

*THE HISTORIC SETTING OF THE PASTORAL  
EPISTLES.*

(i) *The Linguistic Argument.*

TURNING now to the style and diction of the Pastoral Epistles as possible letters of instruction from the Greatest of Missionaries, written to direct and strengthen trusted disciples in facing certain practical difficulties (arising in mission churches, rooted in soil in which other growths of far longer standing acted as competing influences), we cannot but feel that the old problem appears in a somewhat changed light. Our eye does not to-day rest on Paul so much in his individual capacity—what we may call “the unconditioned theologian” of critical fiction in its more academic moods,—but rather on the missionary, bound with a myriad threads of living memory and association to those who are before his mind as he writes—their special needs and failings, *their* way of looking at things and even of putting them to themselves in words. Surely all this would tend, consciously or unconsciously, to condition his way of writing, as we know it did condition the line of thought and even some of the phrasing of 1 Corinthians, in which there are obvious echoes of what his readers were wont to say among themselves.<sup>1</sup> If in 1 Timothy iii. 16 a citation from some current Christian hymn shows how the writer’s mind was working on the line and level of what was familiar to those whom he held in his mind’s eye, surely this would not be unlike Paul himself. Nor is it natural to limit the application of this principle to what we can demonstrate to be formal quotation.

Signs of the way in which his mind keeps in touch with forms of thought and even phraseology to which the common

<sup>1</sup> “We know that ‘honourable (καλός) is the Law’” (1 Tim. i. 8), recalls 1 Cor. viii. 1, “We know that ‘we all have knowledge.’”

consciousness of the local church would most readily respond, appear also in certain terse, sententious maxims<sup>1</sup> introduced by the formula "Faithful is the saying." In most cases these seem couched in the very words in which each sentiment was current among the local Christians, while one at least (Tit. iii. 8) seems a little adapted in form to suit the context. But all appear to reflect modes of expression proper to the average Christian consciousness to be impressed through these letters, which are virtually "open letters," fit for quotation so far as might seem needful in order to silence challenge of Timothy's authority and win over local public opinion. This is implied by the closing salutations in 1 Timothy and Titus, "Grace be with you (all)," especially as compared with the ending of the more intimate and personal second Epistle to Timothy, "The Lord be with thy spirit."<sup>2</sup> But it is implied also, when the matter is considered more closely, with these hints to guide us, in many other phenomena of the Epistles, especially such as have often been alleged to prove their fictitious nature, as though the forger could not help dropping the mask occasionally and using language suitable enough in addressing those relatively out of touch with Paul's own ideals, but to that degree unsuitable in writing to intimate disciples like Timothy and Titus. This point, however, will come up again in another connexion touching the substance rather than the form of these writings.

Passing then to style and diction in the stricter or philological and grammatical sense, it is hard not to agree with Sir W. M. Ramsay in his recent contention in these pages,<sup>3</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy i. 15, iii. 1, iv. 9; 2 Timothy ii. 11-13; Titus iii. 8, all cited below.

<sup>2</sup> The ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν which follows in a group of our MSS., with significant variants in others, while it is lacking in another group (see, e.g. A. Souter, *Nov. Test. Græce* (Oxonii), *ad loc.*), is probably a gloss, added on the analogy of 1 Timothy and when the Epistle was used in public reading.

<sup>3</sup> Series VII. vol. viii.

the effect that a man of such large reserves of every kind as Paul proves himself, both in Acts and in his acknowledged Epistles, must not be judged by a hard and fast standard even in this respect. Further, those other Epistles actually reveal great flexibility and variety in his style at different stages of his career and in different conditions, by the range of variation within his now admitted Epistles. The force of this analogy seems still insufficiently recognised, even where it is in principle admitted. A leading feature of the case is that those variations within Paul's Epistles which have finally been accepted as due simply to changed conditions, concern not only style and diction proper, but also thought and emphasis or dominant interest. Thus it is never a purely linguistic problem that meets us. Disputed epistles have won their way to recognition not along one line by itself, but rather as the result of an impression of continuity along several converging lines. In some cases the linguistic ties have come to be regarded as the strongest, in others not so. But in no case could they be held conclusive in themselves. The variations in style and in subject-matter are causally connected. So is it in the case of Colossians and Philippians, the latter of which, though it is, at least in the judgment of most of the very critics who reject the Pastorals on the score of style, the further removed in date, is in style nearer to the earlier groups of Paul's letters. Now in the Pastorals the change in subject-matter is most marked: hence we might expect large changes also in style. Bearing all this in mind, it seems that the linguistic facts of these Epistles are sufficiently covered by analogies gained from the gradual linking up of the rest of the Pauline Epistles, especially when we note that the process has gone on at both ends. It has, on the one hand, taken up the earliest and most rudimentary type, letters of encouragement and exhortation like the two Thessalonian Epistles, which were once held "sub-

Pauline" because not full enough of Paul's distinctive Gospel; and on the other, it has embraced the so-called "Captivity Group," once treated as "Deutero-Pauline," as going beyond the doctrinal development possible to his own Gospel. This means that in both directions, the so-called "sub-Pauline" and the "Deutero-Pauline," far larger latitude is now recognised than formerly; and the case against the Pastorals, whether in substance or form, is proportionately weakened.

As regards the details of the linguistic argument<sup>1</sup> *pro* and *con.*, one can here touch only a few of the chief matters. I fully recognise that change in the use of particles requires more explanation than the appearance of a number of fresh words: but even it is connected with the change of aim and subject-matter, which carries with it a change from a more to a less argumentative<sup>2</sup> and closely compacted style, or from a narrative to a hortatory. In fact, what strikes one forcibly in scanning the lists of constructions and *hapax legomena* adduced on the negative side, is the absence of proper analysis. They are accumulations, upon which the historical and psychological imagination has not been brought to bear: which means that the human factor, as compared with the mechanical, has not been given due play. What has to be shown, before fresh words can prove anything against a Pauline origin, is that they constantly occur where otherwise known Pauline terms would serve equally well, or that they were not likely to be used in Paul's circle of experience. But this has not been shown; nor is the argument from the total or relative absence of certain common Pauline terms a strong one: such can seldom be shown to be required by the subject-matter itself. A good many words and expressions which do not happen to occur in Paul's admitted writ-

<sup>1</sup> Which may be studied in Wohlenberg's Commentary, especially its Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> This would account for the disappearance of ἀπα, διό (δι' ἣν ἀπ' αὐτῶν, which replaces it, is found also in Hebrews ii. 11), διότι, ἔπειτα, ἔτι.

ings are paralleled in the Lucan and other New Testament writings <sup>1</sup> (e.g., 1 Peter), probably dating a good deal earlier than the period to which the Pastorals are often assigned. Further, the proportion of fresh words in the Pastorals as compared with the "Imprisonment Group," does not largely exceed that in the latter group when compared with the letters preceding it—especially when one allows, as is only fair, for the long strings of epithets belonging to the new subject-matter which naturally swell the list of fresh words.

Beyond these general considerations, one or two instances may be given to show how dubious is the stylistic case against authenticity. Two words in particular have been cited, viz., *καλός* and *σωτήρ*. "*Καλός*, which Paul never uses as an attribute, is mainly employed in this way" in the Pastorals. But the adjective is one which appealed strongly to the Greek mind in the sense of "honourable" or "fair" (= "noble"): it enters into their equivalent for our "gentleman" (*καλοκάγαθός*). Why, then, should Paul, who used it in Romans vii. 16, in "I consent unto the Law that it is good" (*ὅτι καλός*), not have used it also in the other way as occasion offered? The easy transition between the uses is seen in 1 Timothy ii. 3, "This is (a) fair and acceptable (thing)." But further, the relative frequency of the adjectival use in the Pastorals seems partly due to suggestion from the usage current among his converts. Thus both in 1 Timothy iii. 1, "If any desires oversight, he desires a fair function," and in Titus iii. 8, "that those who have placed their trust in God should take care to patronise fair deeds," the sentiment is prefaced by "Faithful is the saying." Again, 1 Timothy i. 8, "We know that the Law is honourable," probably echoes what was being said by others—perhaps quoting Paul himself (Rom. vii. 16); and "the fair confession" in 1 Timothy vi. 12 was a natural, if not a regular, expression for the convert's baptismal

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., tables in W. H. Simcox's *Writers of the New Testament*.

pledge of allegiance. Such a view receives support from the reference to "the fair name" ("Christ") invoked upon the Christian according to James ii. 7. Indeed I suspect that the language of the Pastorals is allusive and coloured by common usage in far more passages than we can now trace with certainty. But if so, this would help to explain the relative lack of the *distinctively* Pauline element even in letters which contain some characteristically Pauline passages.

Σωτήρ, "Saviour," as applied to God, is another clear case in point, occurring as it does after "Faithful is the saying" in 1 Timothy iv. 9: "We have set our hope on a living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." This saying may also underlie 1 Timothy ii. 3 f., "This is fair and acceptable before our Saviour God, who willeth all men to be saved." There is not the slightest reason why this widely used religious term for a God as "Deliverer" should not have been applied from the very first to God and Christ, as we find it used in the Pastorals (cf. Phil. iii. 20; Eph. v. 23). And as regards another religious term, that for the "manifestation" of deity, while *Parousia* (the more Jewish term perhaps) occurs oftener in the other Pauline Epistles, *epiphaneia* does occur in 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, in the interesting expression "the *epiphany* of His *Parousia*," as though the words expressed rather different aspects of the same thing. Other terms bearing more on the substance of the thought, like "faith" and "insight" (ἐπίγνωσις), will be referred to in another connexion. But it is here pertinent to call attention to so formal a phrase as "night and day"—with its Oriental order of thought—found in 1 Timothy v. 5, 2 Timothy i. 4, and implying that the author of these Epistles was at any rate a Jew and not a Greek—as one imagines the supposed forger would be,

On the whole, then, it seems that the true verdict as to the style and diction of the Pastorals in relation to Pauline authorship should be simply *Nil obstat*: the issue must be settled on other grounds. This is very much Dr. Peake's attitude in his *Introduction to the New Testament*. He feels the linguistic difficulties to be about equal against "Ephesians" and against the Pastorals (especially if "Ephesians" be Pauline); and if on the whole he sums up *pro* in the former case and *con.* in the latter, the difference turns for him on those other grounds. To this attitude I have no objection in principle; but I hope to be able to change the balance on the remaining grounds, as he conceives it, by what now follows.

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#### AN ORACLE OF THE LORD IN ISAIAH XXXII.

THE words and deeds of the Lord Jesus will be more clearly understood when the origin of the four Gospels is more clearly understood. For this purpose it is much to be desired that students of the question should fairly consider whether Papias did not put us all on the right track while we ever since have declined to understand his meaning. It is here to be suggested that Papias, in speaking of the *Oracles of the Lord* of which he wrote an *Exposition*, meant select and precious words and passages of the Greek Bible which foreshadowed the earthly life of Christ the Lord: that, in fact, he made a collection such as that which "Matthew" had made before him, of prophecies concerning Jesus as Messiah, and that *Dominical* (κυριακά) Oracles are those concerning Christ and only in a distant and secondary way were, or contained, Sayings of Christ, while any lengthy discourses found no place whatever in his collection. And a single instance of these Oracles is presently to be treated.