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ART. II.—THE PASTORAL EPISTLES AND THE MINISTRY.

I SUPPOSE it is not uncommon for a clergyman to be often depressed by the many forms of error around him, and by the ungodliness of life too often to be met with. An earnest labourer in his parish in private and in public, in spreading the truth and in promoting holy living, is often grieved at apparent failure. To compare the present with the past, the anxious man takes down the Pastoral Epistles, and earnestly reads them once again. The first encouraging thing striking the troubled spirit—an old thought revived with new life—is :

I. The Divine Call of the Pastor.

This is certainly the claim of the writer of the three Pastoral Epistles. His Ministry is a divine thing. He is an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Speaking of himself he says : “The glorious gospel . . . was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. i. 11). He thanks Jesus Christ for putting him into the ministry. Expressions so great distinctly teach the heavenly origin of the Ministry. The standpoint from which the writer appears is congenial to the clergyman whom we have pictured in his anxieties amid surrounding difficulties. The situation is that of the leader of the mighty movement about to pass away himself, and to hand on the torch of truth to a successor. The several parts of these Epistles, facing such a position, breathe out a tone of overpowering earnestness. Our clergyman, catching up this tone, sees perhaps with clearer vision than before, that then, as now, a sound faith and a holy life had to maintain a sore conflict with many forms of error and hideous shapes of vice.

The very opening of the 1st Epistle to Timothy warns the Ministers of religion “that they teach no other doctrine” (έτεροδιδάσκαλεῖν). But, according to the instruction to Titus, they are to be “teachers of good things.”

Certain teachers would add to the Gospel the Jewish Law, and even the very frivolous traditions on it. The Teacher of Christian truth, as Timothy is instructed, is not to “give heed to fables” (1 Tim. i. 4). These fables, we learn from the Epistle to Titus, are “Jewish” (i. 14). One of the commands of “teachers of the law” (1 Tim. i. 7) was “to abstain from meats” (iv. 3). In Crete, where the Jews abounded, Titus is warned against “deceivers, specially they of the circumcision” (i. 10). The exhortation to the Teacher there was : “Avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law” (iii. 9). These are all errors in reference to the Jewish law and its surroundings.

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There were the germs of the false teaching, called *γνῶσις* (*gnosis*), knowledge, eminently so called. Even then there were forerunners of those afterwards called "knowing" ones, gnostics, who in the second century professed by *gnosis*, knowledge, philosophy, to explain the doctrines of the Gospel. Timothy is warned against "oppositions of science (*gnosis*) falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi. 20).

Errors there were then, as now, touching not the outworks, but the very centre of the Christian Faith, as in the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, a representative of which grievous error was found in Hymenæus (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18).

The surrounding errors of doctrine had not been merely speculative. Their bad fruits were seen in unholy lives. These teachers had put away a good conscience, speaking lies in hypocrisy, supposing that godliness is gain, or, as Titus is told, "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (i. 11).

Besides errors present and pressing, the horizon was dark with the gravest, as seen in the well-known words: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Amid such surroundings Timothy had need to keep his divine call ever before him. Set apart for the work of the ministry by the laying on of the hands of the Apostle, together with those of the Presbytery, he had within him the upholding strength of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6).

The Pastoral Epistles find their natural place after the first imprisonment of Paul, as mentioned in the closing words of the Acts of the Apostles. In 1 Tim. i. 18 the Apostle writes to Timothy as left in Ephesus, when he himself went into Macedonia. The only journey of Paul into Macedonia in the Acts is in company with Timothy, and in the Epistles to Philemon, to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, written during the first imprisonment, the name of Timothy is joined with the Apostle in his addressing those Christians, and therefore he must have been with him. The nature of the wrong teaching which Timothy and Titus were to oppose fixes the Pastoral Epistles to the end of St. Paul's life. The doctrinal errors of the Gnostics in the second century, about the middle of which Baur most audaciously fixes the Epistles, were utter abhorrence of the Jewish Creator, Jewish law and system—just the very opposite of the Judaic errors such as prevailed, before Jerusalem, with its temple and system were swept away in the siege of Titus.

The second Pastoral Epistle to Timothy, written by Paul in the near prospect of the martyr's grave, presses most solemnly the continued discharge of the Pastor's work in

II. *The Succession of the Ministry.*

The view of the Plymouth Brethren that the Church has no recognised ordained Ministry, is in the plainest opposition to the teaching of these Epistles. Not merely are divers orders of Church officers mentioned, but the qualifications for them are enumerated in detail (1 Tim. iii. 1-13; Tit. i. 5-9). To desire these offices is a commendable thing. The elders that rule well are to be accounted "worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. v. 17). Those in the lowest order, "that have used the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree."¹ They have a claim to be advanced to a higher order in the ministry. The *theoretic* teaching, so to say, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, written during St. Paul's first imprisonment, directs a continuance of Pastors, "for the work of the ministry," to go on to the end, "till we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephes. iv. 12, 13). This is now to be carried out into *practical* effect. In his second and last imprisonment the Apostle, in his most solemn anxiety for this, says to Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). As to Timothy, so to Titus was apostolic authority given. "For this cause," says the Apostle, "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" (i. 5). It is true Titus was not permanently settled in Crete. He was to come to Paul to Nicopolis, near Actium in Epirus; and leaving the Apostle there, or afterwards in Rome, he went to Dalmatia.

Timothy is most earnestly entreated to come to the Apostle in Rome. He greatly desired to see his son in the faith once more before he sank into the grave of the martyr. These comings and goings are merely such as are common at all times in the lives of public men discharging high and important duties. There is no difficulty from this—as far as I can see—with regard to these men being permanently the chief Pastors of these places.

The progress Church government had made as seen in these Epistles suits exactly the state of things towards the close of the life of St. Paul, when the Pastoral Epistles were written. The names of Bishop and Presbyter are still interchangeable for the second Order of the Ministry, as they were some years before, when Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus. At the

¹ The R.V. has, "gain to themselves a good standing."

middle of the second century, at which time Baur most audaciously, as I have said, places the date of the Epistles, the words Bishop and Presbyter were no longer convertible, but the term Bishop was used distinctly for the first Order.

The anxious clergyman remembers well that at the most solemn time of his ordination the Ministers of religion were called "to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord." Prayerfully he reads once again what these Epistles say of

III. The Qualifications for the Ministry.

Timothy is taught what qualities he was to require in the Bishops or Presbyters, and in the Deacons whom he might appoint, as is Titus who was to ordain elders in every city. The spiritual character of such ministers was to be tested by time, and by a continuance in well-doing. This is seen by the very nature of the qualities named, as purity, sobriety, hospitality, patience, and generosity. Nearly the same list of virtues is put into the hands of Titus. A novice, or one lately come into the Church, would not be suitable for these offices. Forwardness and zeal, which then, as now, often marked the novice, were not to take the place of the steady practice of these virtues as seen by friend and foe.

While in the Epistles to Timothy the Bishop or Presbyter must be apt to teach, in that to Titus he is to be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (i. 9). The very centre of spiritual life is pointed to, for the teachers were to be such as "call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22). Following righteousness and virtue Timothy was to be "an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. iv. 12). With the shadows of his approaching end deepening on the Apostle, he lays on Timothy, towards the end of his second Epistle to him, the solemn charge: "Preach the word;" "Do the work of an evangelist;" that is of a Preacher of the Gospel. No Order of the Ministry is here referred to, but a plain duty is taught, incumbent on every order. This is well wrought out in our Ordination Service, where the duty is most solemnly impressed on the Bishop, as we know it is on the other two Orders.

Among the qualifications are found no counsels of perfection, such as the celibacy of the clergy. At the same time the Minister of the Gospel must be an example to the flock, as our Ordination Service, following the spirit of these Epistles, most impressively teaches. The resolute virtues then, as now, take a high place. In no age of the Church is the character of the Christian Minister complete in a dress of mere gentle inoffen-

siveness. Moral courage, tempered with discretion, finds a high place in the Minister at Ephesus. Surrounded there by learning and culture, he was to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 2). The same resolute spirit was to animate the Pastor among the less cultivated mountaineers of Crete. He was to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus i. 13). Now, as then, the Minister's office is the highest in dignity and usefulness. The Apostle's description of the qualifications for it ought to encourage and elevate the Pastor amid his anxious surroundings.

The Ordination Service most earnestly impresses on each Order of the Ministry to be like watchmen, to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and to walk therein." It most solemnly requires unfeigned acceptance of all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. The earnest Pastor, whom we have represented to ourselves, has ever tried to give to God of his very best. There is a call on him for very various powers. In the morning of the day he sees before him the management of schools, the instructing of youth in religion; the reclaiming the intemperate, the visiting the sick and the dying, the making visits to rich and poor, and the winning of souls to Christ by the public preaching of the Gospel. Amid duties so varied and difficult he keeps close to the great Book of his study, the source of his teaching, and the standard of doctrine.

IV. The Holy Scripture, his Rule.

So it has been from the first. The solemn exhortation to Timothy was: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Tim. vi. 20). "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13). Among the other qualities of the chief Pastor, as laid down in Titus, he was to be "holding fast the faithful word." The Pastor at Ephesus was to "give attendance to reading," that is of Scripture in public. He was to exhort and teach the people out of it. At all times the earnest Pastor holds fast by this rule of Faith. From it he is led himself to Christ. His aim is, amid all doctrinal errors and viciousness of life around him, so to instruct out of the Scriptures as to lead to Him of Whom they testify. Wherever his duties call him, he makes the Scriptures reflect Christ, and thus he wins souls to Him Who is our life.

V. The Pastor's Strength.

In looking to the heavenly origin of his mission, and in stirring up the "gift" that is in him, the anxious Minister thinks less of his difficulties and more of his strength. The

Pastor at Ephesus with his divine gift (*χάρισμα*) was expected to realize the expectations raised by prophetic utterance with regard to him at the time of his appointment: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Tim. iv. 14). "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."

The men appointed in the spirit of the Apostle's teaching in these places were really a new power put into them, a salt in a corrupt society, a light in a dark place. Their strength was from without, as is ours from the Holy Ghost. The pastor is not to forget the weighty words of his commission: "Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God;" "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the congregation;" words spoken after the most earnest prayer for the Divine Spirit.

The weary man in a time of depression is not to forget that his life is in One Who is to supply him with all strength according to the word: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." His heart is stirred, as was that of Timothy, by being reminded to look on himself as a strong man, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The strong athlete, looking forward to be crowned, observes the Apostle's wise rule to strive lawfully—that is, within the rules of honour, honesty, and truth. The appeal of the Apostle to him is to live much in the future: "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (2 Tim. ii. 8). Titus was to be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (ii. 13). The arduous present, for which all the pastor's strength is needed, has ever been in sharp contrast to the blessed future.

Seeing the giant strength of false teaching, a strong craving may be felt for high intellectual gifts in the Master's service. Such, we are to remember, are bestowed at times few and far between. One thing is quite certain, that pastoral strength ever increases with advance in the spiritual life.

If not examples themselves, the lessons of the Pastors in Ephesus and Crete would not be blessed to their flocks. Titus was to be an example, not of ideal excellence and of unattainable virtue, but of good works; and Timothy was to be an example of the believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. iv. 12). Holding firmly with the one hand to the soundness of doctrine, for to Titus it was said, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of," the man of God was to hold on no less firmly with the other hand to purity of life,

that he may be "throughly furnished unto all good works." Increase of strength will come with steady perseverance in both. The Apostle who wrote the Pastoral Epistles is himself an example of increasing strength. In his first imprisonment St. Paul describes his spiritual state as one of progress ; "forgetting those things which are behind," he was "reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. iii. 13). In his closing words in his second Pastoral Epistle to Timothy the required strength had been supplied ; and this is surely a great example to the anxious Pastor of whom I have spoken all through. In the assurance of faith Paul was able to say : "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."

THOMAS JORDAN.



ART. III.—JANE AUSTEN.

CLOSE upon seventy years ago, on July the 24th, 1817, a modest party of mourners separated to return to their own homes, after consigning to earth, in the north aisle of Winchester Cathedral, the remains of one who had been very dear to each and all of them. Brothers grieved for her who was their joy and pride ; a sister returned to take up a desolate life ; the beloved niece and friend mourned a guide and counsellor, doubly dear to her since her mother's death.

Jane Austen died, as she had lived, unnoticed and unknown, except by the narrow circle of friends and relations among whom her lot was cast. She is the gainer for it in one respect—if, indeed, the verdict of posterity can be gain to one whom it has ceased to affect. All that she accomplished, every jot and tittle of her work, are hers only. No Johnson directed the bent of her genius, as he did for Madame d'Arblay ; no father urged on the timid workings of a mind cultured and trained by himself, as was the case with Maria Edgeworth. There was not even the experience of an eventful life, the intercourse with men of letters, or the interchange of thought, which her sister novelists enjoyed in so high a degree, to help her on the career she had chosen for herself. Hers and hers alone are the masterly conceptions clothed in words of pregnant simplicity ; hers alone the observation and penetration which gave them birth. None can lay claim to a share in the creation of that fame, the enjoyment of which she was never fated to taste.