

The Character of Timothy.

BY THE REV. J. PAUL ALEXANDER, JEDBURGH.

OF all Paul's mighty men, none was so tenderly loved, so thoroughly trusted, so continuously employed by the Apostle as Timothy. He was Paul's 'own,' 'true,' 'beloved' son in faith—a wise Galatian whom Paul had 'bewitched.' He was the Apostle's constant companion on his journeys, and, as a son with a father, so he slaved with him in the gospel. To him were entrusted many difficult and delicate missions, and in all the great centres of Christianity there was no better known figure. He ministered to such an one as Paul the aged during his imprisonment in Rome, and, on the eve of his martyrdom, it was to Timothy that the Apostle turned for the carrying out of his last wishes.

A strange fate has overtaken this beloved disciple. After serving with the Apostle for a dozen years and more, and that with honour and distinction, he falls a victim to a mysterious infirmity. A blight seems to settle upon his character, and his reputation suffers a strange and well-nigh fatal eclipse. It is asserted that in the Pastoral Epistles he is presented in very doubtful guise indeed—a poor creature sans courage, sans honour, sans strength, sans sense, practically sans everything.

This view of Timothy's character is given in its most compact form by Professor Findlay in his essay in defence of the authenticity of the Pastorals,¹ and it may here be reproduced in some detail.

'On the whole it does not appear that Timothy's character had matured in the way we might have hoped. The youthful timidity hinted at in 1 Cor. 16^{10, 11}, he had not sufficiently outgrown; the repeated exhortations to courage and endurance addressed to him in the second epistle imply some failure in this respect. With this was connected a want of firmness, a pliability and accessibility to private influences against which he needed to be cautioned (1 Ti 5¹⁹⁻²²). We imagine there was something recluse and contemplative in his disposition, tending to abstract him from public and practical duties (1 Ti 4¹¹⁻¹⁶); and associated with this a touch of asceticism which made him weaker to resist the very temptations he most shunned (1 Ti 5^{22, 23}). And we suspect that Hofmann is

¹ Sabatier's *St. Paul*, Appendix.

right in inferring from 1 Ti 6³⁻¹² that the young minister was sometimes inclined in his weariness and despondency to envy the easy, gainful life which false teachers were pursuing under his eyes.

'In fact, Timothy's was a fine but not a robust nature; liable to suffer from an uncongenial atmosphere and ill-framed for conflict and leadership, with more of the ivy in its composition than the oak. . . . In the Apostle's company Timothy had shown admirable devotion and steadfastness (Phil 2¹⁰⁻²³). But he drooped alone. . . . The tears with which he parted from the Apostle (2 Ti 1⁴) and his reluctance to be left longer at Ephesus (1 Ti 1³) were due not merely to his love for his father in Christ, but to the peculiar difficulty to him of the work laid upon him. The portrait which these letters give us of young Timothy is consistent and life-like, and it harmonizes well with the slighter traits preserved in the other epistles and the Acts of the Apostles.'

With this view such scholars as Alford, Farrar, Plummer, Lock, Horton, White, Bernard, Ramsay, Zahn, etc., may be said to be in general agreement. Usually the subject is treated with some degree of sympathy, and then such gentler terms as shyness, sensitiveness, dependence, despondency, timidity, etc., are much in evidence. But sometimes a darker complexion is given to the matter, and the accusations against Timothy are pushed home with greater ruthlessness. Thus, Zahn roundly charges him with cowardice, with endeavouring to escape from his duty, and with urging his youth as an excuse for lack of energy (Introduction); while Findlay gives the following as a summary of 2 Ti 1⁶⁻²¹: 'Exhorts him to courage in view of the Divine glory of the gospel and *in spite of his own desertion and disgrace.*'² But whatever differences there be in the manner of treatment, the general result is the same—the portrait of a singularly ineffective character, one totally wanting in any of the lineaments of a hero or a saint.

This very unfavourable presentation of the character of Timothy has been used as an argument both for and against the Pauline authorship of the Epistles. But in this paper the question of author-

² *Epistles of Paul the Apostle.*

ship is not raised, the standpoint of the writers named being accepted for the purposes of argument. The question to be discussed is the authenticity of the portrait as sketched above. Is the modern copy in any degree a true or adequate representation of the Pauline original? And the contention which the paper seeks to verify and substantiate is that it is not, that the copy is so wanting in perspective as to present us with a positive distortion of the features of Paul's most loved and trusted helper.

I.

Some notice must first of all be taken of the earlier part of Timothy's career, since it is there that the first hints of his weakness are supposed to have been revealed.

In Ac 16¹⁻³ we have its commencement. 'And behold!' says Luke—using, as Hort points out, a phrase which he reserves for sudden and, as it were providential interpositions—'a certain disciple was there named Timotheus . . . which was well reported of by the brethren which were at Lystra and Iconium.' Paul was at the beginning of his second missionary journey. No successor had been found for Mark, and this was clearly a matter of some difficulty and perplexity to the Apostle. Mark had turned back in the day of battle, and the Apostle could not risk another failure and desertion. He needed assistance, but where could he find it? 'And behold . . . Timothy!' It seemed a providence. And when the good report of the neighbouring Christians was reinforced by the voice of the prophets in the Church (1 Ti 1¹⁸), all Paul's fears and difficulties were removed. 'Him would Paul have to go forth with him.' Then followed the act of ordination, the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Ti 4¹⁴) and of Paul's own hands (2 Ti 1⁶). On the supposition (most generally accepted) that the latter passage refers to what took place at Lystra, the succeeding verse is of more than ordinary importance. The Apostle urges Timothy to stir up the gift of God, 'which,' he adds, 'is in thee through the laying on of my hands.' Then he proceeds to describe the gift. 'For,' he says, 'God gave us' (when we entered upon our ministry—so Alford, Bernard, etc.—'the aorist points to a definite occasion') 'not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power, love, and discipline' (2 Ti 1⁷). It is interesting to have thus early a direct negative given by Paul to the theory

of Timothy's 'youthful timidity.' Whatever may have happened later, there was no fearfulness at the start. Power and love and discipline were the main elements in Timothy's missionary equipment. Indeed, it is hard to conceive how a lad, who was naturally timid, and who had witnessed, or at least was well acquainted with the stoning of Paul at Lystra, and the other persecutions at Antioch and Iconium (2 Ti 3^{10, 11}), could ever have been persuaded to accept the perils of a missionary life.

Further, the force of all this accumulation of testimony from local Christians, prophets, presbyters, and apostle ought not to be summarily dismissed. There must have been something quite outstanding in the character of Timothy to have called it forth.

A year or so later we find him being sent by Paul on an independent mission to Thessalonica (1 Th 3¹⁻²). This mission of comfort required some powers of sympathy and tact, and appears to have been carried through in such a manner as to win Paul's entire approval. Apparently by this time Timothy could stand alone, without 'drooping,' and, if it could be proved that in Thessalonica he was also engaged in the work of ordaining elders, as Ramsay holds,¹ we would have a further hint of Paul's high estimate of his capacity.

Mention is next made of him in Corinth. Of this Church he is entitled to rank as one of the founders. 'For,' says Paul, 'the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea' (2 Co 1¹⁹). Timothy's gospel, like that of the Apostle, was the gospel of the Everlasting Yea. Yet it is in connexion with this Church, where he had been so staunch in the presentation of the gospel, that Timothy is alleged to have first shown the white feather.

He had been sent from Ephesus to put the Corinthians in remembrance of the Apostle's 'ways' in Christ, as these were taught by him everywhere, in every church (1 Co 4¹⁷). In sending him Paul describes him as 'my beloved and faithful child in the Lord,' and this, in turn, is rendered by Findlay (*Expos. Gr. Test.*) as 'a trusty agent.' Timothy had apparently been sent off before Paul's letter was written. But after his departure it is clear that news had come from

¹ *Expositor*, July 1909.

Corinth revealing a state of affairs much more serious than the Apostle had at first suspected. He now feared that matters might not go so smoothly or be so easily arranged as he had thought. Accordingly, ere he closes his letter, he bespeaks for Timothy a kindly and respectful reception, just as he did later for Titus and the brethren (2 Co 8²⁴). 'Now,' he says, 'if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as also I do: let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren' (1 Co 16^{10, 11}).

'These words,' says Findlay, following Alford, 'point to Timothy's diffidence, as well as his comparative youth' (*Expos. Gr. Test.*). 'The youthful timidity hinted at in 1 Co 16^{10, 11}' (Sabatier, Appendix). If so, then the hints and references must have been apparent to the Corinthians. But in that case it is somewhat difficult to understand how the words could be supposed to strengthen Timothy's hands, or make for a peaceful reception. In the circumstances, any reference to Timothy's weakness would be supremely tactless, and would act upon the baser sort as a direct incitement to rebellion. One can imagine some of the more hostile spirits, on the reading of the letter, saying, 'So the great Apostle is not coming after all, brave man!—Sending one of his young hopefuls, is he? And we are to be nice and kind to him!—What did you say his name was? Oh, 'Young Timidity'!—Well, we know how to deal with *him*—'This is the heir: come, let us kill him!' And kill him they did, to all intents and purposes, if Findlay and others are to be believed. And if so, can the Apostle be entirely acquitted of blame in the matter?

Fortunately the words carry no such reference to Timothy's weakness. The hint requires to be read in to the text. The passage certainly reveals the Apostle's anxiety as regards the situation in Corinth. But such concern as he displays is not based on his knowledge of any weakness in Timothy—has he not described him as 'a trusty agent'? If, as is argued, the Apostle had been in Corinth for the second time, shortly before the writing of 1 Cor., and had been forced to retire from that city in bitter sorrow and humiliation, that would be sufficient of itself to explain his anxiety regarding Timothy's reception. From his

own experience, he would know only too well the kind of treatment Timothy might receive from the Corinthians in their insurgent mood. If they could despise and set at nought their father in Christ, anything might happen to his representative. So that he might well ask that Timothy be received without fear.

Even if Timothy did feel some anxiety or fear on coming face to face with the rebels in Corinth—though it is nowhere stated that he did—that is in nowise to his discredit. Such fears would be entirely honourable. They could only be for the success of his mission, not in any degree for himself. They do not mark him down as timid, or diffident, or, more plainly, a coward; unless Paul himself, who came to Corinth on his first visit 'in fear and much trembling' (1 Co 2³), and who, concerning the final outcome of this very crisis, could speak of 'fears within' (2 Co 7⁵), is also on that account to bear the brand of shame.

The passage, therefore, cannot be taken as adverse to Timothy. It carries no veiled hint of weakness or timidity. Such fear as is revealed is all on Paul's side, not on Timothy's.

One further reference, belonging to this earlier period, must be noticed here. Timothy is with Paul in Rome, ministering to him in his imprisonment. Paul writes to the Philippians of his intention to send Timothy to them shortly, and adds this testimony concerning him: '*For I have no man likeminded*' (literally 'equal-souled'; Timothy is the man after Paul's own heart. No other comrade has a 'soul' of just the same fibre—Strachan), '*who will truly care for your state*' (Timothy's solicitude for the Philippians had become a second nature—Lightfoot. It is in this aspect that he most resembles Paul, in his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the churches—Strachan). '*For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ*' (Paul had found, in all probability, that when he proposed to some of his companions, good Christian men, that they should visit far-distant Philippi, they all shrank, making various excuses. Timothy alone is willing, the one man he can least afford to spare—Kennedy). '*But ye know the proof of him*' (that character which emerges as the result of testing—Kennedy), '*that, as a child with a father, so he slaved with me for the gospel*' (Ph 2¹⁹⁻²²). This comes at the end of some twelve years of closest intimacy and service.

During that period Timothy has been tried in various ways, and at no point has he been found wanting. Surely words could not go further in appreciation of a man's character and work, than do those just quoted. No apostolic agent ever carried better credentials than Timothy.

II.

But now, suddenly, unexpectedly, there comes a frost, a killing frost, and a long farewell to all his greatness. Before many months have passed all sorts of unsuspected weaknesses begin to appear in Timothy. At the worst, he is revealed as a coward and deserter. At the best, he has become a timid, puling, morbid creature, unwilling and unfit for the work entrusted to him, and suspected and distrusted by the man who formerly was loudest in his praise.

Now, how can these things be? So strange and unexpected a subsidence and upheaval calls for something adequate by way of explanation or apology. Various attempts have been made in this direction.

Thus, Timothy's youth has been referred to as in some degree accounting for his fall. At the time of 1 Ti., he was still a 'youth' from the point of view of the ancients—that is, he was still under forty years of age—though evidently not far from the time when he would be entitled to take his place amongst the 'elders' (cf. Ramsay). But, whatever his age—Zahn's estimate is 35-40 in 64 A.D.—he was certainly no stripling, and after fourteen years or so of service with Paul he can hardly be regarded as a 'neophyte' (1 Ti 3⁶), or as a 'raw catechumen.'

Zahn argues that Timothy had urged his youth as an excuse for his lack of energy. This is supposed to be a fair and accurate inference from the words, 'Let no man despise thy youth' (1 Ti 4¹²). But, surely, if Timothy was neglecting his duty, the Ephesians had some grounds for despising him, quite apart from his youth.

Then Alford and Farrar trace everything to his physical weakness, his 'often infirmities' (1 Ti 5²³). But whatever the nature of these may have been, it is evident that the Apostle did not take them very seriously, since 'a little wine' could cure them, and since, at no long interval, he could call on Timothy to take the long and trying journey to Rome. Timothy, like Paul, must have been constitutionally sound, or he could never have over-

taken the work he did. There was no room in the Pauline ranks for a valetudinarian.

Ramsay has an explanation which is all his own. 'Timothy was rather timid and distrustful of himself, and in all probability neither very highly educated nor very smart as a speaker. . . . A boy brought up in so remote and rude a colony as Lystra was not well equipped by his early training for facing such opponents as those false teachers. . . . It was difficult for the less nimble-witted Timothy to cope with their quick and well-trained intellects.'¹ The answer to this is best given in the following words from the same writer: 'This must be regarded as proving that Timothy . . . sprang from a family of some wealth and good standing in Lystra; and the words of Luke that Timothy "was well reported of by the brethren in Iconium," and that all the Jews knew that his father was a Greek, show that he was not an obscure individual of the humbler rank, but a person whose name and position were widely known. This is only one of the many incidental details which prove that most of the important figures in the early centuries of Christianity sprang from the educated higher middle class of Anatolia, the local gentry, whose position opened to them the path of education, from which the mere peasantry were debarred.'² Here we have the true Ramsay, expounding his favourite theory. His disparagement of Timothy's intellect can only be set down as a momentary lapse.

In any case, some fair measure of ability must be credited to Timothy, in order to justify Paul's choice of him for so important a charge as Ephesus, the danger zone in the East.

Neither youth, nor physical nor intellectual weakness can be held to account satisfactorily for Timothy's failure after so long a period of probation. Had they been operative as predisposing causes, the *dénouement* must have been reached much earlier in his career. The very insufficiency of the explanations does much to strengthen the belief that there is nothing to explain, that the weakness of character had no real existence.

III.

This brings us to the consideration of the evidence from the Pastoral Epistles. But, ere we come to the details, it is necessary that something

¹ *Expositor*, August 1909.

² *Expositor*, March 1907, 'Cities of St. Paul.'

be said as to the nature and interpretation of these documents.

'These epistles,' says Findlay, 'especially 1 Timothy and Titus, are "open" or quasi-public letters, written with the churches of Ephesus and Crete in view, and such as it would be suitable to read, in part at least, at their assemblies.' With this, Plummer, Bernard, Bartlet, and Zahn agree. 'The lack of personal greetings,' says the last-named scholar, 'presupposes that Timothy will communicate the contents of the letter (1 Timothy) to all the churches under his charge. He had difficulties to contend with, his authority needed strengthening (4¹²); so when occasion required it, he could exhibit this letter and read it publicly.'¹

Ramsay also holds that Timothy would support his exhortations in time of need by a quotation from the written letter.

That some such theory is necessary must be evident. The letters are true Pastorals, and their contents were intended to be passed on by Timothy to the Christians 'in every place' (1 Ti 2⁸) where Paul's authority was recognized. The exhortations and admonitions were meant for personal application by others besides Timothy ('These things teach and exhort'). So also were the words of encouragement and benediction ('Grace be with you all'). And when this fact is taken into account, and also Paul's 'ways' in dealing with offenders elsewhere, it must be obvious that the Epistles can carry no imputation of moral fault, except where such fault is plainly stated.

When a pastoral charge is given to a minister at his ordination or induction, many of the phrases and exhortations are taken over bodily from these letters. They are as applicable to present-day needs as to those of Timothy and his brethren in Asia. Yet no one nowadays would ever dream of imputing any fault by such means to the recipient of such a charge. When, for example, a minister is urged to take his share of hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, it is not thereby subtly implied that he has been guilty of shirking or neglecting his duty. Such an insinuation would be felt as an outrage on public decency. Yet that is precisely what has happened in the interpretation and application of these Epistles. Paul's most innocent and most general observations regarding

¹ How an 'open' letter, specifying certain grave charges against Timothy, would be likely to strengthen his authority in Ephesus is not explained.

Christian life and duty have been turned and twisted to imply the existence in Timothy of the exact opposite. If Paul says, 'Flee this,' then Timothy must certainly have been pursuing it, or, 'Guard this,' then quite obviously that is the very thing which Timothy has been neglecting. Surely a most vicious method of interpretation.

1. With this in mind, it is now possible to look at the charges in detail. And, *first*, as to Timothy's dependence, despondency, and reluctance to remain at his work. These, it is said, are very clearly revealed at Paul's last meeting with Timothy. On that occasion the Apostle had exhorted 'his true child in faith' to remain in Ephesus, and, from this, it has been inferred that Timothy was reluctant to do so, and yielded only to the pressure of the Apostle (1 Ti 1³). Shrinking from the task laid upon him, he had parted from his master in tears (2 Ti 1⁴), and in consequence had become a prey to sadness and futile despondency, thus greatly hindering his usefulness.

Now, even if the reference of the 'tears' of 2 Ti 1⁴ to the meeting of 1 Ti 1³ be taken as assured—there is really no certainty in the matter—Timothy's sadness cannot have been of any long duration. In all probability he had Paul's verbal assurance that his return to Ephesus would not be long delayed. In any case he would soon be in receipt of his master's expressed intention of rejoining him shortly (1 Ti 3¹⁴ 4¹³). Besides, so far is Paul from blaming Timothy for his 'tears,' that he finds in the remembrance of them a cause of joy and thanksgiving. 'The travelled ambassador of Christ who snatched Christianity from the hands of a local faction, and turned it to a universal faith—whose powerful word shook all the gods from Cyprus to Gibraltar—who turned the tide of history and thought, giving us the organization of Christendom for the legions of Rome, and for Zeno and Epicurus, Augustine, Eckhart and Luther, he, with his indomitable soul, was conquered by a Lycaonian youth, and now in Rome sat, with his chained hands upon his knee, musing, as he says, with joy on the tears and embrace of their last parting.'²

But, it is said, those tears were not purely tears of affection and farewell, gathered to the eyes by thought of days that were to be no more. No, no! Nothing so fine can be allowed to Timothy. They came, it is alleged, from the depths of a very dark

² Martineau, *Hours of Thought*.

and selfish despair, at having to face, almost unfriended and alone, the somewhat thankless task of establishing Church order and Pauline truth in Ephesus and Asia. Timothy was reluctant: Paul had to assert his authority. Is it not written, 'I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus' (1³)?

A touch of common grammatical sense is what is wanted here. The verb ('I exhorted thee') is a perfectly innocent one—a neutral term, says Ramsay—and carries no hint of coercion. Paul makes frequent use of it. In the next chapter he says: 'I exhort, therefore, first of all that supplication, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men' (2¹). Are we to infer that Timothy and the Ephesian Christians were 'reluctant' to do this? Clearly the unwillingness is an importation into the text and can only be proved by means of exegetical torture.

2. 'But, consider,' says Zahn, 'the urgency and solemnity of the exhortations. Do these not prove that Timothy was endeavouring to escape from his duty? Is it not clear that his conduct was due to lack of courage?' 'Certainly,' says Findlay, 'The youthful timidity hinted at in 1 Co 16^{10, 11} he had not sufficiently outgrown; the repeated exhortations to courage and endurance addressed to him in the 2nd Epistle, imply some failure in this respect.' And then, with growing boldness in defamation, there comes the truly remarkable synopsis of 2 Ti 1⁶⁻²¹³ already quoted, where actual desertion and disgrace are charged against Timothy.

Now it may safely be said that the urgency and solemnity of the exhortations no more imply grave dereliction of duty than do the many solemn and urgent messages in the rest of Paul's Epistles. Otherwise we should have to bring a railing accusation against the whole body of early Christians. When a general issues a proclamation or addresses his troops on the eve of battle, and exhorts them to courage, are we to take the urgency of his words as proof that his men are a pack of cowards? Or must we infer from Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar that his seamen were on the verge of mutiny? Surely not. No more should we regard the various warnings, exhortations, etc., addressed to Timothy as proving default. No doubt they were meant to be taken seriously. Probably no one valued the Apostle's words more than Timothy, and as probably no one was more prepared to profit by them. One can even imagine that

Timothy was tempted to weakness and slackness in various directions. Who is not? But a warning against temptation must not be taken as *prima facie* evidence that such temptation has been yielded to, or even entertained. And to imagine that Paul, while loving and praising Timothy, and seeking to help and guide him, was all the while by subtle innuendo rebuking him, is not only wholly to misconceive the situation, but to reveal the Apostle as possessed of a most peculiar code of honour.

The solemnity and urgency of the exhortations then prove nothing as against Timothy. They were given not from any fear or suspicion as to his character, but because of the urgency and solemnity of the situation in Ephesus. Further, they were meant for more than Timothy's personal application. Even the passage (2 Ti 1⁶⁻²¹³), of which Findlay makes so much, is immediately followed by the words, 'Of these things put them in remembrance' (2 Ti 2¹⁴).

All this, of course, is only a negative defence. But something more positive by way of proof is afforded us by the Epistles. In the First Epistle, Paul describes Timothy as his 'true child in faith' (1¹), and in the Second he speaks of 'the unfeigned faith that is in thee' (1⁵). Now what particular shade of genuineness can be ascribed to the sonship of a defaulter such as Timothy is alleged to have been? Or wherein is the non-hypocritical element in Timothy's faith apparent? In shirking hardness, in desiring to be relieved of his post, in despondency, or timidity, or what? Some credence must be given to these testimonies of Paul, unless we are to challenge the good faith of the Apostle as well as the character of his agent.

Reference has already been made to the passage (2 Ti 1^{6, 7}), dealing with the Divine gift bestowed on Timothy by the laying on of hands. Bernard is of the opinion that this refers to his settlement in Ephesus. Could this be proved it would go far to dispose of the accusations. Unfortunately it cannot. Such evidence as there is seems to point to what happened at Lystra (cf. the connexion with Timothy's early life and home, 1⁵). At that time there was no 'youthful timidity,' and all that is now required for his work in Ephesus is that he should stir up the gift of power and love and discipline, 'which,' Paul adds, 'is in thee,' now as then.

Paul's view of the situation does not at all agree

with that of Timothy's critics. What is required by their argument is not the stirring up of an old gift, which on their view Timothy never possessed, but the impartation of a new gift, and more particularly of courage to take the place of the well-known timidity. Strange that Paul should not have thought of this!

In line with Paul's description of Timothy's gift is the reference to his good confession made before many witnesses (1 Ti 6¹²). This has been variously assigned to his baptism, his ordination at Lystra, his settlement in Ephesus, some period of persecution, and the time of his arrest and imprisonment. Whatever be the reference to time or place, there must have been 'something heroic' (Lock, *St. Paul the Master Builder*), some element of 'notoriousness' (Alford) in connexion with it, else its conjunction in the next verse with the good confession made by Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate would be singularly out of place.

Finally, it is held that Timothy came at Paul's bidding to Rome, and there suffered imprisonment, but was released (He 13²³) shortly after Paul's martyrdom (so Findlay, Plummer, Lock, Horton). This, of one who was naturally timid, a coward, who had already deserted! If Timothy could risk his neck in Rome, and had no shame for the Lord's prisoner there, what was there in Ephesus to upset his equilibrium or break his nerve?

3. There were the false teachers! Timothy's weakness is supposed to have further manifested itself in undue subservience to the ascetic teaching and discipline of these people. Here, the great text is, 'Keep thyself pure. Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities' (1 Ti 5^{22, 23}). The interpretation given is that, under the influence of the false teachers, Timothy was practising an ascetic abstinence from wine, in order thereby to free himself from the temptations of the flesh, and attain to greater personal holiness. This practice Paul condemns as likely to defeat its own end, as likely to make him weaker to resist the very temptations which most he shunned. Instead, he recommends a little wine for his stomach's sake.

All this theorizing is meant to be taken seriously, but the task is one of considerable difficulty. If the connexion of thought be as stated, then

the Apostle's attitude is simply inexplicable.¹ Timothy's abstinence seems a small thing in itself, but if it were undertaken at the suggestion, or under the influence of the false teachers, then it was no trifle. Further surrenders would naturally follow. Zahn, indeed, asserts that the abstinence covered not only wine but what he calls 'hearty foods.' Paul hated these ascetics with a fine hatred. Yet, whenever they touch him at close quarters in the person of his 'son,' all he has to offer by way of protest is the casual reference to a little wine—a drop of wine for a cancer! Such unwonted meekness, or such wilful blindness, towards his opponents is not at all in Paul's manner. Equally inconceivable is his tenderness towards Timothy. If Timothy had become an ascetic, after the manner of the heretics, then he must be set down as exceptionally invertebrate. His ailment, in that case, was more moral than physical, and his stupefied conscience a more dangerous symptom than his disordered stomach. What he needed was not a gentle restorative, but a thorough trouncing, and in such circumstances the Apostle was not the man to spare the rod. The very casualness of the Apostle's prescription may therefore be taken as proof that he had no fear of any moral danger affecting Timothy, and no knowledge of any complicity with the false teachers.

The influence of these men upon Timothy is discovered, however, in another direction. He is accused of being 'envious of their easy gainful lives.' This is the unkindest cut of all—a foul blow, if ever there was one. The evidence? 'If any man teacheth a different doctrine . . . supposing that godliness is a way of gain . . . for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O Man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness . . . (1 Ti

¹ Alford insists, and rightly, that in keeping with the context, the primary reference in 'keep thyself pure' must be to ecclesiastical purity, and not to personal chastity. There must be no hasty or unworthy admissions to the ministry, else Timothy will thereby become a partaker of other men's sins. From all such irregular participation he must keep himself pure. So far v.²². And when it is observed that in v.²⁴ the same subject—the judging of candidates for the ministry—is resumed, the conclusion seems inevitable that v.²³, with its reference to wine, is an interpolation.

6^{s-11}.) Timothy is urged to flee these things, so of course the Man of God must have been pursuing them. Those who pursue them are described as having gone astray from the faith, but Timothy though pursuing is still in some strange manner to be reckoned a 'Man of God' and Paul's 'true child in faith'!

This, of course, is only one more example of the method of interpretation of which complaint has already been made. A warning is issued, an exhortation given, then the grounds for it must be found in some weakness of Timothy. In such fashion he is found guilty of being quarrelsome, recluse, susceptible to private influence, etc. etc. On the same lines, anything could be proved. As a *reductio ad absurdum* the following may be commended. On the words, 'Exhort the younger women as sisters, in all purity' (1 T 5²), Horton has this comment: 'Titus (2: 6) is to hand over the younger women to the elder. Probably Paul knew well the relative susceptibility of his two lieutenants.' Evidently Titus as squire of dames was not to be trusted. Poor Titus; but a feather in Timothy's cap at last!

IV.

From the examination of the earlier part of Timothy's career an impression was gained of a character of quite unusual strength and steadfastness, and this is in nowise diminished by any fair interpretation of the evidence from the Pastorals. Indeed, the positive references to Timothy in these letters tend rather to heighten that impression. On any other view of his character the whole situation becomes impossible. All the parties concerned—Paul, Timothy, and the Ephesians—are put in a thoroughly false position, if Timothy be thought of as weak and erring. Thus, from the Apostle's point of view the situation in Ephesus was critical, and had long been regarded by him with anxiety (cf. Ac 20^{28f.}). It called for a strong man. But if Timothy was so exceptionally weak, and if Paul insisted on his remaining in Ephesus against his better judgment, then the Apostle must be held guilty of that very fault against which he was so careful to warn Timothy, namely, of becoming a partaker of other men's sins. So far as we know, there was nothing particularly pressing in the condition of affairs in Macedonia. If he could find no better representative than Timothy, his clear duty was

to go to Ephesus himself and take charge in person.

Then, how could Timothy carry on his work in such circumstances? He was there to check false teaching, to settle Church order, and to see that no one unworthy was admitted to office. But—the judge was guilty, who was to try the prisoners! How, then, could Timothy with a good conscience, rebuke, charge, exhort?

As for the Ephesians, how could they be expected, with true hearts, to look up to and respect one who, on the most merciful view, was shy, despondent, not over clever, reluctant to serve, timid, quarrelsome, ascetically minded, and who at his worst was a shirker, a coward, a deserter, and covetous as well? How could discipline be maintained in such circumstances? Imagine Timothy attempting to deal with some false teacher who was making of godliness a way of gain. Imagine him defied and put in a corner by some such nimble-witted Greek, and in despair appealing to the authority of the great Apostle, diving into his pocket, producing the letter and reading out the passage already quoted dealing with such matters. Could human nature resist the inevitable *tu quoque*—'And thou, O Man of God, dost thou flee these things'? No, the situation will not bear examination.

V.

How, then, are we to think of Timothy? The true point of view is given in the following words of Sir W. M. Ramsay.

'While Paul is full of anxiety that Timothy shall discharge the difficult duty successfully, the anxiety is tempered by his deliberate judgment and confidence that the younger man will acquit himself well: 6^{20f.} is full of that confidence: some have erred, but Timothy will not err or misunderstand his charge. Timothy is addressed as "Man of God" (6¹²): while Paul expected that the Asian Christians would look up to Timothy, and that Timothy should exact from them the respect due to his position (4¹²), he was careful to show by his address that he paid to Timothy the same respect which he expected that the Asians should pay.'¹

A like measure of respect must also be exacted from modern readers of these Epistles. Such as we have seen Timothy to be, when Paul wrote

¹ *Expositor*, March 1911.

concerning him to the Philippians, so he continued to be to the end. Paul's true child in faith, much loved and entirely lovable. Well versed in the Apostle's ways in all the churches, a follower to the end of his teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings (2 Ti 3¹⁰). Entirely capable and trustworthy—full of the spirit of power, love, and discipline. Confronted with many difficulties,

and beset by such temptations as are common to all men, yet, through them all, fighting the good fight of faith, and taking his share of hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Absolutely like-minded with Paul, and suffering, like him, the loss of all things. And if, in addition, the tradition of his martyrdom be accepted, then, surely, as far as is humanly possible, we have in Timothy the lineaments of a hero and a saint.

Contributions and Comments.

The Forms Σειραχ and Ἀκελδαμαχ as Transcriptions of סירא and אקלדמא.

THERE is a tradition to the effect that St. Luke was a Syrian, a native of Antioch. His Greek, as was already noted by one of the early Fathers, is certainly the purest in the N.T.; yet, more particularly in Acts, it shows various phenomena which point to a strong Semitic influence, and which, as the present writer thinks, suggest an Aramaic or Hebrew original. The Greek translation of this may possibly have been published by Luke himself.

As one of the linguistic phenomena in question, the peculiar and much-discussed form Ἀκελδαμαχ, with final χ, is probably to be explained, not as a misunderstanding, or an inexact transcription, or a dialectical pronunciation, but rather as representing an original Aramaic form, and therefore as quite correct. The final χ is found also in the name of the writer of Ecclus., the Σοφία Σειραχ; and as the Greek editor of Sirach translated that work from the Hebrew original of his grandfather (see the Prologue), the explanation of the form Σειραχ will have to be sought in the Hebrew original. And so with the Ἀκελδαμαχ of Acts. The original words would in each case be written in the square Hebrew character, thus—

סירא אקלדמא

Then, as the translator desired to reproduce the consonantal structure of the words as precisely as possible, he rendered the Heb. guttural (which is organic and necessary in this Aram. noun-form) by a Greek character which looks almost identical with the Heb. א, and is at the same time a guttural—

i.e. X. Or the translator may have simply transferred the א, thus—

ΣΕΙΡΑΝ ΑΚΕΛΔΑΜΑΝ

the א being subsequently read as, or replaced by, a Gr. X. Something of the kind was done at a later date by the Syriac translators, who, in transcribing Greek words containing an E, render that letter by the Syr. ܐ (ܐ), which is identical in form with a recumbent E, and which, moreover, as they doubtless noticed, occupies the same position in the Syriac as E in the Greek alphabet.

Hence the final guttural of the Greek words in question is to be explained not on merely linguistic, but also on graphological grounds,¹ and is an evidence of the scrupulous precision with which proper names were transcribed.

EBERHARD HOMMEL.

Meran Obermais.

1 Corinthians vi. 2.

MIGHT NOT ἀνάξιό ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων in this verse be taken as a statement, not as a question, and the sentence be translated:

If the world is judged by you,
You are *too good* for the lowest tribunals.

¹ Dalman's assertion (*Grammatik d. jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch*, p. 161, n. 6) that the final χ marks the words as indeclinable will not stand examination, and, in fact, gives no explanation at all. The other example given by Dalman, viz. ἰωσηχ, for ישי (of which there would certainly be another form, אשי), a diminutive of ישי, is, curiously enough, also found in Luke (Lk 3²⁶), though not in Acts. It was, in fact, precisely in diminutives (so-called Hypercoristica) that final א was commonly used, as is attested also by the cuneiform renderings of such pet names in the Persian period, e.g. Zabuda', Taddi', etc.—F. HOMMEL.