

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

footstool of the Eternal, knowing that though "no man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

A. ROBERTS.

TITUS AND CRETE.

(An Introduction to a brief Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to Titus.)

ST. PAUL conferred upon a few of his friends and fellow-workers an immortality of remembrance by simply referring to them in one or more of his Epistles. Some of these, like Apollos, Timothy, Trophimus, Silas, Crispus, Aquila, and Priscilla, are also mentioned in the Acts. On the other hand, all that we know of Titus is gathered from the Letters of St. Paul. It is impossible to explain the silence of St. Luke with reference to an energetic fellow-labourer so fully trusted and so highly commended by the Apostle, and one to whom a Letter of so much interest was subsequently addressed. Conjectures on this subject have not been wanting, but they have scarcely the support of ingenious plausibility. The supposition that he was the *Titus*, or *Titius Justus*, of some Manuscripts¹ of the Acts (xviii. 7), is, if genuine, scarcely compatible with the fact that Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the visit to Jerusalem described in Acts xv., a circumstance vouched for by Paul in Galatians ii. 1. The attempt to identify him with either Luke or Timothy or Silvanus (Silas) fails when we remember that Paul speaks

¹ *8*, *E*, *D*, and sundry cursives constitute this authority. Tischendorf (eighth edition) introduces the word *Titius*, not *Titus*, into his text. Tregelles brings it into his margin.

of him as a Greek, and lays emphasis on the fact that each of these other friends of his had been circumcised. Grave difficulties beset each of the identifications on other grounds.¹ Some writers have urged, in explanation of St. Luke's silence, that Luke and Paul were not in one another's company when Titus received his most serious commissions, and that therefore Luke had no occasion for mentioning his presence. This cannot be proved, for St. Paul must have rejoined Luke at Philippi about the very time that the Apostle came from Troas to Macedonia, impelled by restless anxiety for the news which Titus was to bring him from Corinth. Besides, Luke appears to have remained in Philippi through the whole of the memorable journey from that city to Berea, Athens, and Corinth; and yet his memoirs betray ample traces of an intimate acquaintance with all its details. We therefore regard the problem as insoluble, and class it with other inexplicable silences of holy Scripture.

The Epistles of St. Paul draw the portrait of the man with tolerable distinctness. Young Timothy was the son of a Greek by the Jewess Eunice; but before he had been so impressed by the teaching and perils of St. Paul as to become his constant attendant (*cf.* Acts xvi. 1-3), Titus, a born Gentile, must have become Paul's "very own child" (Titus i. 4) in the common faith of the gospel. This is obvious if, with most modern scholars, we identify the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem recorded in Acts xv. with the visit mentioned in Galatians ii. From the latter we learn that Titus, as a Greek, was not circumcised,

¹ Köhler, in *Herzog's Encl.*, shows the extreme arbitrariness of Märcker's identification of Titus with Silas. *Cf.* 2 Cor. i. 19 with 2 Cor. ii. 13.

and that Paul refused to revoke, in his case, a privilege which Peter at the beginning of the gospel had accorded to Cornelius. This refusal of the Apostle, in the heat of the angry controversy with the Judaizers, conferred an invidious distinction on Titus, who apparently had come up to Jerusalem to press the arguments and try the case of religious equality. His toughness of nature and strength of character enabled him to sustain the conflict, which was fought out in his own person. We can only conjecture his previous history. From this time onward he was one of the most trusted and doughty servants of the Apostle. Titus probably accompanied St. Paul on some portions of his second missionary journey (Acts xv. 36-xviii. 22); and from the familiar reference in the Galatian Letter to the circumstance of his non-circumcision, we presume that he was well known to the Churches in Galatia. He may have been left for a while in Ancyra, and have been the identical Church officer and minister to whom St. Paul refers (Gal. iii. 5) as administering the Spirit and working mighty deeds among them. However that may be, Titus followed Paul to Ephesus on his second visit, and witnessed all the intensity of the apostolic zeal, which Paul did not hesitate to review in detail (Acts xx. 17-35). His devoted conduct, self-possession, and wise management of men, were Paul's reasons for making Titus the bearer of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. By 1 Corinthians xvi. 10-12, Timothy and Apollos are excluded from the company of those who bore that solemn communication.

In 1 Corinthians xvi. 11 the bearers of the Epistle are described as "the brethren;" and in 2 Corinthians

xii. 18 they appear to be referred to as "Titus and the brother," who on this first visit had to enforce the rebukes of St. Paul, and press for the "collection." Timothy had quieter and more gentle work to do at Corinth, and was sent, almost contemporaneously (see Acts xix. 22), on some other missions. The Corinthians were told not to frighten him, nor to despise him; and they were enjoined, moreover, neither to detain him, nor to divert him from his purpose. Timothy was to accompany "the brethren," and in their society to rejoin the Apostle. The tone of apology, stimulating suggestion, and fatherly counsel manifested towards his son Timothy differs greatly from the manner of every reference to Titus, who evidently could take care of himself, and be safely entrusted with intricate, difficult, and delicate negotiations. St. Paul appears to have been more dependent upon Titus than Titus was upon Paul. He is described as the Apostle's "brother and companion and fellow-labourer" (*ἀδελφός* and *κοινωνός* and *συνεργός*, 2 Cor. viii. 23); and if he were the bearer of the first Epistle, and enforced the advice of the Apostle upon the Church which had for the moment been thrown into violent confusion by "that wicked person," he must have been a man of strong nerve and fine tact. Other very perplexing questions had disturbed the infant community. Factions had been formed, and the representative and bearer of St. Paul's Letter would have to meet the excited partisans of Apollos and Cephas. Their practice of carrying Church quarrels before the law courts had to be arrested; and all the angry conflict raised by Judaizers concerning the Apostle's doctrine of unclean meats, as

well as the confusions incident to the spiritual manifestations and disorderly scenes that had occurred at love-feasts and at the Eucharist, called for firm and wise dealing. Some of the Corinthians, moreover, had denied the resurrection of Christ and of Christians, and had failed to render a generous support to that apostolate to the Gentiles with which Paul and Barnabas had been entrusted by the Church at Jerusalem. The Apostolic rebukes of their sins and defects were sure to excite vehement emotion; and whether or not Titus was the bearer of St. Paul's Epistle, he was clearly commissioned to enforce its teaching, and report the result to the Apostle. Need we wonder that the Apostle was nervously anxious to learn from Titus the effect of their united remonstrance and counsel? St. Paul had left Ephesus after the uproar in the theatre: he would have liked to have made his intended journey to Macedonia by way of Corinth, but altered (2 Cor. i. 15, 16) his route, and awaited the result of the first Epistle. He made his way to Troas, and "*a door was opened there unto me of the Lord, (but) I found no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother*" (2 Cor. ii. 12). Finding that no Macedonian vessel which touched at Troas brought Titus to him, he took ship, and went himself to Macedonia, to abbreviate his suspense; but even then he said, "*Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears.*" But at length *by the coming of Titus and by the consolation (παρακλήσει) wherewith he was consoled in the Corinthians* (2 Cor. vii. 6, 7), St. Paul was himself comforted. The ingenuity and firmness, the mingled

gentleness, loyalty, and devotion, with which Titus had discharged his most difficult task, and maintained the credit of the Apostle against the formidable odds already referred to, provide a highly favourable and vivid sketch of the character of this brother and fellow-labourer of the Apostle. Timothy was not equal to the task, Apollos declined to undertake it. Titus not only discharged it with admirable patience and success, but was ready, even eager, to go back to Corinth with the *second* Letter, and to complete the delicate service which he had commenced a year before (*cf.* 2 Cor. viii. 6 with xii. 18). Since *he had begun*, Paul desired him *also to finish among the Corinthians the same grace or gift*. The eager interest with which he responded to the appeal seemed like a Divine inspiration. "God," says Paul, "put it into his heart." A private letter addressed to Titus in the midst of these negotiations would have possessed great interest, but we know nothing of his proceedings until many years have elapsed.

The Apostle, meanwhile, had himself visited Corinth, and had written the Letters to the Galatians and the Romans; he had made two visits to Jerusalem, had been detained in Cæsarea, imprisoned in Rome, and had once more, as we believe, visited Ephesus, Philippi, and Corinth. Among other places, we learn from the Epistle to Titus that the Apostle had paid a visit to the island of Crete. We are not to suppose that during this visit the Churches of Crete were founded. Jews and proselytes from Crete were present at Pentecost (Acts ii. 11), and heard and saw the wonders of that day. Doubtless these converts

carried to the island of Crete, as others did to Cyrene, Cyprus, and Rome itself, the first tidings of the new faith, and of the kingdom over which the exalted Jesus reigned. At this period the island of Crete, —having, 69 B.C., been conquered by Cecilius Metellus—was associated with the *Cyrenaica*, to form one senatorial province.¹

There was a strange blending of races and religions upon the island, and though in earlier times their principal cities had enjoyed separate government, and contended for the *hegemony* of the country with fierce animosity, yet they were capable on occasion of combining with each other, of sinking their mutual jealousies, and of presenting a united front to their common foe. From this circumstance the Greek word “syncretise” (*συγκρητίζουσι*) came into customary use. The Cretans in the earliest times of their history adopted the most superstitious and debasing forms of heathen worship. Porphyry tells us that the practice of sacrificing youths to Cronos was introduced amongst them.² Clemens Alexandrinus³ confirms the allegation. Crete kept aloof from the great conflict between Greece and Persia, and took no part in the Peloponnesian war. Their political institutions bore a superficial resemblance to those of Sparta, but there was less drill, feebler sense of order, a fainter desire for education or progress; and the Cretans in early days were accused of being “liars, evil beasts, and indolent gluttons.” This report may to some extent reflect the hatred of the

¹ According to Gesenius and Knobel, Crete is the *Caphtor* of Deut. ii. 23 and Jer. xlvii. 4, though others identify Caphtor with the coast-land of the Delta. From its salubrious climate, Hippocrates sent his patients thither.

² *De Abſtinentia*, ii. 56.

³ *Cohort. ad Gentes*, 36.

more vigorous and enterprising tribes occupying other islands in the Ægean Archipelago. It is dangerous to speculate upon the affinities of their religious ideas with those either of Phœnicia, Phrygia, or Achaia. They play an important part in the mythological history of Greece, and they boasted the possession, not only of the birthplace, but of the *tomb* of Zeus! There is no trace of either Egyptian worship or ideas among their monuments, but there is quite sufficient monumental evidence to shew the eagerness with which they had practised the orgiastic rites of Zeus, and the voluptuous abominations of the worship of Dyonyusus.¹ The population in its flourishing days must have been great. Ptolemy, Strabo, Virgil, and Horace refer to the existence of a hundred cities in the island, and the ruins of many of these may still be seen. The length of the island, from Cape Salmone on the east to Criumetopon on the west, is not less than one hundred and forty miles. The narrowest part of the island is near the port of Phœnix—a spot memorable in the history of St. Paul. On his journey from Cæsarea to Malta, a violent gale appeared to be the sole reason why he and his companions were not permitted to winter at Crete. Sweeping under the lee of Crete, the captain of the vessel made for the harbour of “Fair Havens,” nigh unto which was the city of Lasœa; but loosing thence, contrary to St. Paul’s wish and advice (Acts xxvii. 12, 21), with the hope of making the haven of Phœnix, they were caught by a north-eastern typhoon from Mount Ida, which drove them towards Clauda, and wrecked them

¹ Pashley’s “Travels in Crete,” vol. ii. c. 21.

on Malta. Doubtless at this very period there were numerous communities of Christians struggling, without apostolic help, into misdirected activity and theologic confusion. The mixed population of Asiatics and Greeks, characterized by indolence, untrustworthiness, and credulity, furnished fruitful soil for a rank growth of dangerous speculation, and were easy of access to any pretentious teachers who had new views to promulgate or new methods of life to suggest.

The infant Churches were in some respects in very similar conditions to that of the Christians of Ephesus. They were exposed to a similar eclectic blending of thought and manners. There was, moreover, a large Jewish population,¹ so that Christianity had all the stimulus and all the disadvantage of their eager belief and their religious pride.

We cannot affirm that St. Paul and his companions had any opportunity for pursuing their accustomed missionary work during the brief sojourn at Lasea; but he probably resolved, if opportunity should ever arise, to visit the cities of Crete, and proclaim among them the gospel of righteousness and love.

In previous articles² I have endeavoured to shew the extreme improbability that the Church at Ephesus, during the three years of St. Paul's residence there, could have attained the degree of ecclesiastical development referred to in the Epistles to Timothy. A similar difficulty frustrates Wieseler's hypothesis that the visit made to Crete by St. Paul and Titus

¹ The town of *Gortyna* was especially signalized as the residence of Jews (1 Mac. vx. 23.) in the letters passing between Romans and Simon Maccabæus. Moreover, Philo (*Legatio ad Caium*. 36) tells us that the island was full of Jews in his day.

² See EXPOSITOR, vol. i.

took place at that early part of his ministry. On the other hand, no serious difficulty arises if we accept the tradition that the imprisonment of Paul came to a favourable termination, and make the hypothesis of a prolonged period of missionary labour, concerning which the "pastoral epistles" give us the only definite hints. The references to the movements of both Paul and Apollos, and also of Titus himself, in the Epistle before us, are in themselves additional reasons for refusing to intercalate them in the midst of the Ephesian ministry. We judge that Paul (Chap. i. 5) had visited Crete and left Titus behind him, to complete his work. Now if this work included the appointment of elders "in every city," and the bestowment of various advice upon different classes, it is difficult to imagine it accomplished in less than several months of toil. The "elders" whom Titus was to ordain were to possess the qualification of being fathers of "believing children." A quiet indication is thus supplied that some length of time must have elapsed since their first conversion to Christ. Paul hoped to send (Chap. iii. 12) Tychicus and Artemas to Titus—implying a further delay—and he then urges upon Titus to join him at Nicopolis, where he had "determined to spend the winter." I do not think that Wieseler's hypothetical journey of St. Paul to Corinth, before the despatch by the hands of Titus of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, at all lightens the difficulty, but rather increases it; for this chronological arrangement clashes seriously with the very explicit mention in the Acts of a *three* years' residence in Ephesus, which would on this hypothesis be se-

riously curtailed. The three Pastoral Epistles represent a state of the Apostle's mind, a condition of the Churches, and a series of mutually consistent and closely related facts, to which they give sufficient testimony. In ordinary literature we want no better evidence for simple biographical details than the existence of such letters. We gather details from them, and are content. Whether Paul went to Ephesus on his final visit before or after his visit to Crete cannot be decisively established. The most probable supposition is that, since Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3), he must have then already paid his visit to Crete; and that while in Nicopolis, where he proposed to winter, he was a second time arrested and taken prisoner to Rome. From his lonely cell, on the eve of his martyrdom, he penned his second letter to Timothy, and in that touching Epistle we find the final reference to Titus, who is said to have gone into Dalmatia. There is no reason whatever for believing that Titus had deserted his father in the faith, or that in this journey he had done other than fulfil the wishes of the dying Apostle.

In future papers we shall gather from the Letter itself some of the most mature exhibitions of the Apostle's thought, and his latest advice on the duties of the minister, the citizen, and the slave. The words of guidance and direction are addressed to one who had shewn, in various and delicate circumstances, fine tact and strong nerve, personal independence and power of conciliation. He left behind him in Crete a name and a sacred memory. The modern *Candia* claims the honour of his tomb. Two consid-

erable Churches were dedicated to him in the island, and he was regarded as its patron saint. After the conquest of Crete by Venice, the Venetians also claimed Titus, by the side of St. Mark, as their patron too. Pashley discovered a fountain, said to have been used by St. Paul for the baptism of his converts, and amid other superstitious tributes to his memory, found that the Apostle was credited with having driven the wild beasts from the island.

THE GOLDEN CENSER.

A NOTE ON HEBREWS ix. 4.

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in enumerating the contents of the Holy of Holies in the Mosaic Tabernacle, mentions in the foremost place, and even before the ark of the covenant, χρυσοῦν θυματήριον, translated in our Version "the golden censer." But even if it could be shewn that any golden censer was kept in the inner sanctuary, why, it may be asked, should such a vessel have so prominent a position assigned to it? The "altar of incense," which some have supposed to be meant, is excluded by the fact that it was outside the veil, in the Holy Place, and that it was not made of gold, but, like the ark itself, was only plated with gold.

The word θυματήριον itself, as Dean Alford has remarked, may express "anything having regard to or employed in the burning of incense." May it not then have been used by this author to denote the "mercy-seat," which formed the covering (Heb. *kap-pôreth*) of the ark, and was its most important part?