have seldom alluded to it. As, however, many eminent critics have considered it a genuine epistle of Paul, and as there is a considerable amount of evidence in favour of this opinion, the entire omission of it, in a work specially designed to serve as an introduction to the Pauline Epistles, would doubtless be regarded as a grave defect. On the other hand, considering that the authorship cannot be determined with the same certainty as that of the other Pauline Epistles, it may be advisable in the meantime to limit our remarks to this special point. Hence our examination of the Epistle to the Hebrews is added by way of appendix; and all that it is designed to do is to consider its authorship, omitting entirely all discussion on other points, such as its canonicity, its original language, the persons to whom it is addressed, the occasion on which it was written, and the time and place of its composition, except so far as

<sup>1</sup> This subject is discussed at considerable length in Alford's *Greek Testament*, Prolegomena, vol. iv. pp. 1-90; Bleek's *Der Brief an die Hebräer erläutert*, vol. i. pp. 82-430; Davidson's *Introduction to the N. T.* (old edition), vol. iii. pp. 163-277; Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 1-22; Ebrard *On the Hebrews*, pp. 389-426; Forster's *Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews*; Lünemann's *Der Hebräerbrief*, pp. 1-56; Moses Stuart *On the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 1-343; Tholuck *On the Hebrews*, vol. i. 1-78; and Wieseler's *Untersuchung über d. Hebräerbrief*.

they have an incidental reference to the subject under discussion. The subject is one of considerable difficulty, and perhaps no definite conclusion can be ultimately arrived at. As Delitzsch remarks: "May we not say that this Epistle resembles the Melchizedek of sacred story, of which its central portion treats? Like him, it marches forth in lonely, royal, and priestly dignity, and like him it is ἀγενεάλογητος; we know not whence it cometh and whither it goeth."<sup>1</sup>

#### I. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

An argument in favour of the Pauline authorship of this Epistle has been derived from the following words of Peter: "Account the long-suffering of our Lord salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood" (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16). Some (Cramer, Bengel, Whitby, Horne, and Forster) suppose that the epistle of Paul, to which Peter specially alludes, is the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> They argue that Peter writes to the Jewish Christians, the same who are here addressed; that in the Epistle to the Hebrews there are things hard to be understood (Heb. v. 11); and that it treats of the advent of Christ, to which the words of Peter refer. But such arguments are weak and untenable. It is a mere supposition that the Second Epistle of Peter is addressed to the Jewish Christians; and no passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews can be adduced exactly corresponding to the statement here made by Peter—that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.<sup>3</sup>

Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96) is the earliest extra-canonical authority for the books of the New Testament. There are, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, allusions to several of the epistles of Paul; but he quotes or alludes to no writing so

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Hebrews*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Bengel's *Gnomon*, on 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; Whitby, *in loco*; Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*, vol. iv. p. 573; Forster's *Apost. Authority of the Hebrews*, pp. 625-644.

<sup>3</sup> The Epistle which treats specially of the second advent is not the Hebrews, but Second Thessalonians.

frequently and so definitely as the Epistle to the Hebrews. Kirchhofer gives no less than twelve allusions to this Epistle in the short epistle of Clement.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the very words of the Epistle are cited. One extract out of many must suffice: "Who, being the brightness of His majesty, is so much greater than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For so it is written: 'Who maketh his angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.' But concerning His Son, thus said the Lord: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession.' And again He saith to Him, 'Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool'" (Heb. i. 3-13).<sup>2</sup> This frequency of allusion is thus noticed by Eusebius: "In which epistle, Clement, after giving many sentiments taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also literally quoting the words, most clearly shows that this work is not a late production. Hence it is probable that this also was numbered with the other writings of the apostles."<sup>3</sup> Clement certainly nowhere ascribes this Epistle to Paul; but this is no argument against its Pauline origin, because, in alluding to the other epistles of Paul, with the exception of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he never mentions either author or title. On the other hand, this frequent reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews not only demonstrates its high antiquity, but proves that it was a work of considerable, if not apostolic, authority; and therefore has justly been regarded as a presumption that

<sup>1</sup> Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 233-238. See also Lardner's *Works*, vol. i. pp. 299, 300; Forster's *Apostolical Authority*, pp. 575-594; and Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. iii. pp. 259-266. Davidson increases the number of allusions to fifteen.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. ad Cor.* c. 36: "Ὁς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς μεγαλοσύνης αὐτοῦ, τοσούτῃ μίζων ἐστὶν ἀγγέλων, ὥσῃ διαφωρότερον ὄνομα κεκληρονόμηκεν. Γέγραπται γὰρ οὕτως· 'Ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα· ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ οὕτως ἔπεν ὁ δεσπότης· υἱός μου εἰ σὺ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γενένηκά σε· αἵτησαι παρ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ δώσω σοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σου, καὶ τὴν κατὰσχισιν τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς. Καὶ πάλιν λίγει πρὸς αὐτόν· Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ὥς ἂν ῥῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου."

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 38. A similar statement is made by Jerome, *Catal. Scrip. Eccl.* c. 15.

it was written by Paul, to whom only of all the apostles it can be ascribed.<sup>1</sup>

Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) most probably alludes to the Epistle to the Hebrews when he says, "This is He who, according to the order of Melchisedec, is King of Salem, and eternal Priest of the Most High God" (Heb. v. 9, 10).<sup>2</sup> In another place he says of Christ, that "He is called both angel and apostle."<sup>3</sup> As He is nowhere else called *an apostle* except in Heb. iii. 1, this is considered to be an allusion to that Epistle. Justin certainly nowhere mentions Paul as the author of this Epistle; but this is of small consequence, as he never mentions any writer of the New Testament by name.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is found in the Peshito or Syriac version (A.D. 160). It is there, however, placed after the thirteen epistles of Paul: consequently its inclusion cannot be regarded as an argument in favour of its Pauline origin (Guericke, Delitzsch); nor can its position be viewed as an objection (Wieseler):<sup>4</sup> it was probably put last, because it was anonymous. It was afterwards, in the fourth century, considered by the Syrian church as a genuine epistle of Paul.<sup>5</sup> The Epistle to the Hebrews is also contained in the old Latin version, or the *Vetus Itala* (A.D. 170); but this cannot be adduced as an argument in favour of its Pauline origin, as we know that the Latin Church in general, for the first three centuries, did not regard it as Paul's.

The earliest authority, known to us, who distinctly asserted the authorship of Paul, is Pantænus of Alexandria (A.D. 185). In a passage, preserved by Eusebius, from the *Hypotyposés* of Clemens Alexandrinus, that Father (Clement) observes: "But now, as the blessed presbyter used to say, since the Lord, who was the apostle of the Almighty, was sent to the Hebrews,

<sup>1</sup> The supposed allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, given by Kirchofer, are too doubtful to be depended on. Ignatius, *ad Magnes.* c. 8, *ad Ephes.* c. 16; Polycarp, *ad Philippen.* c. 4 and c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Dial.* c. 33: Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ βασιλεὺς Σαλὴμ καὶ αἰώνιος ἱερεὺς ὑψίστου ὑπάρχων.

<sup>3</sup> *Apol.* i.: Καὶ ἄγγελος δὲ καλεῖται καὶ ἀπόστολος.

<sup>4</sup> Wieseler's *Untersuchung über d. Hebräerbrief*, pp. 8–11.

<sup>5</sup> It is acknowledged as such by Jacob of Nisibis (A.D. 325) and Ephrem the Syrian (A.D. 378).

Paul, from modesty, as if sent to the Gentiles, did not subscribe himself an apostle of the Hebrews; but from reverence to the Lord, and because he wrote of his abundance to the Hebrews, as a herald and apostle of the Gentiles."<sup>1</sup> It is generally admitted, that by "the blessed presbyter," Clement meant his master Pantænus; and here we have a distinct assertion by that Father of the authorship of Paul.

Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194) frequently quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews as the work of Paul. He never expresses a doubt regarding its Pauline origin, whilst he mentions his doubts concerning other writings. Thus, for example, he says: "Writing to the Hebrews, who had declined from faith to the law, Paul says, 'Ye have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat'"<sup>2</sup> (Heb. v. 12). And in the passage from the *Hypotyposés* preserved by Eusebius, above quoted, Clement makes the following important observation: "The Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew tongue; but it was carefully translated by Luke, and published among the Greeks. Whence one finds the same colour of expression in the Epistle as in the Acts."<sup>3</sup> It is to be observed that Clement here expresses no doubt as to the authorship of Paul; but, recognising a difference between the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of Paul's other epistles, states, in explanation of that circumstance, that we have a translation by Luke from the original Hebrew of Paul. Whether this was a tradition, or the mere private opinion of Clement, we have no means of ascertaining; but the latter

<sup>1</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14: "Ἦν δὲ ὡς ὁ μακάριος ἔλεγε πρεσβύτερος, ἐπὶ ὁ κύριος ἀπόστολος ὢν τοῦ παντοκράτορος, ἀπιστάλη πρὸς Ἑβραίους, διὰ μετρίότητα ὁ Παῦλος ὡς ἂν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἀπισταλμένος, οὐκ ἐγγράφει ἑαυτὸν Ἑβραίων ἀπίστολον διὰ τε τὴν πρὸς τὸν κύριον τιμὴν, διὰ δὲ τὸν ἐκ περισυίας καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἐπιστείλλειν ἰδῶν κήρυκα ὄντα καὶ ἀπόστολον.

<sup>2</sup> *Stromata*, vi. c. 8: Διὸ καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις γράφων, τοῖς ἐπανακάμπτουσιν εἰς νόμον ἐκ πίστεως, ἢ πάλιν, ψησι, χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς, τίνα τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ γεγόνατε χρεῖαν ἔχοντες γάλακτος, καὶ οὐ στερίας προφῆς.

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14: Καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους δὲ ἐπιστολὴν, Παύλου μὲν εἶναι φησὶ, γεγράφθαι δὲ Ἑβραίοις Ἑβραϊκῇ φωνῇ. Λουκᾶν δὲ φιλοτίμως αὐτὴν μεθερμηνεύσαντα, ἰκδοῦναι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἔβη τὸν αὐτὸν χρῶτα εὐρίσκεισθαι κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν, ταύτης τε τῆς, καὶ τῶν πρᾶξεων.

view is the more probable, from the comparison which he mentions between the style of the Epistle and that of the Acts.

Origen (A.D. 230), according to Kirchhofer, cites the Epistle to the Hebrews more than two hundred times, and that in different ways. Sometimes he quotes with the words "the apostle," "the Epistle to the Hebrews says;" but most frequently he attributes the Epistle directly to Paul. Thus: "In the Epistle to the Hebrews Paul says, 'In the last days He hath spoken to us by His Son'"<sup>1</sup> (Heb. i. 2). He recognises a difference of opinion in the Church concerning the authorship of the Epistle. "But possibly," he observes, "some one pressed with this argument will take refuge in the opinion of those who reject this Epistle [to the Hebrews], as not written by Paul; against whom we use, on the proper occasion, other arguments to prove the Epistle to be Paul's."<sup>2</sup> His mature judgment is thus given in two fragments preserved by Eusebius: "The style of the Epistle with the title 'to the Hebrews,' has not that rudeness of diction which belongs to the apostle, who confesses that he is rude in speech, that is, in phraseology. But that this Epistle is more Hellenic in the composition of its phrases, every one will acknowledge who is able to discern differences of style. Moreover, the ideas of the Epistle are admirable, and not inferior to any of the books acknowledged to be apostolic. Every one will confess the truth of this who attentively reads the apostle's writings. In another passage he says: I would say that the thoughts are the apostle's, but the diction and phraseology belong to some one who wrote down what the apostle said, and reduced, as it were, to commentaries the things spoken by his master. If, then, any church considers this Epistle as coming down from Paul, let it be commended for this; for the ancient men did not deliver it as such without cause. But who wrote the Epistle, God

<sup>1</sup> Origenes *Opp.* iv. p. 60: Καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἑβραίους, ὁ αὐτὸς Παῦλος φησιν, ἐπ' ἰσχύατος τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist. ad Afric.*: 'Ἀλλ' εἰκός τινα θλιβόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς εἰς ταῦτα ἀποδείξεως, συγχρήσασθαι τῷ βουλήματι τῶν ἀθετούντων τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, ὡς οὐ Παῦλον γειγραμμένην πρὸς ὃν ἄλλων λόγων κατ' ἰδίαν χρήζομεν εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ εἶναι Παύλου τὴν ἐπιστολὴν.

only truly knows. The account that has come down to us is, according to some, that Clement, who was the bishop of Rome, wrote the Epistle; according to others, that it was written by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts."<sup>1</sup>

These words of Origen, recorded by Eusebius, have been much commented on; and there certainly appears to be some ambiguity in them. Origen's own opinion is, that the author of the Hebrews is Paul; but he feels the force of the objection arising from the dissimilarity of style. He does not, however, attempt to remove the difficulty, like Clemens Alexandrinus, by supposing that the Epistle to the Hebrews is a translation; but he considers the thoughts to be the apostle's, whilst the phraseology is another's; but who that other was, he observes, God only knows. By the ancient men (*οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες*), who asserted that the Epistle was Paul's, he evidently means men of a former age, in all probability belonging to the Alexandrian church, to which Origen himself belonged. The expression, however, can hardly be limited to Pantænus and Clement (Bleek), as these were almost his contemporaries; but yet it cannot be carried so far back as to denote "men who stood close upon the apostolic age" (Hug, Tholuck), as the phrase is evidently to be taken comparatively. When he says, "Who wrote the Epistle, God truly knows" (*τις δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς Θεὸς οἶδεν*), he can hardly allude to the original and independent author (Alford), for he asserts that the contents of the Epistle are Paul's; but must refer to the person who put the thoughts of Paul in writing,

<sup>1</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 25: "Ὅτι ὁ χαρακτήρ τῆς λίσσεως τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιγεγραμμένης ἐπιστολῆς, οὐκ ἔχει τὸ ἐν λόγῳ ἰδιωτικὸν τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ὁμολογήσαντος ἑαυτὸν ἰδιώτην εἶναι τῷ λόγῳ, τουτίστι τῇ φράσει· ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπιστολὴ συνθεῖσι τῆς λίσσεως ἑλληνικωτέρᾳ, πῶς ὁ ἐπιστάμενος κρίνειν φράσεων διαφοράς, ὁμολογήσαι ἂν· πάλιν τε αὖ ὅτι τὰ νοήματα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς θαυμάσια ἐστί, καὶ οὐ δεύτερα τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ὁμολογουμένων γραμμάτων· καὶ τοῦτο ἂν συμφέσαι εἶναι ἀληθὲς πᾶς ὁ προσέχων τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῇ ἀποστολικῇ. Τούτοις μὲθ' ἑτέρας ἐπιφέρει λέγων. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποφαινόμενος εἴποιμ' ἂν, ὅτι τὰ μὲν νοήματα τοῦ ἀποστόλου ἐστὶν· ἡ δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις, ἀπομνημονεύσαντός τινος τοῦ ἀποστολικῆς, καὶ ὡς περὶ σχολιογραφήσαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου· εἴ τις οὖν ἐκκλησία ἔχει ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ὡς Παύλου, αὕτη εὐδοκίμειται καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες ὡς Παύλου, αὐτὴν παραδιδώκασιν· τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς Θεὸς οἶδεν· ἡ δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς φθάσασα ἱστορία, ὑπὸ τινων μὲν λεγόντων, ὅτι Κλήμης ὁ γενόμενος ἐπίσκοπος Ῥωμαίων ἔγραψε τὴν ἐπιστολὴν· ὑπὸ τινων δὲ ὅτι Λουκᾶς ὁ γράψας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὰς πράξεις.

who was either the amanuensis to whom Paul dictated (Rom. xvi. 22), or rather the editor who composed the Epistle from the sentiments of Paul. Others think that, besides the view which attributed the Epistle to Paul, Origen found another opinion, referring it to Clemens Romanus or Luke (Bleek).<sup>1</sup> Still his own opinion was in favour of the Pauline origin of the Hebrews.

Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 247) also maintains the Pauline origin of the Hebrews. In his letter to Fabius, the bishop of Antioch, concerning the persecution at Alexandria, he observes: "The brethren retired and gave way, and like those to whom Paul bears witness, they regarded the plunder of their goods with joy"<sup>2</sup> (Heb. x. 34).

Eusebius of Cæsarea (A.D. 315) classes the Epistle to the Hebrews among the *ὁμολογούμενα*, at the same time admitting that it was doubted by some. "The Epistles of Paul are fourteen, all well known and certain. It is not, however, right to conceal that some have set aside the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it was disputed by the Roman church, as not being one of Paul's Epistles."<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere he adopts the opinion of Clemens Alexandrinus, that Paul wrote the Epistle in Hebrew, and that it was translated into Greek by Clemens Romanus or Luke.<sup>4</sup> In another place, out of deference to the doubts of the Roman church, he appears to rank it among the *ἀντιλεγόμενα* or disputed epistles. He remarks that Clemens Alexandrinus, in his work entitled *The Stromata*, makes use of testimonies from the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, and among these he mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>5</sup> His own opinion, however, clearly was, that the author of the Hebrews is Paul. After this, the Epistle to the Hebrews was generally received by the Oriental Church as the work of Paul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. pp. 105, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 41: 'Εξέκλινον δὲ καὶ ὑπανιχώρουσι οἱ ἀδελφοί· καὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν τῶν ὑπαρχόντων, ὁμοίως ἐκείνοις οἷς καὶ Παῦλος ἐμαρτύρησε, μετὰ χαρᾶς προσεδίξαντο.

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 3: Τοῦ δὲ Παύλου πρόδηλοι καὶ σαφεῖς αἱ δικατίσσαι· ὅτι γε μὴν τινὲς ἠδειπήκασιν τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους, πρὸς τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ὡς μὴ Παύλου εἶσαν αὐτὴν ἀντιλέγεσθαι φήσαντες, οὐ δίκαιον ἀγνοεῖν.

<sup>4</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 13.

<sup>6</sup> So Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssene, Basil, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom.



To these testimonies in favour of the authorship of Paul, there are, however, opposing testimonies.

Marcion (A.D. 140) omits it, as well as the Pastoral Epistles, in his catalogue of Paul's Epistles. On this circumstance, however, no weight is to be placed, as Marcion was exceedingly arbitrary in his selection, being guided by dogmatic views.

The omission of the Epistle in the Muratorian canon (A.D. 170) is more important, inasmuch as it is a document of greater authority. Here there is a list of Paul's thirteen epistles, but no mention of the Hebrews. There is, however, an allusion to a spurious epistle to the Alexandrians, by which some suppose is meant the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Moreover, there is in circulation an epistle to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul, bearing on the heresy of Marcion."<sup>1</sup> If the Epistle to the Hebrews is here meant (Wieseler), we have a denial of its authenticity; but there is not the slightest evidence for this supposition. The testimony of the Muratorian canon is purely negative.

The testimony of Irenæus (A.D. 178) is, to say the least, doubtful. We have the statement of Stephen Gobar, a tritheistic writer of the sixth century, in a passage preserved by Photius, that neither Irenæus nor Hippolytus recognised the Epistle to the Hebrews as Paul's. This statement is certainly a late testimony, and on that account not to be much depended on; but it is some corroboration of its truth, that in the extant works of Irenæus there is no allusion to the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> All the epistles of Paul are mentioned by name except the Epistle to Philemon, for the omission of which its brevity and character may well account. We, however, learn from Eusebius that Irenæus was not ignorant of it, but frequently quoted from it in a work now lost: "There is also a work of Irenæus on various disputes (*βιβλίον διαλέξεων διαφόρων*), in which he mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the book called the Wisdom of Solomon, quoting certain pas-

<sup>1</sup> Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> The references to the Hebrews by Irenæus, given by Kirchhofer, are indefinite and obscure—*Adv. Hæres.* ii. 30. 9, iv. 11. 4, v. 5. 1.

sages from them.”<sup>1</sup> He may not, however, have quoted it as a work of Paul. A fragment also has recently been ascribed to Irenæus, in which there is a distinct quotation from the Hebrews; but it is now universally acknowledged to be spurious.<sup>2</sup>

The testimony of Tertullian (A.D. 200) is very remarkable and important. Arguing in favour of Montanism, he observes: “Nevertheless I am willing, over and above, to allege the testimony of a companion of the apostle. For there is an epistle of Barnabas, inscribed to the Hebrews, a man of such authority that Paul places him with himself in the same course of abstinence: ‘Or I only, and Barnabas, have we not power of doing this?’ And certainly the epistle of Barnabas is more generally received by the churches than the apocryphal pastor of adulterers (*i.e.* the Pastor of Hermas). Admonishing his disciples, he says: ‘Leaving all first principles, rather go on to perfection, and not lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works; for it is impossible, says he, for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, if they fall away now at the end of the world, to renew them again to repentance’” (Heb. vi. 1–8).<sup>3</sup> Here Tertullian expressly ascribes the Epistle, not to Paul, but to Barnabas. Besides this passage, there are in the writings of Tertullian several allusions to the Hebrews, but he nowhere else mentions the name of the author. This opinion is singular; Jerome mentions it, but gives Tertullian as his only authority:<sup>4</sup> it is improbable that it was the view of the African church. It is difficult to assign a reason for this singular opinion. In all probability, Tertullian confounded the Epistle to the Hebrews with the epistle of Barnabas. Bishop Words-

<sup>1</sup> *Ens. Hist. Eccl.* v. 26.      <sup>2</sup> See Bleek's *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> *De pudicit.* c. 20: Exstat enim et Barnabæ titulus ad Hebræos, adeo satis auctoritatis viro, ut quem Paulus juxta se constituerit in abstinentiæ tenore: “Aut ego solus et Barnabas non habemus hoc operandi potestatem?” Et utique receptor apud ecclesias epistola Barnabæ illo apocrypho pastore mœchorum. Monens itaque discipulos, omissis omnibus initiis, ad perfectionem magis tendere, nec rursum fundamenta pœnitentiæ jacere ab operibus mortuorum: “Impossibile est enim, inquit, eos qui semel illuminati sunt, et donum cœleste gustaverunt, et participaverunt Spiritum sanctum, et verbum Dei dulce gustaverunt, occidente jam ævo quum exciderint rursus revocari in pœnitentiam.”

<sup>4</sup> *Catal. Script. Eccles.* c. 5.

worth supposes that the Epistle to the Hebrews may have been read by Tertullian in a manuscript commencing with the epistle of Barnabas; and the Epistle to the Hebrews not having any name prefixed to it, may therefore have been supposed by Tertullian to have been written by that apostolic Father.<sup>1</sup>

Caius of Rome (A.D. 210) also denies the authorship of Paul. "There is," observes Eusebius, "a discussion that has come down to us of Caius, a most learned man, held at Rome in the time of Zephyrinus, against Proclus, who contended for the Phrygian (Montanist) heresy, in which, whilst he silences the rashness and daring of his opponents in composing new books, he mentions only thirteen epistles of the holy apostle, not reckoning that to the Hebrews with the rest; as there are, even to this day, some of the Romans who do not consider it to be the work of the apostle."<sup>2</sup>

Hippolytus (A.D. 220), according to Stephen Gobar, denied the Epistle to the Hebrews to be the work of Paul; and Photius tells us that he read in the *Church History* of that Father the statement that "the Epistle to the Hebrews is not the Apostle Paul's." Certainly, in the extant works of Hippolytus, there is no direct allusion to the Hebrews.

Cyprian (A.D. 248), in all his works, never mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews, and there are no certain allusions to it. Indeed, he appears expressly to exclude it; for he says that Paul wrote only to seven churches, which leaves no place for the Hebrews. "Paul, who was mindful of this legitimate and definite number, writes to seven churches. And in the Apocalypse the Lord writes His divine commands and heavenly precepts to seven churches."<sup>3</sup> These seven churches are Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica. It may be answered that the Hebrews were not a local church; but to this the reply is obvious: neither was Galatia an individual church, but comprised a multitude of churches.

Novatian (A.D. 251), in his contests with the orthodox

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 363, note.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 20: Τῶν τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀποστόλου διακτριῶν μόνων ἐπιστολῶν μνημονεύει, τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους μὴ συναριθμήσας ταῖς λοιπαῖς.

<sup>3</sup> *De exhort. mart.* c. 11: Et apostolus qui hujus legitimi numeri et certi meminit ad septem ecclesias scribit. Et in apocalypsi Dominus mandata sua divina et præcepta celestia ad septem ecclesias scribit.

party, does not appeal in any of his extant works to the Epistle to the Hebrews, although the passage, quoted by Tertullian (Heb. vi. 1-8), which seemed to teach the impossibility of repentance to the lapsed, was favourable to his views.

It was not until the middle of the fourth century that the Epistle to the Hebrews was acknowledged to be Paul's by the Latin Church.<sup>1</sup> The first direct testimony which we have from that Church in favour of Paul, is in the writings of Hilary of Poitiers (A.D. 354).<sup>2</sup> Afterwards this appears to have been the usual opinion of the Roman church.

This change of opinion in the Latin Church was chiefly brought about by the decisions of the general councils and by the authority of the two distinguished Latin Fathers—Jerome and Augustine. Jerome (A.D. 392), in two remarkable passages, gives us the state of opinion on the question in his days. "The Epistle entitled 'to the Hebrews' is not thought to be Paul's, because of the difference of argument and style; but to be either Barnabas', as Tertullian thought; or Luke's, the evangelist, according to some others; or Clement's, afterwards bishop of Rome, who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned Paul's sense in his own language; or if it be Paul's, he might decline putting his name in the inscription, on account of the Hebrews being offended with him. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being translated, it has more eloquence in the Greek than his other epistles. This, they say, is the reason of its differing from the rest of Paul's writings."<sup>3</sup> And in his epistle to Dardanus, Jerome observes: "This is said by ours, that this Epistle which is inscribed 'to the Hebrews,' is received as Paul's not only by the oriental churches, but all the ecclesiastical Greek writers of former ages; though most ascribe it either to Barnabas or Clement. But it matters

<sup>1</sup> The testimony of Lactantius (A.D. 300) is doubtful. He appears, from various references in his works, to have made use of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but without any mention of its author.

<sup>2</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 413.

<sup>3</sup> *Catal. Script. Eccles.* c. 5; Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 556.

not whose it is, since it belongs to an ecclesiastical man, and is daily read in the churches. But if the Latins do not commonly receive it among the canonical Scriptures, the Greeks likewise reject the Apocalypse of John. We, however, receive both, being influenced not by the custom of the present time, but by the authority of ancient writers.”<sup>1</sup>

The words of Jerome are somewhat ambiguous, and perhaps exaggerated. The statement that the Epistle to the Hebrews was received as a work of Paul, *ab omnibus retro ecclesiasticis Græci sermonis scriptoribus*, is incorrect; for at least Irenæus and Hippolytus are exceptions. Further, there is an apparent contradiction in the statement: Jerome first asserts that the Epistle was received as Paul's by all ecclesiastical Greek writers of former ages, and then affirms that most (*plerique*) ascribe it either to Barnabas or Clement. In order to preserve the consistency of his statement, some (Tholuck, Delitzsch, Stuart) suppose that *plerique* refers to the Latin authors, *nostrorum* being understood; and that they are here contrasted with the Greek writers who admitted the authorship of Paul.<sup>2</sup> Others think that Jerome reverts to the opinion of Origen—that the thoughts are Paul's, but the language that of Barnabas or Clement; this hypothesis being adopted by him to remove the objection arising from the difference of style between this Epistle and Paul's writings.<sup>3</sup>

The position which the Epistle to the Hebrews occupies in

<sup>1</sup> *Epist. ad Dardanum*: Illud nostris dicendum est, hanc epistolam quæ inscribitur ad Hebræos, non solum ab ecclesiis orientis, sed ab omnibus retro ecclesiasticis Græci sermonis scriptoribus quasi Pauli apostoli suscipi, licet plerique eam vel Barnabæ, vel Clementis arbitrentur: et nihil interesse ejus sit, quum ecclesiastici viri sit, et quotidie ecclesiarum lectione celebretur. Quod si eam Latinorum consuetudo non recepit inter scripturas canonicas, nec Græcorum quidem ecclesiæ apocalypsin Joannis eadem libertate suscipiunt; et tamen nos utraque suscipimus; nequaquam hujus temporis consuetudinem, sed veterum scriptorum auctoritatem sequentes.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart, without any note, translates the passage, “although most [Latins] think that Barnabas or Clement is the author.”—*Commentary on the Hebrews*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> The opinion of Augustine is in favour of the Pauline authorship, but he does not appear to have been altogether sure about the question. He admits that there are doubts on the subject, and often appears not to consider the Epistle as of equal authority with the other epistles of Paul. See Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 585-587.

the most ancient manuscripts favours its Pauline origin. It is not found, as in our authorized version, after Paul's epistles, as if it were doubtful whether it belonged to them; but after the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and before the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle to Philemon. Such is its position in the Sinaitic MS. (Σ), the Alexandrian MS. (A), the Vatican MS. (B), the Codex Ephrem (C), and the Codex Cosilianus (H). In the Codex Claromontanus (D) it occupies the fourteenth place; in the Codex Augiensis (F) it is found in Latin, but not in Greek; and in the Codex Boernerianus (G) it is wanting.

It would appear from this examination of the external evidence, that there is a great diversity of testimony on the point in question; but what is most remarkable is, that there are two streams of tradition. The Oriental, especially the Alexandrian Church, appears, from the testimony of Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and Dionysius, to have recognised the Epistle as Paul's; whereas the Western Church, Irenæus, Tertullian, Caius, Hippolytus, and Cyprian, either denied or ignored its Pauline origin. Some (Hug, Wetstein, Wordsworth) have attempted to assign a reason for this rejection of the Epistle as Paul's by the Western Church. They have affirmed that the Latin Church was then harassed, first by the Montanists, and then by the Novatians. Both of these sects held severe views concerning the reception of the lapsed, and appealed to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. vi. 1-8), which seemed to assert the impossibility of recovery to those who had fallen away. The Roman Church, unable to answer this argument, was induced to regard the authorship of the Epistle as doubtful, and some of their controversialists were led to affirm that it was written by some other than Paul.<sup>1</sup> But not to dwell on the discredit which such a supposition throws on the candour and honesty of the Latin Fathers, such an opinion is incorrect, because Tertullian himself, a Montanist, did not recognise the Pauline origin of the Hebrews, though he had every inducement to do so; nor did Novatian ever appeal to it in his controversy with the Catholic Fathers of the Western Church.

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 367.

Whilst the Orientals, especially the Alexandrians, recognised Paul as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, yet many of them adopted an intermediate opinion, regarding the thoughts as Pauline, but the diction either as a translation from the Hebrew (Clemens Alexandrinus), or as the composition of another (Origen). The Syrian Church was, in the fourth century, unanimous in favour of a Pauline authorship.

In attempting to balance these opposing testimonies, a preference must be given to the Alexandrian theologians, as more learned and critical than those of the Western Church, so that the external evidence is in favour of at least a modified view of the Pauline authorship.<sup>1</sup> And this opinion is strengthened by taking into account the numerous allusions made to the Epistle by Clemens Romanus, which, as already remarked, afford a presumption in favour of the authorship of Paul. At the same time, the opposite view of the Western Church is, on the supposition of a Pauline authorship, difficult to be explained, and is certainly a ground for considerable doubt. We must then inquire whether this presumption in favour of a Pauline origin is confirmed or weakened by the internal evidence.

## II. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

The particular intimations given in the Epistle, though by no means conclusive, are rather in favour of the authorship of Paul. They are few in number, as the Epistle is almost destitute of personal reference. 1. The writer beseeches the Hebrews to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner (Heb. xiii. 19); and he mentions his intention of coming shortly to them (Heb. xiii. 23). If the Epistle was written by Paul, it may have been written either during his Roman imprisonment, and then the mention of his intention of coming is similar to like intimations in the Epistles to the Philippians (Phil. ii. 24) and Philemon (Philem. 22); or it may have been written after his release, when he was master of his own movements. The intention of visiting Judea—understanding that the Epistle is addressed to the Palestinian Jews—cannot be asserted to be opposed to the hypothesis

<sup>1</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction to N. T.* (old edition), vol. iii. p. 196.

that Paul is the author, because we have no record of his journeys during the interval between his first and second Roman imprisonments. 2. Another intimation is contained in the words: "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you" (Heb. xiii. 23). The appellation "brother Timothy" is in accordance with Paul's manner when writing of Timothy to others (2 Cor. i. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 2), though it might also be employed by other friends of Timothy. Some (Chrysostom, Stuart) translate the word ἀπολελυμένον "sent away," and refer the words to the mission of Timothy to Philippi (Phil. ii. 19).<sup>1</sup> Such a meaning is not inadmissible (Acts xiii. 13, xv. 30), but is not so natural as that in our version, "set at liberty."<sup>2</sup> We have no account of any imprisonment of Timothy, but we cannot assert that it could not have occurred during Paul's lifetime. 3. The statement, "They of Italy salute you" (Heb. xiii. 24), has been variously interpreted. Some (Eichhorn, Bleek, Credner, De Wette, Wordsworth) suppose that the words οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας refer not to the locality where the author was living, but to the locality of those from whom he sends the salutations—"they from Italy;" and that therefore they are a proof that the author, when he wrote the Epistle, was absent from Italy.<sup>3</sup> But the words simply denote the Italians<sup>4</sup> (comp. οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης Ἰουδαῖοι, Acts xvii. 13), and are consequently not inconsistent with the idea of the author being in Italy. It is also asserted that the words are a proof that the author was not in Rome, otherwise the expression would have been "they of Rome;" but this is a far-fetched assumption. The apostle, writing from Ephesus to the church of Corinth, says, "The churches of Asia salute you" (1 Cor. xvi. 19); and so, in writing from Rome, he might well say, "They of Italy salute you." There does not, then, appear to be anything in these intimations opposed to the opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul from Rome at the close

<sup>1</sup> Stuart's *Commentary on the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 160-164.

<sup>2</sup> Bleek's *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 276, 277.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek's *Introduction to N. T.* vol. ii. p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the N. T.* p. 651; Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 515; Stuart *On the Hebrews*, p. 170.



of his first imprisonment; though, at the same time, they cannot be employed as an argument in favour of a Pauline origin: they lead to no solution of the question.

The *doctrines* of the Epistle are Pauline. This is admitted even by those who are the most decided opponents of its Pauline origin. "In respect of the ideas and whole circle of thought," observes Bleek, "our Epistle has an affinity with no other writings of the New Testament so great as with those of Paul."<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case with the Christology of the Epistle—the view which it gives of the person and work of Christ. Christ is there represented as the Creator and Preserver of all things—"by whom God made the worlds" (Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17). He is the visible image of the invisible God—"the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15). His death is a propitiation for sin: "He tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9; Eph. i. 10; Rom. viii. 32). His exaltation followed in consequence of His humiliation: "Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He is crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 8, 9). He is "the Mediator of the new covenant," standing in a peculiar relation between God and man (Heb. viii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5). He makes intercession for His people (Heb. vii. 25; Rom. viii. 34). He is set down at the right hand of God, until His enemies be made His footstool (Heb. x. 12, 13; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Col. iii. 1). And He shall come again, not as a Saviour, but as the Judge of the world: "He shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 27; Rom. viii. 24; Tit. ii. 13). These and numerous other instances prove that the doctrine of the Hebrews is Pauline.<sup>2</sup> Still it must be confessed that the argument is not so entirely convincing as to enable us to infer that Paul was the author. There are also evident variations from the Pauline doctrine; for example, the priestly

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. p. 303. See also Lünemann's *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, p. 14. On the other hand, Köstlin, Ritschl, Weiss, and Riehm suppose that the Epistle is un-Pauline in its sentiments.

<sup>2</sup> See, on this subject, Tholuck *On the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 27, 28; Ebrard *On the Hebrews*, p. 414; and Davidson's *Introduction* (old edition), vol. iii. p. 211 ff.

nature of Christ, which forms such a prominent doctrine in this Epistle, is not much dwelt upon in Paul's writings. The utmost that the argument drawn from the doctrines of the Epistle proves, is that the author held the Pauline type of doctrine. But he might have been a disciple or follower of Paul, deeply imbued with his doctrines, and not necessarily Paul himself.<sup>1</sup>

The *phraseology* of the Epistle is Pauline. This is an argument much more to be depended on. Long lists of Pauline words and phrases are given by Lardner, Macknight, Davidson (first edition), Foster, Stuart, and Bishop Wordsworth.<sup>2</sup> Certainly there is a remarkable resemblance between the words and phrases of this Epistle and those employed by Paul,—a resemblance so striking that it affords a presumption that he was the author. The most obvious of these examples are here given. "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast" (Heb. ii. 2) corresponds with the declaration that "the law was ordained by angels" (Gal. iii. 19). That Christ, "though a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8), is equivalent to what the apostle says of His "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). The expression regarding milk as food for babes, and strong meat for full-grown men (Heb. v. 12), is parallel to what the apostle says: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were unable to bear it" (1 Cor. iii. 2). The term Mediator (*μεσίτης*), as applied to Christ (Heb. viii. 6), is employed by Paul only (1 Tim. ii. 6). The law considered as "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1), is the same with the declaration that the legal ceremonies are "a shadow of things to come" (Col. ii. 17). The quotation, "Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Heb. x. 30), is also made by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xii. 19). The statement that be-

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been differently regarded: by some as an argument in favour of its Pauline origin, and by others as an objection against it. This will be again adverted to.

<sup>2</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 333; Macknight *On the Epistles*, Introduction to the Hebrews; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. iii. pp. 235-239; Foster's *Apostolical Authority of the Hebrews*, pp. 69-344; Stuart *On the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 196-204; Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, pp. 372, 373.

lievers were "made a gazing-stock (or spectacle—*θεατριζόμενοι*) both by reproaches and afflictions" (Heb. x. 33), is parallel to the declaration, "We are made a spectacle (*θέατρον*) to the world" (1 Cor. iv. 9). The metaphor drawn from the Grecian games, by which the Christian life is compared to a race (Heb. xii. 1), is a favourite image with Paul, and almost peculiar to him. The exhortation to "follow peace with all men" (Heb. xii. 14) is but a repetition of the command to "live peaceably with all men" (Rom. xii. 18). The request, "Pray for us" (Heb. xiii. 18), occurs in almost all Paul's epistles. The title given to God as the "God of peace" (Heb. xiii. 20) is found nowhere else than in Paul's writings, where it is frequent. And the concluding salutation, "Grace be with you all" (Heb. xiii. 25), is the token of every one of his epistles. Paul's  
style

The *digressions* in the Epistle are Pauline. Here we have several examples of that remarkable species of digression which Paley calls "going off at a word," and which he considers as a characteristic mark of the style of the Apostle Paul.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in no epistle is this peculiarity so strikingly exemplified. Instances of it are found in Heb. iii. 2-6, at the word *house*; in Heb. iii. 7-15, at the word *to-day*; in Heb. iv. 2-10, at the words *rest* and *to-day*; and in Heb. xii. 18, 19, at the word *shook*;—all of these strongly remind us of the style of Paul.<sup>2</sup>

Several objections of an internal character are brought forward, with a design to prove that the Epistle cannot be ascribed to Paul.

Of these objections, the most apparent is the *want of inscription*. In all Paul's admitted epistles his name is prefixed, but here it is omitted; and it is urged that if he were the author, this would not have been the case. Different solutions of this difficulty have been proposed. Pantenus considered that Paul, by reason of his inferiority to Christ, the true Apostle of the Hebrews, abstained, from a feeling of humility, from calling himself an apostle. Jerome and Augustine think that

<sup>1</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*: the Ephesians, No. II.

<sup>2</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 241 (old edition); Foster's *Apostolical Authority*, pp. 379-389.

Paul declined to put his name in the inscription, lest it should give offence on account of the prejudice which the Jewish Christians entertained against him. Theodoret assigns the reason, that Paul was the apostle, not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles. Steudel supposes that the omission arose from the work being more of the form of a treatise on the relation of Judaism to Christianity than an epistle. And Hug thinks that the rhetorical style with which the Epistle commences rendered a formal declaration of the author's name inappropriate. The omission of the name was evidently not for the sake of concealment; for, from the special references at the close, the Hebrews must have known who wrote the Epistle: salutations are sent to them from the Italians, and the author proposes to visit them in company with Timothy. Nor is it a sufficient answer to say, with Stuart, that other books of the New Testament are also without the names of their authors: the First Epistle of John, for example, is altogether destitute of the author's name;<sup>1</sup> for such an omission was certainly not Paul's custom. Indeed, no satisfactory reason for this departure from his usual custom has as yet been stated;<sup>2</sup> and the want of inscription must be admitted to be un-Pauline. But still the objection does not prove much. There may have been reasons for Paul deviating from his custom in this particular instance which cannot now be ascertained: such as the unsettled state of Judea on the threshold of the Roman war, which may have rendered it a point of prudence to withhold his name; since the connection of the Jewish Christians with one who was regarded by the unbelieving Jews as the great apostate and enemy of their religion, might expose them to persecution from their fanatical countrymen.

It has been objected that in the Epistle the author declares that *he owed his knowledge of Christianity to former teachers*, and consequently that he was not an apostle, but a disciple. This declaration is supposed to be contained in these words: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto

<sup>1</sup> Stuart *On the Hebrews*, vol. i. p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> That of Steudel is the most plausible, that the work is not an epistle, but a treatise. If this be admitted, the want of inscription is accounted for.

us by them that heard Him?" (Heb. ii. 3). Here it is affirmed that the author admits that he received the gospel at second-hand; contrary to the manner of Paul, who asserts the independence and originality of his revelation in the strongest terms. This objection was noticed and urged by the great reformers Luther and Calvin, and has been pressed in recent times by Bleek, Lünemann, Alford, and most of those critics who deny the Pauline origin of the Epistle.<sup>1</sup> But too much stress has been laid upon it; an incidental statement has been converted into an authoritative declaration. Two answers have been given, either of which is perfectly sufficient to remove the supposed difficulty. The author here, by a common rhetorical figure, includes himself with those to whom he writes, without however intending that the words are to be too strictly pressed. Such a mode of address is natural, and is frequent among all writers. Or it may be affirmed that such words may well be employed by Paul himself, even so as, not merely nominally, but really, to include himself. Although he lays claim to an independent reception of the gospel, and asserts that he received it neither from man nor by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, yet he was not an eye and ear witness; he did not hear the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when on earth; he must have been indebted to others for his knowledge of many of the facts in the life of Christ, and probably of many of the sayings of Christ. These facts and sayings "were confirmed unto him by them who heard Him." "Paul himself," observes Ebrard, "could not have written otherwise here; he, too, could and must include himself, along with his readers, among those who had not themselves been witnesses of the life of Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

It has been further objected, that the *doctrinal contents* of the Epistle are un-Pauline. There is an omission of many of the peculiar doctrines of Paul, as well as a statement of peculiar views of divine truth, which, though not contradictions of Pauline theology, yet are deviations sufficient to distinguish this letter from Paul's acknowledged epistles. These supposed un-Pauline views are fairly stated by Bleek,

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 285-295; Lünemann's *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, p. 10; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ebrard *On the Hebrews*, p. 403.

in his excellent commentary on the Hebrews.<sup>1</sup> He dwells especially upon four points of difference:—1. The author of the Epistle goes further than Paul, and asserts the abolition of the old covenant, with all its laws and ordinances, not only for the Gentiles, but even for the Jews. 2. He omits all reference to the Gentiles, and their share in the kingdom of God; in short, all allusion to the Pauline doctrine of the universality of redemption. 3. Whilst Paul places the greatest stress on the resurrection of Christ, and speaks of His death almost always in connection with that event, the author of the Hebrews only alludes to it once, and that incidentally (Heb. xiii. 20), and gives special prominence to the death of Christ, as that of a High Priest offering up a sacrifice for sin. 4. But especially the idea involved in the term *πίστις* is different from that of Paul; its opposition to *ἔργα* is entirely overlooked, and there is no reference to the great Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Similar objections are made and drawn out at considerable length by Baur, Lünemann, and Davidson.<sup>2</sup>

Now, it must be admitted that these remarks are not without foundation, and that there is a certain difference in point of doctrinal statement between this Epistle and Paul's undoubted writings; but yet this difference is not so great as appears at first sight. We do not consider the abolition of the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, as well for the Jewish as for the Gentile Christians, a stage beyond the views of Paul, but as directly following from his principles (Gal. iii. 24; Col. ii. 17).<sup>3</sup> The omission of all mention of the Gentiles arises from the nature and design of the Epistle as addressed peculiarly to the Jews. The resurrection of Christ, so much insisted on by Paul, though seldom alluded to, is yet presupposed in the frequent reference to Christ's session at the right hand of God; and the priestly office of Christ, and the relation of the sacrifices of the law to the sacrifice of Christ, though more fully developed, are not wholly omitted in Paul's

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 303-313.

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i. p. 112 ff.; Lünemann's *Hebräer*, pp. 14, 15; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. i. pp. 241-246 (new edition).

<sup>3</sup> Even Bleek seems inclined to grant this.

epistles (Eph. v. 2 ; Rom. viii. 34). *Πίστις*, it is admitted, appears rather to express confidence in God than faith in Christ (Heb. xi.), and there is no contrast drawn between faith and works: the Pauline doctrine of justification (*δικαιοσύνη πίστεως*) can hardly be traced. But along with these admissions, it is to be observed that this objection is mostly of a negative kind, founded chiefly on the omission of Pauline doctrines, and no great stress can be laid on such an argument: a like omission occurs in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The design of the Epistle, and the character of those to whom it was written, fully account for its peculiarities. Its object is to show the relation of Judaism to Christianity,—namely, that Christianity was the spiritual realization of Judaism; and hence the necessity of dwelling on the rites and ceremonies of the law, and of giving prominence to the priestly character of Christ. And in general, we think that undue weight is given to such subjective considerations as those under discussion; as if the introduction of new views of divine truth, or the omission of certain doctrines, were an objection to the Pauline origin of an epistle.<sup>1</sup>

Another objection to the Pauline origin of the Hebrews is drawn from the *difference in the nature and mode of the quotations* from the Old Testament. Paul quotes generally from the Septuagint, but often freely, as if from memory; and where the Septuagint differs materially from the Hebrew, he often translates from the Hebrew,—thus showing that he was conversant both with the Hebrew original and with the Greek translation. The author of the Hebrews, on the other hand, follows with one exception (Heb. x. 30) the Septuagint, and quotes verbatim; and even when the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew (*e.g.* Heb. x. 5–7) he follows it, and reasons upon it. He seems never to have consulted the Hebrew. The mode of citation is also different. Paul uses various formulæ: as, “it is written,” “the Scripture saith,” “David says,” “Moses says,” “Isaiah says;” the author of the Hebrews, on the contrary, with one exception (Heb. ii. 6), refers his citations to God, or to the Spirit of God, even in those passages where

<sup>1</sup> These objections of Bleek are refuted at length by Ebrard: *Commentary on the Hebrews*, pp. 409–413.

God is not the immediate speaker.<sup>1</sup> Now, such a difference in the nature and mode of citation from the Old Testament must be admitted; but different opinions may be formed as to the force of the objection arising from it. It may be questioned whether it is adverse to the Pauline origin of the Hebrews, as the apostle may have been led from the nature of his work to be very exact in his references. And as to his reasoning from those quotations, where the Greek varies from or even misinterprets the Hebrew, we cannot affirm that this is opposed to the method of Paul (comp. Rom. xv. 12).

It is also asserted that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was *ignorant of the arrangements of the temple*. He mentions, as contained in the holy of holies, the golden censer, or, as others render it, the golden altar of incense (*θυμιατήριον*), the ark of the covenant containing the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (Heb. ix. 3, 4); whereas, in reality, the holy of holies at that time was empty, and even in Solomon's temple contained only the ark and the two tables of stone (1 Kings viii. 9). The altar of incense stood outside, directly before the veil that separated between the holy place and the holy of holies. Hence it is argued that the author of this Epistle could not be Paul, as he lived for a long time in Jerusalem, and could not have been ignorant of the arrangements in the temple.<sup>2</sup> But it is a mere assumption that the writer here speaks either of the temple of Solomon or of that of Herod. It is more natural to suppose that he speaks of the tabernacle as constructed by Moses. Now, we know that Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were laid up before the ark in the holy of holies (Num. xvii. 10; Ex. xvi. 33). The meaning of *θυμιατήριον*, rendered in our version *censer*, is doubtful. Some (Calvin, Bleek, De Wette, Wieseler, Lünemann, Delitzsch, Ebrard) understand by it the altar of incense, which was not in

<sup>1</sup> This objection is very forcibly stated by Bleek in his *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 338-381; and in Lünemann's *Hebräerbrief*, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> This objection has been urged by Bleek, *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 381-387. He argues from this that the writer of the Hebrews was a native of Alexandria, and not of Judea.



the holy of holies, but outside the veil. Others (Luther, Michaelis, Kuinoel, Stier, Stuart, Davidson (first edition), Alford, Wordsworth) suppose it to be the censer which was brought into the holy of holies by the high priest once a year. To remove the difficulty, some propose to understand the participle ἔχουσα in the text in a modified sense, as meaning belonging to the holy of holies.<sup>1</sup> Others think that there was a golden censer, not elsewhere mentioned, kept within the holy of holies, in which the incense was kindled within the veil (Lev. xvi. 12, 13).<sup>2</sup>

The great objection, however, to the Pauline origin of the Hebrews is derived from the *difference in style* between it and the other Pauline Epistles. This difference was alluded to by the Fathers of the Alexandrian school, and various solutions were proposed. Thus we have seen that Clement of Alexandria supposes that the Epistle was translated from the Hebrew by Luke, and that this is the reason why one finds the same character of style and phraseology in it as in the Acts. For the same reason, Origen considered that the thoughts were the apostle's, but that the language belonged to some one who recorded the sentiments of the apostle. Eusebius conceived that the Epistle was a translation. "As," he observes, "Paul addressed the Hebrews in the language of his country, some say that the evangelist Luke, others that Clement, translated the Epistle; which also appears more like the truth, as the Epistle of Clement and that to the Hebrews preserve the same features of style and phraseology, and because the sentiments in both these works are not very different."<sup>3</sup> Philaster, bishop of Brescia, mentions this difference of style as the reason why some denied it to be Paul's. "Some," he observes, "rejected it, as being more eloquent than the apostle's other writings."<sup>4</sup> This critical judgment on the difference of style has been acquiesced in by the most celebrated critics of recent times, although they held different

<sup>1</sup> Ebrard *On the Hebrews*, in loc. But if ἔχουσα is so read, that modification of meaning must extend to all the other particulars.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, in loc.

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 338.

opinions as to the authorship of the Epistle, and cannot now with any degree of success be questioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek of the Hebrews is much purer than that of Paul's epistles. The Hebraisms found in it are mostly those which are derived from the Septuagint. There are no anacolutha such as occur so frequently in Paul's writings. Even in the longest parentheses and digressions the construction is regular.<sup>2</sup> Calmness is maintained throughout; there is wanting that fervour of the apostle which carried him along, regardless of grammatical accuracy.<sup>3</sup> The style is laboured, rounded, and rhetorical. For example, whilst the session of Christ at the right hand of God is expressed by Paul simply by the words, "He sitteth at the right hand of God" (*ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ καθήμενος*, Col. iii. 1), the author of the Hebrews uses for the statement of the same thought various rhetorical expressions, as, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3); "He is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. viii. 1); "He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 2).<sup>4</sup> A similar difference is seen in the mode of the statement of other doctrines. "The main difference for us," observes Dean Alford, "which will also set forth the characteristic peculiarity of this Epistle, is, that whereas Paul is ever, as it were, struggling with the scantiness of human speech to pour forth his crowding thoughts, thereby falling into rhetorical and grammatical irregularities, the style of our Epistle flows regularly on, with no such suspended constructions. Even where the subject induces long parentheses, the writer does not break the even flow and equilibrium of his style, but returns back to the point where he left it. Again, the greatest pains are bestowed on a matter which does not seem to have engaged the attention of the other sacred writers, even including Paul himself,—namely, rhetorical rhythm and equi-

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, by Bleek, De Wette, Tholuck, Ebrard, and Delitzsch. It has, however, been questioned by Foster and Stuart.

<sup>2</sup> See Bleek's *Brief an die Hebräer*, vol. i. p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Neander well observes: "The author of this Epistle seems to stand to the apostle in the same relation as Melancthon to Luther: the one quiet and gentle, the other ardent and energetic."

<sup>4</sup> See Lünemann's *Brief an die Hebräer*, p. 13.

librium of words and sentences. In Paul's most glorious outbursts of eloquence, he is not rhetorical. In those of the writer of this Epistle, he is elaborately and faultlessly rhetorical."<sup>1</sup>

Various answers have been given to this objection. It has been said that the Holy Spirit might have inspired the apostle to write in this particular style. But this is not an answer, but an evasion, and would render all discussions on this subject useless. The style of each sacred writer has been preserved; the writings of Paul are clearly distinguishable from those of John or James. The most common hypothesis is to suppose, with Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Jerome, that we have here a translation; and that the excellence of style is attributable to the translator. But this opinion has been discarded by most recent critics. Some of the reasons which they give are, however, not convincing; the numerous paronomasiæ of the Epistle might be found in a version, and the linguistic niceties might only prove the excellence of the translation. But the want of any traditionary notice of the existence of a Hebrew original, the reasoning from the words of the Septuagint when it differs from the Hebrew, the use of certain Greek terms for which there are no proper Hebrew equivalents, and the employment of *διαθήκη* in the sense of testimony (Heb. ix. 15–20), instead of covenant, which the Hebrew synonym only means, render the idea of a translation improbable.<sup>2</sup> Lardner supposes that the difference of style arose from the superior knowledge of Greek which the amanuensis, to whom Paul dictated the Epistle, possessed. "My conjecture," he observes, "is, that Paul dictated the Epistle in Hebrew; and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, wrote down the apostle's sentiments in his own elegant Greek."<sup>3</sup> Others refer the difference to Paul's versatility. They suppose that Paul was able to write in the rhetorical style of the Hebrews; indeed, that several of

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, p. 79. See also, on the style of Paul, Bleek's *Hebræer*, pp. 215–228.

<sup>2</sup> We do not here discuss the question as to whether the Epistle to the Hebrews is a translation, but merely note some of the reasons which render that opinion improbable.

<sup>3</sup> Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 329.

his speeches given in the Acts, as his oration to the Athenians and his apology before Agrippa, are equally rhetorical, and bear a close resemblance in style to the Hebrews.<sup>1</sup> "It can scarcely be supposed," observes Bishop Wordsworth, "that the divinely inspired Apostle St. Paul could not write in different styles on different occasions and to different persons. Even uninspired men can do this. Great masters can paint in different manners; and great authors can write in different styles."<sup>2</sup> Others resolve the difference into the greater literary care which the apostle took in the composition of this Epistle. The inaccuracy of Paul's Greek does not arise from defective knowledge of the language, but from a certain carelessness of style arising from the fervour of his spirit.<sup>3</sup> Now, it might happen that he took peculiar pains with this Epistle, perhaps because it partook more of the nature of a treatise than of a letter: the fervour of his spirit was kept under restraint, as would naturally be the case in writing on an abstract subject; and hence the remarkable difference in style might in some measure be accounted for. The argument arising from style ought not to be pushed too far, as many circumstances may occur, such as the difference of subject, the amount of labour bestowed, the peculiarities of situation, the difference of age, and even the state of bodily health, which materially affect and alter an author's style. It is to a large extent a matter of private judgment and taste, whether Paul could or could not have written in a style similar to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Eminent critics have formed opposite opinions.<sup>4</sup>

In summing up the internal evidence, it is difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion. The doctrines and phraseology of the Epistle point to a Pauline origin; whilst the want of inscription, and the mode of citation from the Old Testament, are un-Pauline. The great objection is the difference of style; but we must put against this difference the peculiar Pauline

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, however, the diction of these speeches was Luke's, not Paul's.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth's *St. Paul's Epistles*, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> See remarks formerly made on Paul's style, p. 43 of this work.

<sup>4</sup> Stuart and Bishop Wordsworth, both proficient in Greek, notwithstanding the difference in style, yet consider Paul as the author of the Hebrews. Bleek, Lünemann, and Alford, on the other hand, consider this difference an insuperable objection to the Pauline authorship.

digressions with which the Epistle abounds. If the external evidence in favour of Paul had been stronger, we might have disregarded the internal; but still we think, taking all things into consideration, that the preponderance of evidence is in favour of a Pauline authorship; at least no person has yet been suggested as better entitled to be considered the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

### III. HYPOTHESES CONCERNING THE AUTHOR OF THE HEBREWS.

Toward the close of the fourth century, the Epistle to the Hebrews was received both by the Western and Eastern Churches as a genuine work of Paul. This opinion was left almost entirely undisturbed until the time of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> It is a fact, not generally known, that almost all the great Reformers denied the Pauline origin of the Epistle. Such was the opinion both of Calvin and Luther. "As to the author of the Epistle," observes Calvin, "we need not be very solicitous. Some think the author to have been Paul, others Luke, others Barnabas, and others Clement, as Jerome relates; yet Eusebius, in the sixth book of his *Church History*, mentions only Luke and Clement. I well know that in the time of Chrysostom it was everywhere classed by the Greeks among the Pauline Epistles; but the Latins thought otherwise, even those who were nearest to the times of the apostles. I indeed cannot be persuaded to recognise Paul as the author;<sup>2</sup> for they that say that he designedly suppressed his name, because it was hateful to the Jews, deduce nothing to the purpose: for why did he mention the name of Timothy, as by this he betrayed himself? But the manner of teaching and the style sufficiently show that Paul was not the author; and the writer himself professes in the second chapter that he was one of the disciples of the apostles, which is wholly different from the way in which Paul spoke of himself."<sup>3</sup> And so also, commenting on Heb. ii. 3, Calvin observes: "This passage indicates that this

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Reformation, both Erasmus and Cardinal Cajetan, in the Romish Church, rejected the Pauline origin of the Hebrews.

<sup>2</sup> Ego ut Paulum agnoscam auctorem, adduci nequeo.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin *On the Hebrews*: Introduction.

Epistle was not written by Paul ; for he did not usually speak so humbly of himself, as to confess that he was a disciple of the apostles." The opinion of Luther is precisely similar: "That this Epistle to the Hebrews," he observes, "is not St. Paul's or any other apostle's, is evident from chap. ii. 3, where it is said, This doctrine has come to us, and been received by us from those who heard it from the Lord. From this it is evident that the author speaks of the apostles, as a disciple—that he has received his doctrine from the apostles. But St. Paul strongly testifies that his gospel is not of man, neither by man, but from God Himself."<sup>1</sup> So also Melancthon did not consider that the Epistle was Paul's. Beza wavered ; but he also is probably to be reckoned among those who rejected the Pauline origin.<sup>2</sup> In the Lutheran Bible the Epistle to the Hebrews is separated from Paul's Epistles, and placed among the catholic epistles, between the Epistles of John and the Epistle of James.

Modern critics are much divided in their opinions on this subject. They may be arranged into three classes : those who regard Paul as the author ; those who deny the Pauline authorship ; and those who adopt an intermediate opinion, and, like Origen, conceive that the thoughts are Paul's, but the language another's. Those who maintain the Pauline origin of the Epistle reckon among their numbers Doddridge, Whitby, Lardner (?), Macknight, Hallet, Paulus, Bengel, Storr, Hug (?), Stuart of America, Foster, Hofmann, Bloomfield, and Wordsworth.<sup>3</sup> Those who deny the Pauline origin of the Epistle number among their advocates such distinguished critics as Grotius, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Bertholdt, De Wette, Baur, Schwegler, Twisten, Bleek, Wieseler, Neander,<sup>4</sup> Credner, Riehm, Köstlin, Neudecker, Ewald, Tholuck, Ullmann, Reuss,

<sup>1</sup> Luther, *Preface to the Hebrews*.

<sup>2</sup> So also Osiander, Limborch, etc., rejected the Pauline authorship.

<sup>3</sup> Lardner considers that Paul's amanuensis used his own style, and Hug thinks that Luke improved Paul's diction. The Pauline authorship of the Hebrews is chiefly defended by Stuart of America in his commentary, and by the Rev. Charles Foster in his learned work entitled *The Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

<sup>4</sup> Neander's view is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by an apostolic man of the Pauline school ; but he does not suggest any name.—*Planting of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 347.

Lünemann, Ritschl, Alford, and Davidson (second edition). Those who hold that the Epistle was written under the special influence of Paul, but not by his own hand, comprehend Ebrard, Delitzsch, Döllinger, Stier, Guericke, Thiersch, and Davidson (first edition).

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been assigned to others besides Paul. One theory is, that Clemens Romanus was the author. This hypothesis was especially favoured by Erasmus, and adopted by Franciscus Junius, the first who edited the Epistle of Clement. It has not been maintained by any recent writer. Eusebius supposes that Clement might have been the translator of the Epistle;<sup>1</sup> and Origen suggests that he might have put Paul's thoughts into his own language. The main argument in favour of this opinion is drawn from the numerous allusions to the Hebrews which occur in the Epistle of Clement. These allusions are not regarded as quotations, but as Clement's own sentiments. There is a certain plausibility in this view; and it would account for the testimony of Clement being never appealed to by the Fathers in proof of the authorship of Paul. But the hypothesis is contradicted by the nature of Clement's epistle. There is no resemblance between it and the Epistle to the Hebrews, in point either of diction or profundity of thought: both writings could not have proceeded from the same individual. Clement also was, in all probability, a Gentile Christian, and therefore could not have written an epistle which implies in its author an intimate acquaintance with the ordinances of the Jewish religion.

Others refer the Epistle to the evangelist Luke. This opinion was adopted by Grotius. There are also several modifications of it. Clemens Alexandrinus thinks that Luke was the translator of the Epistle written in Hebrew by Paul. Origen mentions him, along with Clemens Romanus, as one of those who may have written the Epistle under Paul's direction. And in recent times, several eminent critics who have adopted the intermediate opinion (Ebrard, Guericke, Delitzsch, Döllinger, Hug), suppose that the style and diction of the Epistle belong to Luke. The great argument in support of this opinion is a supposed resemblance between the style of

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 38.

this Epistle and that of Luke, especially in the latter half of the Acts. Points of resemblance have been traced by various writers; terms and phrases, found nowhere else, are common to Luke's writings and the Hebrews. It has been objected that Luke could not have been the independent author of the Hebrews, because he was a Gentile Christian (Col. iv. 14), and consequently comparatively unacquainted with Jewish ordinances. But this does not affect the question whether he might not have been employed to write down Paul's views, and thus be, in a secondary sense, the author,—a point to which we shall again recur.

Others suppose that Silas is the author of the Hebrews. This opinion is adopted by Böhme and Mynster, and is regarded by Riehm as possible.<sup>1</sup> Silas was a Jewish Christian, and a fellow-worker with Paul. But there are here no grounds to go upon. We possess none of the writings of Silas, with which to compare the Epistle to the Hebrews; and we are ignorant of his character and mental qualities. The supposition is a mere groundless hypothesis.

Others refer the authorship to Barnabas. For this they can appeal to the testimony of Tertullian.<sup>2</sup> This opinion has been adopted by Schmidt, Ullmann,<sup>3</sup> and Twesten, and has been supported with his wonted acuteness and ingenuity by Wieseler.<sup>4</sup> A modification of this hypothesis has been advanced by Thiersch, who conceives that the Epistle to the Hebrews is the joint production of Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas, it is asserted, was eminently qualified to be the author of the Epistle. He was a man of apostolic dignity, the companion of Paul and friend of Timothy, and expressly called an apostle in the Acts (chap. xiv. 14). He was not only a Jew, but a Levite, and therefore must have been intimately acquainted with the Levitical service. He was a native of Cyprus, an island closely connected with Alexandria, and therefore was probably educated in the Alexandrian school of

<sup>1</sup> Riehm's *Lehrbegr. des Hebräerbr.* p. 893.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *de pudicit.* c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Stud. u. Krit.* 1828, ii. pp. 377-399.

<sup>4</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, pp. 504-513; *Untersuchung über der Hebräerbrief*, vol. i. pp. 60-67.



Jewish philosophy, represented by Philo, which would account for the Alexandrian method of viewing the Old Testament as typical, which characterizes this Epistle. And whereas it is asserted that Barnabas was inferior to Paul in oratory, this is not at variance with his being an eloquent and rhetorical writer. It is admitted that there is no resemblance or comparison, either in style or matter, between this Epistle and the extant Epistle of Barnabas; but it is affirmed, and not without reason, that the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, which has come down to us, is spurious. Such are the arguments on which Wieseler builds his hypothesis. But however ingenious, they are wholly insufficient to produce conviction. There is no writing of Barnabas with which to compare this Epistle; others as well as he possessed the necessary qualifications; and the statement of Tertullian is, so far as is known, completely unsupported by other testimony.

The hypothesis which has had most advocates in recent times is, that Apollos was the author of the Epistle. This opinion was first advanced by Luther. Commenting on Gen. xlviii. 20, he observes: "*Auctor epistolæ ad Hebræos, quisquis est, sive Paulus, sive ut ego arbitror Apollos, eruditissime allegat hunc locum.*"<sup>1</sup> It has since been adopted with some modifications by Semler, Osiander, Le Clerc, Credner, De Wette, Schott, Tholuck, Lutterbeck, Bleek, Bunsen, Reuss, Feilmoser, Lünemann, Alford, and Davidson (second edition). The description given of Apollos in the Acts, it is affirmed, eminently suits the author of the Hebrews: "A Jew born in Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts xviii. 24). The fact that he was a Jew accounts for his intimate acquaintance with the Jewish worship; that he was an Alexandrian Jew, affords a reason for the Alexandrian mode of interpretation which pervades the Epistle; his reputation as an eloquent man suits the eloquence, purity, and rhetorical nature of its diction; and his being mighty in the Scriptures corresponds with that intimate knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures which is displayed in this Epistle. Apollos was also a companion of Paul, and would consequently adopt

<sup>1</sup> So also, commenting on 1 Cor. iii. 4, Luther remarks, "This Apollos was a highly intelligent man: the Epistle to the Hebrews is perhaps his."

the Pauline phase of Christianity, and would be acquainted with Timothy.<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed that this hypothesis is totally unsupported by external evidence. Apollos is never mentioned by any of the Fathers in connection with this Epistle, either as its author or its translator: the origin of the hypothesis was a mere incidental remark of Luther. The internal evidences are mere assumptions, resting on a small foundation; for there is no writing of Apollos with which a comparison can be made. If Apollos, a native of Alexandria, had been the author, we would have expected some traces of this fact in the school of Alexandria; whereas the Alexandrian Fathers, with one voice, attribute the matter of the Epistle to Paul, whatever difference there may be in their views as to its form.

The opinion of the third class of critics yet remains to be considered: that of those who think that the thoughts are Paul's, but the language another's; in other words, that the *matter* is Pauline, but the *form* un-Pauline. This was the view of Origen, and has since been adopted by Stier, Guericke, Ebrard, Delitzsch, Hug, and Davidson (first edition).<sup>2</sup> Stier considers that the actual writer of the sentiments of Paul is unknown; but the other critics agree in fixing on Luke as the writer or editor of the Epistle, from a supposed resemblance of style. As, however, the personal notices are at variance with a twofold authorship, Guericke supposes that Paul added the concluding part with his own hand;<sup>3</sup> whilst Ebrard thinks that the personal allusions refer to the person who drew up the Epistle according to Paul's directions. Ebrard assigns to Luke a greater share in the composition of the Epistle than either Guericke or Delitzsch, and almost exalts him into an original author. He gives his opinion as follows: "Paul, we suppose, intended to have fully talked over the subject with Luke, perhaps to have given him a

<sup>1</sup> The ablest defence of the Apolline authorship of the Hebrews is by Bleek in his *Brief an die Hebräer*, pp. 423-430. See also Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, pp. 58-62.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Davidson, in the first edition of his *Introduction*, supported a modified view of the Pauline authorship; but in his second edition he leans to the opinion that Apollos was the author.

<sup>3</sup> Guericke's *Isagogik*, p. 405.

scheme or preparatory work in writing; he himself was deprived of the leisure necessary for the composition by the legal procedure against him, which precisely at that time (Phil. ii. 23) had passed into a new stage. Luke worked out the Epistle for Paul, and as in his name; not, however, in Rome, where perhaps he himself might have been involved in the procedure against Paul, but in another place in Italy, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Theophilus."<sup>1</sup> Hug, with whom Dr. Davidson<sup>2</sup> partially agrees, supposes that all the share which Luke had in the composition of the Epistle was merely to polish the diction of Paul. Similar instances of such co-operation are found in Scripture. Thus, for example, the speeches of Paul recorded in the Acts are in matter Paul's, but in diction Luke's: Luke used the materials freely, and impressed upon them his own style. The hypothesis is ingenious, and is not to be set aside without consideration. At the same time, it must be confessed that it bears the appearance of improbability, being avowedly formed to escape a difficulty. Besides, many critics affirm that the resemblance between Luke's style and that of the Epistle to the Hebrews is by no means so strong as to prove identity.

Of all the theories which suppose an independent authorship of the Epistle, that which ascribes it to Paul is the only one which is supported by external authority.<sup>3</sup> No other name can be substituted with any appearance of equal reason. Whether the difference of style is a sufficient reason for denying Paul's direct authorship, or whether this difference may be accounted for on the supposition of greater care in composition on the part of the apostle; whether the intermediate hypothesis of Origen, that the thoughts are Paul's and the diction another's, is admissible; whether the author of the Epistle is wholly unknown, as is the case with many of the inspired books of the Old Testament: these are points which cannot easily be determined. The question still re-

<sup>1</sup> Ebrard *On the Hebrews*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> In the first edition of his *Introduction*.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian's testimony in favour of Barnabas is the solitary exception to this remark. Luke and Clement have also been mentioned, but rather as editors or translators than as independent authors.

mains in a considerable state of dubiety, and after sixteen hundred years we have hardly advanced beyond the statement of Origen: "The thoughts are Paul's; but who wrote the Epistle, God only truly knows." As the result of the whole discussion, we appear constrained, though not without reluctance, to come to the same conclusion as Michaelis: "After all, then, we must confess that we do not know whether St. Paul wrote this Epistle or not. An absolute decision on this subject is indeed to be wished, but, in my opinion, not to be obtained."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. vi. p. 157. We do not, however, agree with Michaelis in supposing that the balance of evidence is against, but rather consider that it is in favour of, a Pauline authorship.

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