

ity."¹ Excellent as the author of this religion may be, mankind may, and must, always "*look for another.*" For the path of progress has no limit. The door is open to the first comer; and the prediction of Jesus has only to find another fulfilment: "*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive.*" (John v. 43.)

For the Church therefore this is a vital question. John, who lived in the midst of those first conflicts which were the prelude to the last, perfectly understood this. He had therefore his reasons for placing this Prologue in the fore-front of his Gospel. In order that faith may be faith, it must be absolute, without any after-thought, without admitting even the possibility of contradiction, and to be this, its object must be perfect; as an object of knowledge as well as of life, it must be what can never be surpassed. Such is the practical bearing of the Prologue of John, and such its intimate connection with the subsequent narrative. F. GODET.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER III. VERSES 1-7.

THE Apostle now diverges to another department of practical Christian ethics, and describes the moral and social characteristics of the officers of the Christian Church. He lays down no law of ecclesiastical organization. He does not review the

¹ Lerminier.

origin or significance of these offices. He does not even determine the mode of the appointment or consecration of church officers. All the information we can obtain on these subjects is purely incidental. The functions of the bishop and deacon are apparently well understood between Paul and his correspondent. I will not discuss from this passage the question of the identity of the office of elder and bishop. The most learned modern scholars, and the most accomplished advocates of the apostolic origin of the episcopal rank, concede the identity, while they suppose that the position of Timothy and Titus mediated between the supreme authority of the Apostles and the office of the pastor, elder, or bishop; that, as a matter of fact, the *episcopus* of the second century was the representative of the hyper-presbyterial dignity of Timothy and that the transference of the name bishop to such an officer was an accidental circumstance. Whether traces of such official hyper-presbyterial rank can be found at any time that can secure for it apostolic approval is a grave and difficult question, which I must not presume to discuss here. The *episcopus* of the Ignatian Epistles may indeed have easily arisen as a "development" from the presbyterial college of earlier days. The "bishop" may have merely confirmed the existence of certain tendencies in human society by which the stronger will and the broader experience of *one* triumphs over the smaller faculties of the *many*. A lamentable disposition in our nature to hand over to another solemn duties which are really laid by God on every one of us has led, under all dispensations, to priest-

craft, and the Christian Church may not have been exempt from the disposition. Granting this, it is easy to understand the growth of episcopal power; but such an explanation is quite insufficient to justify the pretensions of those who limit the Church of God to episcopally-officered communities. In the close of Paul's ministry it had already become *a faithful saying*, a well-known and trustworthy remark, one which covered much ecclesiastical history, and suggests many conjectures, that *if any one seeks* (stretches out the hand to secure) *the office of a bishop* (pastor, elder, or overseer), *he desires a good work*. The classical usage of the word ὀρέγεται implies the eagerness with which such a desire is manifested. The chief point to observe is, that Paul admits the office to be a beautiful, honourable, noble position, involving "*work*" for God and men.

Verse 2.—*It is then,—i.e.,* if the saying be a trustworthy one—*needful that a bishop (i.e., every bishop) should be irreproachable*, one who is not blamed and not blameable. The office should never be used as the means of purging away stains upon character.

The next clause has provoked much dispute, Paul says a bishop should be *the husband of one wife*. The δεῖ does not carry imperative force, so that an *un*-married man should not be allowed to occupy episcopal and pastoral functions. This would certainly be inconsistent with 1 Cor. vii. 7, 32, 33; ix. 5. Ambrose interpreted the passage to mean that a bishop should not be a pluralist, or be changing from one see to another. Many of the Fathers have seen in it a condemnation of second marriages.

The Greek Church has throughout permitted a single nuptial, but regarded a repetition of the marriage relation as a disqualification for the episcopate. Very early in Christian literature, as in "The Shepherd" of Hermas, ii. 4, Tertullian, "De Monogamia," second marriages are condemned as displeasing to the Lord, and supposed to be unsuited to the pastoral functions. This is held by Cornelius-a-Lapide, Heydenreich, Leo, Ellicott, and Alford, to be Paul's injunction. It seems, however, that there is no stigma whatever in the Roman, Greek, or Hebrew legislation on second nuptials, and in this very Epistle Paul advises the second marriage of the younger widows. The great Greek interpreters, Chrysostom and Theophylact, give a wider significance to the clause; and the false asceticism involved in the reproach thus passed on a second marriage is inconsistent with the whole spirit of Paul and of the New Testament. Surely the Apostle is here condemning all illicit relations of the sexes, and confining the bishop to one wife at a time. It is certain that the great moralists of Greece and Rome opposed polygamy, but the greatest looseness prevailed. Divorce and concubinage were too common to render such a stringent law as this unnecessary.¹ The significance of the advice to pastors is, that in all relations with woman they preserve the most painstaking and scrupulous purity, an inward and absolute modesty of thought and desire. More than this, the bishop is to be *sober*. The word implies more and other than "total absti-

¹ See a long and very careful Appendix on this subject in Fairbairn's "Commentary."

nence" from wine; it means self-restraint in all things, having, as Chrysostom puts it, ten thousand eyes, looking, watching everywhere. It urges temperance in pleasures of all kinds. This is sustained by two grand words, *σώφρονα, κόσμιον*. He must be, or should be, *sound-minded* and *discreet*. The latter word refers to all the outer seeming. "A man," says the Son of Sirach, "may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding by his countenance. A man's attire and excessive laughter and gait shew what he is." *A lover of strangers* was a characteristic of vast importance in the early Church, and it is not valueless now. A pastor is here taught to consider it his function to be kind and unsuspecting to strangers. It is better to be occasionally deceived by a rogue than to harden one's heart against suffering goodness.

The word *διδασκτικόν*—*apt to teach*—is peculiar to these Epistles; but is easy to translate. Not only should a bishop or pastor be able, but ready to teach. Some are *ready*, but are not *able*, to impart any knowledge. There are others who are able to teach, but are *not* ready, and who shirk their solemn responsibilities to God's Church. The word seems to urge the immense importance of "sanctified common sense" and of the power of instructing others by public speech.

It is important to remember that teaching power may be clearly discriminated from prophetic fire, from burning eloquence and from conspicuous originality. It is, moreover, *c^f* more important to a pastor than are these great gifts without it.

Verse 3. Πάποιος is violent manifestation at ban-

quets, the result rather than the fact of drunkenness. Against the riot of the feast the pastor is warned ; and, moreover, he is to be *no striker*. There are presbyters who seem on the look-out for tender consciences that they can shock, for little irritabilities that they can vex, for abuses that they can expose, for mistakes which they can hold up to reprobation, for peccadillos which they can harshly criticize. There are good men and true who are perhaps too ready to give an "honest word," "some candid advice," or a "little of their mind," to any casual friend. They can "strike" with fist and sledge-hammer, and "stone men with hard words till they die."

It is singular that some of the later MSS. and the Received Text should have here inserted, "not greedy of base gain;" but the clause disturbs the order of the thought, and the idea is involved in ἀφιλάργυρον, which is introduced later on.

Not only is the bishop to be *no striker*, but he is to be characterized with what has been felicitously translated by Mr. Matthew Arnold as "*sweet reasonableness*." Επεικῆς is a readiness to treat others, ὡς εἶκος, "as it is fitting." It is the moderation of justice, by tender sympathy with weakness. It is a justice which does not look merely at acts, but also at motives, temptations, and extenuating circumstances. This moderating sweetness of soul is the basis of the "*uncontentiousness*," which is here recommended.

Freedom from the *love of money* is then declared to be characteristic of the worthy pastor. The word used is discriminated from covetousness. It repre-

sents a love of that which a man has, as distinct from the strenuous and unscrupulous desire to possess more. Love of the means of securing temporal and secular advantage has wrought untold havoc in the Church.

In *Verse 4* Paul recognizes the family life of the bishop of the Church, and regards the wise management of his own household as a good test of his fitness to preside over larger and more sacred interests. He must *rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with decorum*. The word *σεμνότης* is applicable to the young as well as to the old; though it preserves fundamentally and frequently the meaning of "venerable," or "worthy of reverence." And, verily, dignity is an appanage of child-like innocence; reverence is due to chastity, and the sanctity of the kingdom of heaven waits around the little children, who are rightly spoken of as *σέμνα*. The child-life of the pastor's home should suggest the sacredness of a temple and the order of a palace.

Verse 5.—*For if he knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take the charge of the Church of God?* The kind of rule which a bishop is to exercise over the church does not resemble that of a king, but that of a father. A footing of perfect equality with the members of his household was not contemplated. Government of some kind by competent hands is indispensable; and hence the further advice, *Verse 6*, that the ruler should not be a *young convert*, a neophyte (*νεόφυτον*), a recently convinced or baptized person, newly planted in the vineyard of God. This suggestion offers a note of warning to

those who hurry the enthusiastic convert into positions where experience of life and much practical self-culture and knowledge of men are at least of equal value with the warm heart and the ready tongue. The reason is, *lest*, stupefied, beclouded, *puffed up with pride*, such an one *fall into the judgment of the devil*. The "judgment" here spoken of refers to the Divine condemnation passed upon the devil. The condemnation or commination by the devil (though a possible translation) would be a ground of praise rather than blame. The κριμα is elsewhere referred to God, and has "the genitive of the object" as its appropriate regimen. I conclude, with Meyer, Ellicott, Bengel, and others, that the special fault and awful doom of the devil himself are here thought to be impending over a neophyte tempted by office to spiritual pride.

Verse 7.—A positive characteristic is now referred to; the bishop *should, on the other hand, have a good report or reputation among those who are without the Christian Church*. The world, which is a poor judge of doctrine and hopelessly misunderstands the mysteries of the faith, miscalculates motives, and cannot estimate the real weight of religious thought and hope, often judges most accurately of character. That candidate for spiritual functions should be preferred whom non-christian society extols as honest, sincere, pure, and manly. *Lest*, continues the Apostle, *he fall into reproach, and into the snare of the devil*. If the two words, "reproach" and "snare," both refer to the devil, as some have argued, we should once more have the difficulty that the reproachful accusations of the devil

are marks of moral excellence rather than signs of weakness. The devil does not reproach or persecute a man of loose character. Thanks be to God, the reproach of the world does overtake the hypocrite, and help the Church to unmask him. "The snare of the devil," the pit dugged for the wicked, the ultimate confusion of falseness, impurity, and selfishness await those who have mistaken their calling.

The Apostle speaks here of no tremendous mysteries which the bishop has to celebrate, no keys of the kingdom of heaven with which he is entrusted, no remission of sins, no absolving function. Sacrificial services, sacramental rites, sacerdotal dignities, are not hinted at, nor is a word said of the power of conferring on others the authority entrusted to himself. Moral characteristics are of prime importance, and "the good report of those who are without" is of more moment than the mere fact of any ecclesiastical appointment. This is very suggestive. If we compare this mode of treatment with the genuine and spurious literature of the second century, we discover new support of the authenticity of the Epistles and fresh testimony to the simplicity of the apostolic constitutions.

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