ST. PAUL IN EPHESUS.¹

THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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IN this paper I propose to discuss a single problem—that of the date of the Epistle to the Philippians. The traditional view is that the letter was written from Rome at some point in the period of two years during which Paul was awaiting trial there. In recent years this view has been seriously challenged by rival theories which would put the composition either during Paul’s imprisonment at Caesarea (Acts xxiii-xxvi) or during a hypothetical imprisonment at Ephesus. The Caesarean theory seems to me to be open to fatal objections, so that the real issue is between Rome and Ephesus: it is that issue that I wish to consider.

So long as the traditional view held the field, it determined the exegesis of the Epistle. We knew from Acts that the Apostle was a prisoner in Rome, whither he had been sent by the Procurator of Judaea, Festus, after he had demanded to be tried in the Emperor’s court (Acts xxv, 9-12). It is true that King Agrippa had expressed the opinion to Festus that, but for his appeal, Paul might well have been released there and then (Acts xxvi, 30-32). Nevertheless the appeal had been made, and a trial in Rome under Nero might well be only less perilous than an acquittal and release in Judaea. On any day during the Roman period Paul might be summoned to appear before a tribunal which had the power of life and death, and

¹ A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on the 11th of January, 1939.
from whose sentence there was no appeal. On that background all the allusions in the letter had to be understood: references to bonds were obviously references to actual imprisonment which the apostle was undergoing at the time of writing; allusions to death must refer to the possibility of condemnation by the Imperial Court.

Even when the place of composition was fixed at Ephesus instead of Rome, these presuppositions continued to dominate the interpretation of the text, and the upholders of the Ephesian hypothesis believed themselves compelled to posit an Ephesian imprisonment of the writer along with the Ephesian composition of the letter. But the evidence for an Ephesian imprisonment of Paul—apart from the internal evidence of Philippians itself—is so weak as to be negligible. The reference to fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus (I Cor. xv, 30-32) cannot be taken in any but a metaphorical sense without raising the most serious difficulties. Nor is the case any better with the allusions in Rom. xvi. There (v. 3 f.) mention is made of Prisca and Aquila who had risked their necks when Paul was in danger of his life. This can hardly refer to an imprisonment on a capital charge. If Paul were in such a case, it is hard to see how his friends, by risking their necks, could protect his: the most they could do would be to share his fate, whatever it might be. Again in v. 7 Andronicus and Junias are called by Paul his 'fellow-prisoners'; but we do not know whether this is literally or metaphorically meant; and even if it is literally meant, we have nothing to show that Paul, Andronicus, Junias (and perhaps Prisca and Aquila too?) had all been in gaol together at Ephesus. We cannot allow much weight, if any, to the testimony of the Marcionite Prologue to Colossians, still less to the existence of a so-called φυλακή Παύλου at Ephesus. Acts knows nothing of an Ephesian imprisonment. In fact if it were not that we start with a preconceived idea that Philippians—must have been written from prison, we should have little inducement to believe in an Ephesian imprisonment at all.

That leads to the first question for discussion: if the Roman origin of Philippians is given up, is there anything in the letter itself to compel the conclusion that it was written from prison?
Repeated readings of the letter itself confirm me in the opinion that not only is there nothing in the letter to compel us to think that the writer was a prisoner, but also that there are several facts that seem to point in the opposite direction. Let us begin by examining the references to 'bonds' and suffering for the Gospel.

The first is Phil. i, 7. καθὼς ἐστι δίκαι ἡ ἐμοὶ τὸ ὄρο φρ νεὶν ὑπὲρ πάντων υἱών, διὰ τὸ ἔχειν μὲ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑ ἀσ, ἐν τε τ ἢ δ σ ἰ-μον καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τ ὑ εὐαγγελίῳ καὶ συνη ὕνω ὑς μον ἡς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς δίνας. The intimate union between Paul and the Philippian Christians has found expression in the way in which they have shared in his χάρις. The χάρις here must be given the same meaning as in Rom. i, 5; xii, 3, 6; xv, 15; I Cor. iii, 10; Gal. ii, 9; Eph. iii, 2, 7, 8. It is the privilege of suffering for, defending, and establishing the Gospel. In this apostolic task the Philippians have taken their share from the beginning until now. Consequently when Paul speaks of his bonds and the successful defence of the Gospel, he must mean all experiences of that kind from his first day in Philippi to the time of writing; and there is no reason why we should suppose that the phrase ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου refers specially to an imprisonment in Ephesus.

Phil. ii, 17 f. must, I think, be understood al o in a general way. There, after exhorting them to live in such a way as to bring credit on his apostleship he goes on: ἄλλ' εἰ καὶ σπεν μαὶ ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πάτεως ὑμῶν, χαίρω καὶ συγχαιρώ πᾶσιν υἱῶν· τό δ' αὐτο καὶ ύμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετε μοι. The careful and conscious parallelism in the construction is surely meant to lead us to the simple and natural interpretation of the verses. In embracing the Gospel of the love of God both Paul and his converts have laid themselves open to the hatred and enmity of 'a crooked and perverse generation.' He and they have to pass through difficulties and dangers, to make sacrifices—perhaps the supreme sacrifice. The main point on which Paul

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1 I take ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς . . . εὐαγγελίῳ with what follows (so Lightfoot and Dibelius). On the sense of χάρις see J. A. Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 224 ff., and for βεβαιώσεις, Deissmann, Bible Studies, 108.
insists is that like experiences call for like reactions. ‘We are all,’ he says in effect, ‘in the same straits: let us show the same invincible joy in facing the odds against us.’ Here again I do not see anything to compel us to think that, when he writes those words, Paul is actually in prison facing the imminent possibility of condemnation on a capital charge.

Similarly in iv, 14, καλὸς ἐπούρασε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει, the immediate reference is doubtless to a particular θλίψει, where θλίψει means the suffering which the enemies of the Cross of Christ are always ready to inflict upon the servants of Christ. But there is nothing to indicate that this particular θλίψει is imprisonment; and indeed the context suggests that it is more likely to be the oft-repeated experience of being without food or shelter or friends among people indifferent or even hostile to his message. Paul, no doubt, found himself in that position often enough when he began in a new place; and in such circumstances the help of his friends at Philippi would be doubly welcome.

The crucial passage, however, is i, 12-30. In this passage Paul is speaking about his own affairs. The first thing he has to say is that, contrary to expectation, events have turned out to the advantage of his missionary work in two ways. First it has become obvious ἐν ὅλω τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσι that Paul’s imprisonment was on account of his religion (and, we are left to infer, not on account of any crime committed by him). I think that the phrase ἐν ὅλω τῷ πραιτωρίῳ must, in view of the following καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσι, be taken to mean a body of people; and, in that case, the most natural view is that the Praetorium is the Roman court either at Rome itself or somewhere in the provinces. We are thus led to the view that Paul is writing about a trial that lies in the past. The most natural way to understand that it had helped on Paul’s missionary work will be to suppose that, at the trial, he had been acquitted. If so, he is not likely to be writing from prison. In the second place the course of events has favoured the work by the fact that the majority of the brethren, filled with confidence by the proceedings against Paul, are themselves

1 Cf. G. Kittel, Lexicographia Sacra, p. 23.
preaching the word with the utmost boldness. If Paul was, in fact, languishing in prison, it is not easy to see how that could be an encouragement to the brethren to go on with the preaching. If they did so, it would presumably be in spite of, not because of, what had happened to the Apostle. But if Paul had been acquitted, their confident boldness is at once explained.

The remainder of this long paragraph (vv. 19-30) is occupied with reflections of a more general character. If he thought only of himself, he would be happy to die and enter into the bliss of being with Christ. But the glory of his Master and the well-being of his converts alike demand that he should remain at his post. It is a work of difficulty and danger and suffering, but it has its own peculiar rewards. He and his Philippian converts have the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but also of suffering for Him. In all this there is nothing to suggest that Paul is in danger of sentence of death, any more than in the passage in II Cor. iv, 7-18.

Our conclusion so far is that the statements in the letter, which might seem to favour the view that it was written from prison, turn out on closer examination to support the opposite view. There are some further considerations, of a general nature, that seem to lead to the same conclusion.

(i) It may be taken for granted that if Philippians was written from Ephesus, it was written before I Cor., that is, at a relatively early date in the Ephesian ministry. But it is to be observed that in the accounts of Paul's missionary work in Acts, trouble with the authorities usually puts an end to his activities in a place, at any rate for the time being. On the hypothesis that Philippians was written from prison in Ephesus, we have to suppose that, on being released, Paul was able to resume the very activities which had been the cause of his imprisonment in the first instance. This seems very unlikely.

(ii) We have to remind ourselves that imprisonment in the Roman Empire of St. Paul's day is not to be thought of as on a par with imprisonment in modern times. In Roman criminal

1 Cf. Digest, xlviii, 19, 8, 9. Carcer enim ad continendos homines, non ad puniendos haberi debet, with Buckland's remarks in Cambridge Antc. Hist., xi, 843;
law the primary purpose of a prison was to hold persons awaiting trial; and the use of imprisonment as a punishment was exceptional. If, however, Philippians was written from an Ephesian prison, we should have to regard Phil. i, 12-14 as an account of the trial and assume that Paul, at the time of writing, was ‘serving his sentence.’ This also seems very unlikely.

These general considerations would not tell against the Roman imprisonment as they do against the Ephesian; for in the case of Rome, Paul is awaiting trial; and, however the trial may have gone, he does not appear to have done any further mission work in Rome after it.

We may now pass to the next step in the argument. Not only is the evidence insufficient to prove that Philippians was written from prison: there are also positive indications in the

Greenidge, _Legal Procedure of Cicero’s Time_, 513-16. Greenidge says that imprisonment was not recognised as a punishment; but preventive imprisonment is sometimes used as a penalty; and (p. 516) ‘Thus it was that a part of the mere administrative machinery of the State became used for the ends of criminal justice. It was a use to which the Government was sometimes forced by the decline of corporal punishment and the growth of the theory of exile; for imprisonment was almost the only method which the later Republic possessed of securing the deterrent effects of punishment without resorting to extreme measures.’ See also the articles _Carcer_ and _Coercitio_ in Pauly-Wissowa, and Mommsen, _Römisches Strafrecht_, 48 ff., 299 ff., 960 ff. In the provinces under the Empire, there does not seem to have been any lack of punishments apart from imprisonment. Paul tells us that he had been three times flogged at the time when he wrote II Cor. x-xiii (xi, 24: τρις ἐσαθάδισθην). There were also fines, various forms of exile, condemnation to penal servitude in the mines or quarries (ad metalla), and death.

If Paul was in prison at Ephesus, it would be before or after trial. If before trial, we have to explain away Phil. i, 12-14, which looks like the account of a trial that has already taken place. If after trial, it may be to await execution of some sentence that has been passed—and of this there is no trace whatever—or it may be a period of confinement imposed (by way of coercitio) by the provincial Governor. But in that case we have to take account of the fact that the object of coercitio is to compel obedience: and consequently if Paul had been put in prison to curb his missionary activities, he would not be likely to be released in order to resume them in the same place. And if, after his release, he was found doing the same things for which he had previously been committed, the treatment on the second occasion would not err on the side of leniency. Paul would probably have found it necessary to play his trump card—the appeal to Caesar—at Ephesus.
letter itself which strongly suggest, if they do not prove, that St. Paul was at liberty when he wrote. He speaks of his future plans, especially of a visit to Philippi, in the manner of one who is free to determine his own movements. He mentions the proposed visit in i, 26 f., and there is a suggestion that his arrival may be delayed. But any delay would seem to be due to general mission difficulties rather than to incarceration. St. Paul is too busy fighting against opposition of all kinds to be able to get away to Philippi.1 In ii, 19-24 we are told that Timothy is to be sent first to Philippi to visit the Church there and report to Paul.2 After that Paul hopes to go to Philippi in person, and there is no hint that the decision to set out will depend on anyone but the Apostle himself. The plans may be as yet rather indefinite, but they read like the plans of a free man.

If the argument up to this point is sound, it at once makes an end of the theories that the epistle was written from Rome or from Caesarea; for in both places Paul was a prisoner, and our conclusion is that the writer of Philippians was not. It also makes an end of the theory that the letter was written from an Ephesian prison; but it does not affect the hypothesis that it was written from Ephesus. We may now turn to examine this hypothesis more closely. There are several arguments in its favour.

(i) The travel plans fit in very well with what we are told in I Cor. In Philippians Paul and Timothy are still together

1 Assuming that Philippians was written from Ephesus, I think that the real reason why Paul cannot leave the city immediately is not that he is in prison but that—as he says later in I Cor. xvi, 8 f.—ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἑφέσῳ ἐώς τὴν Πεντηκοστής· θύρα γάρ μοι ἀνέωνε μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοὶ.

2 The eulogies of Timothy should probably not be pressed, nor the somewhat depreciatory remarks about the others. These things may perhaps be partly explained by the fact that Timothy does not appear to have been a very forceful personality (cf. I Cor. xvi, 10 with II Tim. i, 6 ff.; I Tim. iv, 12: even if the Pastorals are spurious they should doubtless be regarded as reliable on this point, seeing that the natural tendency of the tradition would be to avoid disparaging the leaders in the great first missionary campaign of the Church). On the other side it may be that Paul—himself a very determined character—was beginning to find himself crossed by others who had minds and wills of their own (Phil i, 15 ff.). In that case the docility—if that is the right word—of Timothy would appear doubly virtuous in the eyes of his chief.
(i, 1); and Timothy is to be sent to Philippi soon. On his return Paul will come in person (ii, 19-24). Nothing is very definite and no times are set. In I Cor. xvi, 5-9, the arrangements are more precise. Paul writes from Ephesus that he will stay where he is until Pentecost, then visit Macedonia during the summer, and probably winter at Corinth. In I Cor. iv, 17 he says that he is sending Timothy to Corinth; and in xvi, 10 the natural interpretation is that Timothy has already left for Macedonia on his way to Corinth ¹ and that the letter to the Corinthians, being sent direct, will reach Corinth before him. The Philippian travel-plans thus seem to belong to an earlier stage than those in I Cor.

(ii) We note the absence from Philippians of any reference to the collection for the Jerusalem Church, which is so important by the time that I Cor. xvi, 1-4 was written. In I Cor. xvi, 1 Paul says that he has already given instructions to the Galatian churches. This may well have been done, as J. Weiss suggests, verbally during the Galatian visit recorded in Acts xviii, 23. Now in II Cor. viii, 1-7 the collection has been completed in the Macedonian churches, and Paul speaks with high appreciation of the generosity that had been shown by them. The collection had been planned before I Cor. xvi was written, and probably before Paul’s arrival in Ephesus: so far as Macedonia is concerned it is complete when he arrives in Macedonia at the end of the Ephesian period. A simple explanation of the absence of all reference to it in the letter would be that it was a matter that was to be arranged personally by Timothy when he went to Philippi. In that case Philippians would fit naturally into place before I Cor.

(iii) There are a number of expressions in Philippians that suggest that the interval between the foundation of the Church at Philippi and the writing of the letter has not been a very long one.

¹ Timothy did in fact leave Ephesus for Macedonia, along with Erastus, while Paul was still in Ephesus (Acts xix, 21 f.); and Paul followed later (Acts xx, 1; II Cor. ii, 12 f.).

² Der erste Korintherbrief (Meyer’s Kommentar), p. 381.

³ It may be that Paul felt a little shy about pressing the claims of the Jerusalem community at the moment when the Philippians had just made an effort on his own behalf.
(a) In i, 26 Paul uses the phrase τὴς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Here it has been argued that the use of πάλιν is most suitable if the next visit of the Apostle to Philippi will be the second. In the same paragraph (υυ. 29 f.) he tells the Philippians that they have been granted the favour not only of believing in Christ but also of suffering for Him, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες οὗτοι εἰστε ἐν εἰμοί, καὶ νῦν ἀκ ὑπέτε ἐν ἑμοί. It is unlikely that the Philippian Christians were in prison when Paul wrote to them; and the 'struggle' should doubtless be understood in a more general way of opposition to the Gospel. Paul had suffered from it when he was at Philippi. He now says to his converts: 'You saw my troubles in Philippi; now you hear of further troubles, which I have had to undergo.' This way of speaking is not very natural in a letter written during the Roman imprisonment. To say: 'You remember my troubles in Philippi; well, I am having the same troubles in Rome,' would suggest that the intervening ten or twelve years had been a period of unbroken calm. And we know that that was not the case. The sentence reads simply and naturally if we suppose that the interval between the two troubles is quite short.

(b) Again in ii, 12 Paul speaks of the obedience that is expected of his beloved Philippians not only when he was present with them, but now much more when he is away. Here, too, it looks as if there had only been one παρουσία of Paul's—that during which the Church at Philippi was founded—and that the ἀποστολή has not been extremely prolonged.

(iv) Lastly, there is the point that has been made so often that there is no need to repeat the arguments: that if Philippians was written from Rome, Paul's remarks on the subject of the gift sent from Philippi cannot be construed except as a rebuke, and a sarcastic rebuke at that. If the letter is dated before I Cor., this difficulty does not arise. The Philippians have had no opportunity to send a gift because Paul has been away to Syria in the interval between his departure from Corinth and the beginning of the Ephesian ministry (Acts xviii, 18-23).

It thus seems that there are good grounds for believing in
the Ephesian origin of the epistle, but not for believing in the Ephesian imprisonment. This brings us to the third and most adventurous part of the discussion, in which I must try to give an exegesis of Phil. i, 12-30 without putting St. Paul into an Ephesian gaol. The suggestion which I venture to make is that Paul, writing at a comparatively early date in the Ephesian ministry, is referring back to the events which put an end to his first stay in Corinth, and reporting the subsequent developments there (vv. 12-17). He then goes on to speak of his own reactions to these things (vv. 18-26), and of his hope that the Philippian Christians will not allow themselves to be intimidated by the opponents of the Gospel, but will stand fast in the faith even if it means struggle and suffering (vv. 27-30). Let us look a little more closely at vv. 12-17.

Paul begins to speak of his own affairs; but at once, and characteristically, turns to consider their bearing on the progress of the Gospel, which is for him the one thing that really matters. From that point of view things have gone excellently with him. He has had a troublesome time, of course; but it has served to help on the work, so that his troubles have really been blessings in disguise. There have been two principal results: the first concerns himself, the second his fellow-Christians. As to himself it has been made clear that his only offence—if it be an offence—is that of being a Christian. This fact has been demonstrated to the general public (τούς λοιπούς πᾶσι) as well as to a smaller circle (ἐν ὅλω τῷ παρακολουθεῖ). As we have

1 I take ἐν Χριστῷ with τοὺς δεσμούς μου, and understand Paul to mean that it became obvious that he was under arrest in his capacity as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. The idea is similar to that which is set out more explicitly in I Pe. iv, 14-16. The point is clearly put by O. Linton in Coniectanea Neotestamentica, ii, 9-21: 'Die Hauptsache ist dass es durch die Gerichtsverhandlung allen klar wird, dass er als Christ seine Fesseln trägt, dass er mit Christus stirbt oder lebt. Er steht und fällt mit dem Evangelium.'
abandoned the Roman origin of the letter, the *Praetorium* must be given the sense that it would have in the provinces; either the residence of the provincial Governor or the headquarters of the provincial administration. *Praetorium* is the equivalent of our ‘Government House.’ And I think we may go further and say that the context requires us to think of Government House in its judicial capacity. ‘It became clear in the whole Praetorium’ means ‘it became clear to the Proconsular court.’ That implies a trial of some kind in the course of which it was made evident that Paul was not a criminal but, as Government House doubtless put it, a crank. And just such a trial is described for us in Acts xviii, 12-17. There Paul is brought before the Proconsul Gallio by the Jews of Corinth. The charge did not amount to much: teaching men to worship God in ways not in accordance with the (Jewish) Law; but no doubt it was hoped that Gallio would regard this teaching as—to use our own terms—‘conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace,’ and deal with Paul accordingly. This expectation was not realised. According to the account in Acts Gallio said to the Jews:

Εἰ μὲν ἐὰν ἀδίκημα τι ἤραδιούργημα πονη ἑν, ὥ 'Ι ὑδαί ἵ, κατα λογον ἄν ἠνεσώμην ὑμῶν· εἰ δὲ ξητήματα ἐστι περ ἔρι λόγῳ καὶ ὁν μά-ων κα

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1 In the N.T. *πρατήριον* is regularly used ‘to denote the “pal ce”’ i.e. “official residence” of a Governor’; cf. Mk. xv, 16; Ac. xxiii, 35; and for examples of this meaning in the Papyri see Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary,* s.v. and the excursus in Dibelius’s commentary in *HBNT.* The discussion by Lightfoot in his commentary on the epistle, pp. 99-102, takes account only of the possible senses of *praetorium* on the assumption that the letter is written from Rome. The upholders of the Ephesian hypothesis argue, correctly enough, that we must suppose that there was a *praetorium* at Ephesus since Ephesus was the seat of the Proconsul of Asia; but Corinth was equally the seat of the Provincial of Achaea, and the arguments for the Ephesian *praetorium* are equally valid for the Corinthian.

I may add here that on the theory which I propose, οἴ ἐκ τῆς καίσαρας ὄλικας will be slaves and freedmen in the Imperial service (cf. Zahn, *Einleitung,* i, 391). That such persons were to be found all over the Empire, and in particular at Ephesus, may be taken as certain. In Phil. iv, 22, the reference will be to members of this body in Ephesus, who have been converted to Christianity. (See Michaelis, *Theol. Handkomm. ad loc.*)

With that the case was dismissed; and, though the exasperated accusers did create a breach of the peace by beating the unfortunate Sosthenes, 'Gallio was not troubled at all by these things.'

The essential judgement is: there is no crime here, only a dispute about some theological point, on which this court declines to adjudicate. The speech of Gallio and the words of Paul are, I venture to think, just two different ways of expressing that essential judgement: the one, impatient and rather contemptuous, that of the busy Roman official with other and more important matters to think about; the other, pleased and almost triumphant, that of the ardent missionary who sees in the finding of the Court a vindication of himself and his work.

The second result of the proceedings against Paul has been that the majority of the brethren have been filled with confidence and are boldly proclaiming the Gospel. I have already argued that Paul's acquittal would be the strongest possible stimulus to such activity in the part of the brethren. I now add that if I am right in thinking that the trial took place at Corinth, the brethren in question will be the members of the Corinthian Church. Now both Acts and the letters to the Corinthians bear witness that things were moving rapidly in Corinth, and from Corinth outwards through the province of Achaia, in the period after Paul's departure from the city (cf. II Cor. i, 1; Rom. xvi, 1). True, the developments were not all of the kind that Paul desired or approved; but there was activity and zeal. In particular, Acts tells of a very effective mission carried on by Apollos (Acts xviii, 27 f.), and we know from I Cor. that there was a group in Corinth who were probably his converts. Also the Corinthian community had become sufficiently important to claim the attention of the authorities in Jerusalem, and there was a party (the Cephas party) disposed to acknowledge the Petrine claims. We are entitled to think of the period after the trial before Gallio as one of great activity and rapid growth in the Corinthian Church.

1 The translation is that of Lake and Cadbury. See their note ad loc.
Paul goes on (vv. 15-18) to speak further about this missionary activity:

15 τινές μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἐρω, τινές δὲ καὶ δὲ εὐδοκίαν τῶν Χριστοῦ κηρύσσοντον. οἱ μὲν εἰς ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κεῖμαι. οἱ δὲ εἰς ἐριθείας τ' οὐ Χριστὸν καταγγέλλοντοι, οὐχ ἄγνωστοι, οὐδὲνοι θλύσιν ἐγείρεν τοῖς δευτ. ἵνα μου. τί γὰρ; τις ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἰτε προφάσει εἰτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλειται καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρει, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρῆς μαι.

I suggest that the best commentary on these verses is to be found in the first four chapters of I Cor. It is in the Corinthian Church that there is faction and strife, and that at the very time when the letter to the Philippians is being written. It is in Corinth that we find a party who are all for Paul, and others, no doubt equally zealous, who are all against him. We may be sure that all the parties in the Corinthian Church claimed to be good Christians, and that all believed themselves to be proclaiming the pure Gospel. We may go farther and suppose that at the time when he wrote Philippians, Paul did not yet fully realise the seriousness of the Corinthian situation. He has heard of some differences there, and even of opposition to himself; but, after all, even those who are opposed to him personally, are nevertheless preaching the Gospel, and that is the main thing. Later, at the time of the Corinthian correspondence, he has become aware how deep are the rifts in the community, and how evil are the effects on the Christian life and witness of the Church.

Of his opponents Paul says that their purpose is to stir up trouble (θλύσιν ἐγείρεν). Since they are preaching Christianity in some form or other, as Paul himself admits, they can hardly mean to stir up trouble for the Church at large or for the local community where they are active. We can only suppose that it is Paul himself who is the object of their efforts. The question then is how we are to construe τοῖς δευτ. μου. I think that we should take it as instrumental, and understand

1 Is it possible that 'Chloe's people' (I Cor. i, 11) had already arrived in Ephesus when Philippians was being written? In any case there was certainly contact between Paul and Corinth before I Cor. was written.

2 This, the more difficult reading, is to be preferred to θλύσιν ἐπιφέρειν.
that the people in question use the fact that Paul had been under arrest (not for the first time) to undermine his authority in his churches. They could say, not without plausibility, that Paul was getting the Gospel a bad name. Wherever he goes, he seems to get himself involved in brawls which end up in court. He antagonises the synagogues and arouses the suspicions of the Roman authorities.

Now we know from the Corinthian correspondence (and I think that we should also bring in the letter to the Galatians) that during the Ephesian ministry Paul’s position in the Gentile churches, and indeed his status as an Apostle, were both seriously challenged. There is no doubt whatever that the challenge came from the Jewish-Christian wing of the Church, and that its rallying cry—in Corinth at any rate—was the name of Cephas. It does not seem to me beyond the bounds of probability that, when he wrote Philippians, Paul had already heard the first rumblings of the approaching storm.

If that is so, we are in a better position to understand some striking features in the epistle.

(i) There is, first of all, the remarkable emphasis on unity which runs through the letter. The note is struck in the address to all the saints who are in Philippi. It is repeated in the four-fold ‘all of you’ in i, 3-11, and again in i, 27, ὅτι συνέρχεσθε ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι, μακρὸς ψυχῆς συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Once more in ii, 2 f.: ὅτα τοῦτό φρονήσατε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμφωνοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες· μηδὲν κατὰ ἐριθείαν μηδὲν κατὰ κενοδοξίαν . . . and ii, 14: πάντα ποιεῖτε χωρίς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν. Finally in iv, 2: ἐνώδιαν παρακαλῶ, καὶ συντίθην παρακαλῶ, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ. These repeated exhortations to maintain peace and unity in the Philippian Church have added significance if we are right in thinking that Paul knew that there was faction in the Church at Corinth.

(ii) Then there is the remarkable outburst in Chapter iii which has led some commentators to think of interpolation. But there does not seem to be any serious difficulty if Philippians belongs to the early Ephesian period. The fierce warnings have their counterpart in II Cor. x-xiii, and in the letter to the churches of Galatia. In both these documents Paul is fighting
desperately against those who attempted to depreciate him in the eyes of the Gentile churches and questioned his right to the title and privileges of an apostle. In Galatia the mischief has already been done when the letter is written: \( \text{ἀντικρατίζετε} \ \text{εἰς} \ \text{ἀρχάς} \ \text{δι} \ \text{οὕτως} \ \text{ταχέως} \ \text{μεταπίθευσε} \ \text{ἀπό} \ \text{τοῦ} \ \text{kai} \ \text{λακασσαί} \ \text{εἰς} \ \text{ἀς} \ \ldots \ \text{(Gal. i, 6).}

In II Cor. x-xiii it is clear that a considerable section of the Corinthian Church is in revolt against the authority of Paul. At Philippi the situation is not, apparently, so alarming; but it is necessary to deal with this kind of danger almost before it arises.

The nature of the challenge we can easily surmise. It came from persons of Jewish birth. \( \text{Βλέπετε} \ \text{τὴν} \ \text{κατατομὴν} \ \text{can hardly be meant as anything but a savage jest at the} \ \text{περιστέριν.}

It is probable that they were also Christians claiming to stand in the original Palestinian tradition, to be in communion with the original Apostolate. Paul says bitterly (II Cor. xi, 5): \( \text{λογιζομαι} \ \text{γαρ} \ \text{μηδεί} \ \text{υπερτρίκηναι} \ \text{τῶν} \ \text{υπερλίαν} \ \text{απ} \ \text{στ} \ \text{λαν}; \ \text{and in xi. 13:} \ \text{οί} \ \text{γαρ} \ \text{τοιχότου} \ \text{ψευδάμπ} \ \text{στ} \ \text{λ} \ \text{i}, \ \text{εργαί-αι} \ \text{δ'} \ \text{λε} \ \text{i}, \ \text{μετασχηματιζ'} \ \text{μεν} \ \text{i} \ \text{αποστόλους} \ \text{Χριστοῦ.}

He goes on (xi, 22-31) to declare with great emphasis that he is as good a Jew and as good a Christian missionary as any of them, and better than most. It is surely no accident that in Phil. iii, 2 we have the injunction, \( \text{βλέπετε} \ \text{τὸ} \ \text{κακοὺς} \ \text{εργάτας}, \ \text{and that in iii, 5 ff., we have an assertion by Paul of his whole-hearted devotion to Judaism before his conversion,} \ \text{and to Christ since that memorable day on the road to Damascus. It is difficult to compare Phil. iii with II Cor. xi, and we may add Gal. i, 11-17, without feeling convinced that they hang together,} \ \text{that the tension noticeable in Philippians is but a prelude to the crisis revealed by the Corinthian and Galatian correspondence.}

This is perhaps the time to take into account Professor Dodd's theory of what may be called St. Paul's second conversion as it is reflected in II Cor. x-xiii. Accepting the theory in its main outlines, I cannot help thinking that it is more easily credible if Philippians was written before the spiritual experience which so profoundly affected the Apostle. I am unable to persuade myself that in Philippians there is any really serious change in Paul's general outlook and temper, such as is required by the theory of a second conversion. In particular
Chapter iii is more easily understood before the second conversion than after it. Indeed if Philippians is to be dated after the spiritual crisis, Chapter iii can only be regarded as either a relapse or a misplaced survival from an earlier stage in Paul's career.

Nor do I think that the eschatological views expressed in our letter require a late date. In discussing this question it is important to bear in mind that from the time of the Thessalonian correspondence onwards, the urgent problem is to explain the delay of the Parousia. The earliest form of explanation, as given in II Thes. ii, is that a kind of Satanic Parousia must come first, and then the second Advent of the Lord Jesus will take place. Later in I Cor. xv, 20-28, we are told that Christ is risen from the dead and that He reigns until He has subdued all enemies. When the last enemy has been put down the Parousia will take place. Meanwhile Christians are to be 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (I Cor. xv, 58). It seems to me that the eschatological ideas of Philippians are akin to those of I Cor. We may compare Phi. i, 6, ὃ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν υἱῶν ἐγγόν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρις ἡμέρας Ἡσαῦ Χριστοῦ, with I Cor. xv, 58. Again the conclusion of the Christological passage (Phil. ii, 9-11) expresses the same conviction as I Cor. xv, 25 f.: every knee must bow; and all enemies must be subdued. Similarly in Phil. iii, 20 f., the transformation which is to be effected by the Lord Jesus Christ is precisely that which is described in I Cor. xv, 50-54. And it belongs to the power which He has of subjecting all things to Himself (iii, 21; cf. ii, 9-11 and I Cor. xv, 25 f.).

1 To Phil. iii, 20, ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολέμειμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει the nearest parallel is Gal. iv, 26, ἢ δὲ ἀνώ Ἰερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ἢτις ἐστὶ μήτηρ ἡμῶν. At the stage at which Philippians, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians were written the coming of the heavenly kingdom with power, does not seem to mean the negation of existing conditions so much as their transfiguration.

I should like to suggest another link between Philippians and Galatians. I think that the "enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. iii, 18) means enemies of the Messianic Cross—not enemies of Christ. That is, it stands for those to
delayed, but not indefinitely. It is expected that it will come in the lifetime of Paul and his correspondents. Those who have already died in the Lord will be raised, and those who are still living will be changed.

It thus seems to me that Philippians fits in naturally with I Cor. and Gal.; and that the theory of a second conversion of Paul is strengthened if we can place the epistle before the conversion.

With that we may leave the pros and cons and attempt a reconstruction of the circumstances in which the letter was written. Paul, accompanied by Silas and Timothy, had made his way through Asia Minor and had arrived at Troas (Acts xv, 40-xvi, 8), where Paul in a vision by night was entreated by a man of Macedonia to bring the Gospel thither (xvi, 9).

'And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia' (xvi, 10). The appearance of the first person plural at this point may probably be taken to indicate the presence of Luke in the party. The journey by sea from Troas to Neapolis and thence by the Egnatian way to Philippi is described in verses 11 and 12, and the adventures of the missionaries in verses 13-40. These events may probably be dated in the summer of 49. On leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas make their way to Thessalonica (xvii, 1-7) and thence to Beroea, where Timothy reappears. (As the use of "we" in narrative is not a feature of these sections, it may be assumed that Luke had been left behind at Philippi. This supposition is made the more likely by the fact that the use of "we" is resumed once more at Philippi (Acts xx, 5 f.). In that case it

whom the crucified Messiah is a stumbling-block (1. Cor. i, 23 f.). Lint nen puts it (op. cit. p. 18 f.) that it describes those who will not suffer for the Gospel, who want temporal safety as well as eternal salvation. It may be argued that to such persons Judaism (as a religio licita) presents such temporal safety; hence the temptation to get the Christian Church included in the Jewish fold. This is what seems to be meant in Gal. vi, 12, ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπήσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὕτω ἀναγκαίον ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται.

1 For a very full and interesting historical account of the city see Paul Collart, 
may be Luke who is addressed in Phil. iv, 3 as ‘true yokefellow’.) After a stay in Athens (xvii, 15-34), Paul came to Corinth where he worked for some eighteen months (winter 49/50 to summer of 51). In the summer of 51, soon after the arrival of Gallio as pro-consul of Achaea, Paul was brought for trial on charges laid by the Jews of Corinth. This trial and the results that followed are described by Paul in Phil. i, 12-18 and by Luke in Acts xviii, 12-17.

Some time later Paul left Corinth for Syria (Acts xviii, 18), calling at Ephesus on his way. How long he spent in the East we do not know, nor are we told how much time was occupied in the journey through Asia Minor back to Ephesus (xviii, 22 f.). It is, however, very improbable that the arrival in Ephesus was earlier than the autumn of 52 or later than the early part of 55.

On returning to Ephesus Paul was able to come again into close touch with the Philipian community; and if we are right in supposing that Luke was still at Philippi, there would doubtless be a readiness on the part of the Philipians to get into touch with Paul.¹ It may be surmised that on hearing that Paul was in Ephesus the Church of Philippi sent gifts and greetings by the hand of their messenger Epaphroditus, of whom Paul speaks in Phil. ii, 25-30. I would hazard the conjecture that Epaphroditus is to be identified with the Epaphras² who is mentioned in Col. i, 7; iv, 12, and Phm. 23. From what Paul says in Phil. ii, 30 it would seem that he had been acting as an assistant to the Apostle in his missionary work, and that in the course of this work had contracted the illness which almost ended fatally. It is possible that later he returned to this part of the field and made a place for himself in the Churches of the Lycus valley. Still later when Paul is a prisoner in Rome, he comes there to seek the help of the Apostle against false doctrines that are working mischief among his people. The lapse of time between the writing of Philippians and Colossians

¹ It may well be the case that the support of Paul by the Philippian Church was due in the first instance to Luke’s suggestion and encouragement.

would account for the change to the more familiar Epaphras in the later letters. But all this is guesswork.

What does seem fairly certain is that in the early fifties of the first century there was a definite attempt to bring the Gentile Christian communities—and Paul himself—into subjection to the central body in Palestine. Earlier attempts had traded on the name of James the Just—if indeed they had not had his approval. The new movement put forward its claims in the name of Peter, and at the same time questioned the right of Paul to apostolic status. (We have, perhaps, the Palestinian side of the matter in Matt. xvi, 17-19.) Soon we hear of a Cephas party at Corinth and of the defection of the Galatian Churches. It is in the early stages of this crisis that Paul wrote to the Philippians. His letter is above all an expression of his love for them, and an appeal to them to preserve unity with one another and with him in the spirit of Christ. This appeal for unity and loyalty, with its climax in the great Christological passage (ii, 6-11), where Jesus Himself is set forth as the supreme example of self-effacing loyalty and devotion, stands between a report on the factions—as I think—in the Corinthian Church (i, 15-18), and a warning in the strongest terms against the Judaizing emissaries who were already beginning their attempt to undermine the loyalty of the Pauline communities to their Founder (iii, 2-21). It seems to me that this disposition of the material is conscious and deliberate on Paul’s part. The last chapter deals with more personal matters, messages to individuals at Philippi, acknowledgement of the gift from the Church, greetings. The whole letter breathes a spirit of confidence in the love and loyalty of the Philippian community to the Apostle: we have no reason to think that that confidence was misplaced.

1 Gal. ii, 12.
2 I have discussed the interpretation of this passage in The Mission and Message of Jesus, 493-497.