The title of this lecture is deliberately modelled on titles of lectures which my predecessor in
the Rylands Chair delivered in this Library—“St. Paul in Ephesus”\(^1\) and “St. Paul in Greece”\(^2\).\(^3\)
In these lectures (posthumously republished in the volume of \textit{Studies in the Gospels and
Epistles})\(^4\) Professor Manson discussed a number of the earlier epistles of Paul. It is our great
loss that he was not spared to give a lecture, or series of lectures, on “St. Paul in Rome”\(^5\) and
discuss the epistles of the Roman captivity.

\textbf{I}

But are there any epistles which can be ascribed to the years of Paul’s Roman captivity? On
the one hand, some scholars have maintained that all his “captivity epistles” should be dated
to one or more of his earlier imprisonments—in Caesarea,\(^6\) perhaps, or in Ephesus.\(^7\) Their
arguments cannot be dismissed out of hand, and will be considered in due course. On the
other hand, there are those who assure us that most, if not all, of the epistles which have
traditionally been ascribed to Paul’s Roman captivity are not, in fact, epistles of Paul. They
were denied to him, for example, by Ferdinand Christian Baur and his colleagues of the
Tübingen school a century ago.\(^8\) And today it has been claimed that proof of another, and
singularly compelling, kind has been

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forthcoming to establish that of the thirteen epistles which bear Paul’s name only four-those
to the Corinthians, Galatians and Romans—can be certainly regarded as his. This proof of
what is essentially the old Tübingen thesis has been provided, we are told, by the use of the
electronic computer.\(^9\)

Biblical criticism is not the only field to have been invaded by the computer. In an article in
\textit{The Listener} for 27 September 1962, Dr. Kenneth Bisset, Reader in Systematic Bacteriology
in the University of Birmingham, described calculating machines as “the new
fundamentalists” because, thanks to their findings in respect of certain posited genetic
relationships, “we are robbed of our family trees and left with the condition that existed in the

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\(^1\) A lecture delivered in the Library series of public lectures.
\(^4\) Manchester, 1962 (pp. 149 ff., 259 ff.).
\(^5\) Cf. e.g. E. Lohmeyer, “Der Brief an die Philippier” (Göttingen, 1956); Der Kolosser- and der Philemonbrief\(^1\)
\(^6\) Cf. e.g. H. Lisco, Vincula Sanctorum (Berlin, 1900); W. Michaelis, \textit{Die Gefangenschaft des Paulus in Ephesus}
(Güttersloh, 1925); G. S. Duncan, \textit{St. Paul’s Ephesian Ministry} (London, 1929).
to Literary Studies”, \textit{The Times}, 24 April 1963; “A Computer challenges the Church”, \textit{The Observer}, 3
first chapter of Genesis and which lasted until Linnaeus started what used to be the modern system”. “I think,” he went on, “this is one occasion where we should stand firm, tell the machines to mind their own business, and go back to deciding for ourselves what we want to think is important.”

It has been suggested that in their reaction to the findings of the computer on the authorship of the Pauline epistles Professors of Biblical Criticism have been deplorably unscientific, not to say obscurantist; but surely no such charge can be brought against a distinguished biologist, and the biblical critic may safely add his “Amen” to Dr. Bisset’s commonsense utterance. Yet it is not really a question of telling the computer to mind its own business. The computer can be trusted to do just that. Where it is a matter of compiling lexical statistics, concordances and the like, of providing comparative information about sentence-lengths, or of identifying the proper location of manuscript fragments belonging to texts which have already been recorded, the computer does very valuable work, and does it with incomparably greater speed and accuracy than the human mind, eye and hand can hope to emulate. But the computer cannot give out more than is put into it.9

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In the present instance, the computer was fed with material which enabled it to indicate the frequency and distribution of certain conjunctions in the Pauline epistles. It indicated that in this regard the epistles fell into four groups, marked by four distinct patterns of usage. When the computer has yielded a result like this, the next move lies with the human interpreter. But when the human interpreter gets to work, the subjective factor is necessarily introduced. And far be it from me to decry, as some do, the subjective factor; where literary criticism is concerned, it is the subjective factor, properly disciplined, that makes the difference between the good interpreter and the indifferent one. In my case, the subjective factor makes me say that any interpretation which denies Philippians to Paul supplies its own \textit{reductio ad absurdum}. Content, as well as style, is an important criterion in any assessment of authorship; and if it comes to a clash of evidence between the two, what is actually said is ultimately more decisive than the way in which it is said.10

To hold that an author cannot change his style over the years, or cannot exhibit two distinct styles at the same period of his literary development, is to make a very precarious assumption. Some years ago a reviewer of one of my books remarked that I had two quite distinct styles. I believe he was right, and I would hazard the guess that the difference between them (apart from the use of more and less technical terminology) lay in such matters as sentence-length and the lavish or parsimonious employment of connecting particles. But he did not argue that I was the author of only one half of the writings that appeared under my name. Again (and this is an experience common to many speakers and

9 A computer will not do such work, for example, as has been done by C. L. Mitton in \textit{The Epistle to the Ephesians} (Oxford, 1951), or by M. E. Thrall in \textit{Greek Particles in the New Testament} (Leiden, 1962).
10 W. C. Wake (“The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles. A Contribution from Statistical Analysis”, \textit{Hibbert Journal}, xlvi (1948-9), pp. 50 ff.) points out that, by the criterion of sentence-length distributions, Romans, Galatians, 1 Cor. and 2 Cor. x-xiii fall in a group by themselves, whereas 2 Cor. i-xix stands alone. This, however, does not lead him to deny 2 Cor. 1-ix to Paul; on the contrary, he says that “in view of the internal evidence connecting this fragment of an Epistle with Paul, the statistical evidence is a little puzzling. It is mutilated, since it is joined to the ‘Severe Letter’, and this alone would point to a chequered history. The use of a modern critical text instead of the received text [which Wake, rather regretfully, made the basis of his research] may alter the distribution.” At any rate, the statistical evidence reinforces the case for recognizing in 2 Cor. 1-ix and x-xiii two letters, or parts of two letters. See p. 330, n. 3.
writers), when I discover (either unaided or by the kindness of a candid friend) that I am indulging to excess in a particular location, I tend for some time thereafter to go to the opposite extreme and avoid it entirely.

It is argued, however, that when the computer analyses the writings ascribed (say) to Plato or to any of the Attic orators it reveals no such diversity of patterns as appears in the writings ascribed to Paul. It is a relevant point here that these classical writers were conscious literary stylists who polished and repolished their work before publication, as Paul obviously did not. Nor would Greek scholars accept unity of authorship on the basis of statistical analysis alone if other evidence argued against it. In any case, the consistency of Plato’s style and the diversity of Paul’s are phenomena with which we have long been familiar; the computer has simply exhibited in more precise statistical form what we knew already. Even without the aid of a computer we can distinguish, for example, the impassioned, argumentative and fractured style of Galatians from the calm, meditative style of Ephesians, with its piled-up genitival phrases and lengthy sentences.

There is, moreover, one factor which sets a big question-mark against the much publicized findings of the computer with regard to the authorship of the Pauline epistles. That is Paul’s well known practice of dictating his letters to amanuenses. To express surprise at seeing the amanuensis theory dragged from an honourable retirement is an inadequate substitute for a reasoned reply to it. “Why”, it is asked, “should the letters of Isocrates or Demosthenes or Plato or any other writer of Greek epistles have been unchanged in this process and only the letters of Paul have been altered extensively by his amanuensis?” For one thing, as has already been said, the classical writers mentioned were stylists who were deeply concerned about the literary form in which their works were published; Paul was not. Nor is it a question of his letters having been “altered extensively” by his amanuensis; it is a question of this or that amanuensis being largely responsible for the style and composition of some of them.

For all the criticisms that may properly be brought against Otto Roller’s arguments, the central thesis of Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe has not been relegated to “honourable retirement”, and it materially affects the conclusions to be drawn from the statistical analysis of the Pauline epistles. It is precisely in matters like the use of particles and the length of sentences that the idiosyncrasies of the amanuensis are most apparent.
To say this is not to underestimate the importance of statistical analysis in this field. It is rather to agree with the statement of the Rev. A. Q. Morton with regard to another area of the New Testament: “Statistics is no panacea. The evidence presented by statistics is no more potent than that to which scholars have long been accustomed. Yet statistics can resolve some at least of the problems which at present seem insoluble.”

Philemon is such a short epistle that the tests applied to the others are inconclusive when applied to it; it is accordingly allowed to be Pauline by default. But on internal evidence Philemon goes not with the four letters to the Romans, Corinthians and Galatians but with those to the Colossians and Ephesians. Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians have commonly been regarded as epistles sent by Paul to proconsular Asia during his Roman captivity. Whether in fact they were sent from Rome or from some other place where Paul was imprisoned; and whether indeed they are all Pauline, are questions to be investigated afresh. But before we investigate these questions, there are various prolegomena to be dealt with, and these form the subject matter of the present paper. The study of these prolegomena has been promoted very considerably by some recently published work, including in particular A. N. Sherwin-White’s Sarum lectures for 1960-1, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament.*

**II**

Towards the end of his Ephesian ministry (i.e. early in A.D. 55), Paul made plans (so Luke informs us) to revisit his former mission-fields in Macedonia and Achaia, and then pay a visit to Jerusalem. “After I have been there”, he said, “I must also see Rome” (Acts xix. 21).

likely hypotheses are either that they were joint letters in which Paul and Timothy really participated, or that Timothy is the author, or that Timothy acted as amanuensis for Paul, writing on Paul’s instructions but not in Paul’s phraseology” (p. 54). The statistical method has no material for deciding which of these three hypotheses is most probable, since no indubitable writings of Timothy have been preserved for comparison. On non-statistical considerations the third alternative appears most probable. Timothy’s name appears also in the salutation of 2 Cor. i-ix, but the statistical method may suggest that someone else acted as amanuensis for this letter.


20 As F. C. Baur saw, and logically decided against the authenticity of Philemon (*Paul*, ii. 80 ff.).


For a commentary on these words, we must go to Paul’s epistles. From these we learn that a prime reason for his proposed visit to Macedonia and Achaia was to complete the collection which he

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had organized in the churches of these provinces to relieve the poverty of the Palestinian believers and make Jewish and Gentile Christians more aware of their solidarity.23 The reason for his proposed visit to Jerusalem was that the proceeds of this collection might be handed over to the leaders of the mother church.24 But what was the reason for his proposed visit to Rome? This appears clearly enough from the letter to the Romans. In it he tells the Roman Christians that he has completed his apostolic task in the Aegean lands, and hopes to repeat in Spain what he has done in Macedonia and Achaia, Galatia and Asia. His settled policy of preaching Christ where the gospel had not previously been heard, his unwillingness to “build on another man’s foundation” (Rom. xv. 20),25 ruled out most of the other Mediterranean lands as areas for his further apostolic activity. But no one, evidently, had thus far carried the Christian message to Spain. To Spain, then, Paul would go. And on his way to Spain he would have an opportunity to realize a long-cherished desire to see Rome. This is how he puts it (if we paraphrase his words):

I have often intended to pay you a visit, but up to now I have never been able to make it. I long to see you all, so that both you and I may impart to each other some spiritual blessing. As it is, I want you to know that you are constantly in my thoughts and prayers, and that I thank God that your faith and loyalty are renowned throughout the world. I have seen some fruit as a result of my apostolic ministry in other parts of the Gentile world, and I should like to see some among you too. As I have proclaimed the good news elsewhere, I am eager to proclaim it in Rome as well: it is a message of which I have no cause to be ashamed.... Not that I think of settling down as a missionary in Rome, for that would be building on another man’s foundation—the very thing I have always avoided doing. And as for taking the place of a teacher among you, I know very well that you are perfectly capable of teaching one another. But from Jerusalem to Illyricum I have proclaimed the good news and planted churches, and now my task in this part of the world is finished. The next place on my missionary programme is Spain. First of all, however, I must go to Jerusalem to discharge a service to the people of God there. But when I have done that, I hope to set out for Spain and break my journey in Rome, so that I may find refreshment in your company and be sped forth by you on my westward journey.26

Luke has nothing to say of Paul’s plan to evangelize Spain. Rome is the terminus of Luke’s history; he reaches his goal when

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he brings Paul there, and there he leaves him, living under house-arrest and unable to move about freely, but preaching the gospel to all who come to visit him, without let or hindrance.27

The purpose of Luke-Acts as a whole is closely bound up with the note on which the narrative

23 1 Cor. xvi. 1 ff.; 2 Cor. viii. 1 ff.
24 Rom. xv. 25 ff.
25 Cf. 2 Cor. x. 13 ff.; his attitude to those who came and built on his foundation is expressed in 1 Cor. iii. 10 ff.
26 From Rom. i. 11-16a, xv. 14-29.
27 Acts xxviii. 30 ff.
comes to an end. For Luke, Paul’s words in Acts xix. 21, “I must also see Rome”, anticipate the goal for which his own narrative is making, whereas for Paul Rome was but a temporary halting-place on his way farther west.

III

Paul, we gather, had never been in Rome before. Yet he was a citizen of Rome, and from time to time he found that citizenship a very present help in trouble. No wonder that he was so eager to see the city of which he was a citizen. Moreover, he was born a Roman citizen, as he told Claudius Lysias, the military tribune in command of the Jerusalem garrison, when Lysias mentioned that he had had to lay out a large sum of money in order to acquire the citizenship.28

But how did a Jew of Tarsus come to be born a Roman citizen? His family, by all accounts, were not assimilationist Jews who compromised with Gentile ways; this much at least is involved in Paul’s claim to be “a Hebrew born of Hebrews” (Phil. iii. 5). But we simply do not know how the citizenship came into Paul’s family. His native Cilicia fell within the provincia of more than one Roman general in the first century B.C.—Pompey and Antony, for example—and the grant of citizenship to approved individuals was included in the imperium conferred on these generals by law. But whether it was one of these, or someone else, who granted Roman citizenship to Paul’s father or grandfather we cannot tell—no more than we can tell why it was so granted. In a letter which I received in February 1953 from the late Sir William Calder, commenting on a book of mine which he had read, he said, in reference to my treatment of Paul:

Had not his father (or possibly grandfather) been made a citizen by Antony or Pompey? Were they not a firm of σκηνοποιοί, able to be very useful to a fighting proconsul? (You don’t bring out enough that Paul was a great swell—compare recently, mutatis mutandis, a Hindu K.B.E.)

Sir William, who was not a cautious son of Moray for nothing, put his suggestions in the form of questions (even if, as grammarians would say, they were “questions expecting the answer Yes”); they are indeed as reasonable as any suggestions that could be made on this point, but we have no certain evidence.

As a Roman citizen, Paul had three names—praenomen, nomen gentile and cognomen—but of these we know only his cognomen, Paulus. If we knew his nomen gentile, we might have some clue to the circumstances of his family’s acquisition of the citizenship (for new citizens commonly assumed their patrons’ nomen gentile; but we are given no hint of it. His cognomen may have been chosen because of its assonance with his Jewish name Saul—Hebrew Shā‘āl, in the New Testament sometimes spelt Σαοῦλ and more often

28 Acts xxii. 28. Lysias’s nomen gentile, Claudius, suggests that he owed his citizenship to the Emperor Claudius. Sherwin-White (Roman Society..., pp. 154 f.) points out that the large sum of money laid out by Lysias was not the price paid for his citizenship but the amount expended on bribing the intermediaries who put his name down for enfranchisement. On the wider issues see A. N. Sherwin. White, The Roman Citizenship (Oxford, 1939).
Σαύλος, the latter form rhyming with Παύλος. (Since he belonged, as he tells us himself, to the tribe of Benjamin, his parents may well have named him Saul after the most illustrious member of that tribe in their nation’s history, Israel’s first king.)

If the circumstances in which Paul’s family acquired Roman citizenship are obscure, many other questions relating to Paul’s citizenship are hardly less so. On more than one occasion, for example—at Philippi and, some years later, at Jerusalem—he appealed to his rights as a Roman citizen: on the former occasion by way of protest at having been summarily beaten with rods by the lictors attendant on the chief magistrates of the colony, with

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out having received a proper trial; on the latter occasion, in order to be spared a scourging (much more murderous than a beating with rods), to which he was about to be subjected in an effort to discover what he had done to make the Jews in the temple court so incensed at him. The rights of Roman citizens were laid down in a long succession of laws (most recently the lex Iulia de ut Publica, going back traditionally to the lex Valeria of 509 B.C. These rights included exemption from certain ignominious forms of punishment, and protection against summary execution.

But when a man claimed his citizen rights—when he said ciuis Romanus sum, or its equivalent in Greek—how did he prove his claim? In the absence of any provision for verification on the spot, it must have been tempting for a man in a tight corner to make the claim even when he had no title to it, and hope to get away with it. Certainly it was a capital offence to claim falsely to be a Roman citizen, but how was the official before whom the claim was made to know whether the claim was true or not?

A new citizen might have a duly witnessed copy of his certificate of citizenship; auxiliary soldiers received such a document when they were enfranchised, and civilians may have been given something of the same sort. But Paul was not a new citizen. He might, however, produce a diptych containing a certified copy of his birth registration. Each legitimately born child of a Roman citizen had to be registered within (it appears) thirty days of his birth. If he lived in the provinces, his father, or some duly appointed agent, made a professio before the praeses prouinciae at the tabularium publicum. In the course of his professio the father or his agent declared that the child was a Roman citizen; the professio was registered in the album professionum, and the father or agent would receive a copy, properly certified by witnesses.

29 Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5.
30 Acts xvi. 37. It is implied here that his companion Silas was also a Roman citizen. Paul might well have chosen him as his fellow-traveller for this phase of his ministry for this among other reasons; he would thus be spared the embarrassment of claiming for himself privileges which his companion could not share. Silas was a Jewish Christian from Jerusalem; that there were several Jews in Jerusalem who had the Roman citizenship in the period A.D. 44-66 is evident from the narrative of Josephus (cf. B.J., ii. 308). Silas’s Latin cognomen Silvanus may have been chosen because of its similarity to his Jewish name (Shīlā, She’ēlā).
31 Acts xxii. 25.
32 Gk. ἀκατάσκρητος (as also in Acts xxii. 25), possibly the equivalent of Lat. re incognita.
33 See p. 338 with n. 2.
34 Cf. Suetonius, Claudius, 25. 3; Epictetus, Ench., iii. 24. 41.
35 Cf. Sherwin-White, Roman Society..., pp. 146 f.
This certificate recorded the *professio* in the third person, in *oratio obliqua*, and it would include the words: *ciuem Romanum*

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*esse professus est* (“he [the father or agent] declared him [the child] to be a Roman citizen”). Whether it was customary or not for an itinerant Roman citizen to carry this diptych around with him is doubtful. Dr. F. Schulz is sure that Paul did so:

> The birth certificates which contained this clause furnished a *prima facie* evidence for the Roman citizenship of the bearer, being in so far a substitute for a passport. When St Paul alleged his Roman citizenship before the Roman authority (Acts xvi. 37; xxii. 25-29; xxv. 11) he must have produced his birth certificate for corroboration. As he was Rome born he was in possession of such a document which he doubtless carried with him wherever he travelled.37

This is an extremely reasonable view—although Mr. Sherwin. White thinks it more likely that such certificates were normally kept in the family archives.38 There is a further point to consider: this registration of Roman citizens at birth was apparently enacted by the *lex Aelia Sentia* of A.D. 4 and the *lex Papia Poppaea* of A.D. 9. If Paul was born even a year or two before the earlier of these enactments, would he necessarily have been registered in this way?

IV

In the event, it was Paul’s Roman citizenship that brought him to Rome. When he wrote to the Roman Christians to prepare them for his visit to their city, he hoped to go there as a free agent. But when he did reach Rome, it was as a prisoner; and as a prisoner he was sent to Rome because he had exercised his privilege as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar. No ordinary provincial, no mere subject of Caesar, had any such right; it belonged to citizens of Rome.

The circumstances of Paul’s appeal are set out clearly enough in Acts. When he came to Jerusalem, in accordance with his plan, in the late spring or early summer of A.D. 57, he was set upon in the temple precincts because of a rumour that he had violated their sanctity by bringing a Gentile within the prohibited bounds. (For a Gentile to commit this trespass was a capital offence,39 even

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if he was a Roman citizen40; and no doubt for a Jew to aid and abet a Gentile in the commission of this trespass was equally a capital offence, even if that Jew was a Roman citizen.) Paul was rescued from his assailants by members of the adjoining Roman garrison and taken into custody in the Antonia fortress. When the military tribe discovered that he was a Roman citizen, he sent him under armed escort to Felix, the procurator of Judaea, at Caesarea. The Jewish authorities sent a deputation to Caesarea to press two charges against

37 *J.R.S.*, xxxiii (1943), 63 f.
38 *Roman Society...*, p. 149.
39 Josephus, *B.J.*, v. 5. 2; his testimony is confirmed by the two warning inscriptions in Greek found in 1871 and 1935; cf. *P.E.F.Q.*, iii (1871), 132; *Q.D.A.P.*, vi (1938), 1 ff.
40 Josephus, *B.J.*, vi. 2. 4.
Paul—the particular charge of sacrilege, which could not be substantiated because the witnesses failed to appear, and the more general charge of being a subverter of public order, a perfect pest throughout the whole Diaspora. To both charges Paul returned a firm plea of Not Guilty; but Felix deferred sentence until his recall from office in A.D. 59, and left Paul for his successor to deal with. His successor, Festus, reopened the case, with every intention of acting in accordance with the highest standards of Roman justice. When, however, he spoke of holding the trial at Jerusalem, and implied that he might use the Sanhedrin as his consilium, Paul was afraid that through the new governor’s inexperience he might be put into the power of his enemies. Accordingly he availed himself of a Roman citizen’s privilege:

Standing before Caesar’s tribunal, I stand where I ought to be tried. If I am guilty, if I have done anything worthy of death, I do not plead that the death penalty should not be carried out. But if there is no substance in the charges brought against me by these men, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar (Καίσαρα ἐπικαλομαί). The right of provocatio to the emperor appears to have grown out of the earlier right of provocatio to the sovereign people. According to Dio Cassius, Augustus in 30 B.C. was granted the right to judge on appeal—ἐκκλητον δικαίωσιν, which Professor Jones suggests is the Greek equivalent of ex provocatone cognoscere. It was in this period, too, that the lex Iulia de ui publica (mentioned above) was enacted. This law forbade any magistrate vested with imperium or potestas to kill, scourge, chain or torture a Roman citizen, or even to sentence him aduersus provocationem or prevent him from going to Rome to lodge his appeal there within a fixed time. Professor Jones concludes that, from the date of this enactment, a Roman citizen anywhere in the empire was protected against arbitrary magisterial coercitio, although the provincial magistrate might deal with cases which involved a plain breach of established statute law (which Paul’s case manifestly did not). By the beginning of the second century A.D. it evidently became the regular practice for Roman citizens in the provinces, charged with offences extra ordinem, to be sent to Rome almost automatically, without going through the formality of appealing to Caesar. But there seems to have been a gradual erosion of the citizen’s privileges with the steady increase in the number of citizens throughout the

42 This date, probable on other grounds, seems to be confirmed by the evidence for a new Judaean coinage beginning in October of that year (cf. H. J. Cadbury, The Book of Acts in History (New York, 1955), pp. 9 ff.).
44 Acts xxv. 10-12.
45 Hist., li. 19. Seven years later he also received the lifelong tenure of tribunicia potestas, which authorized him on appellatio (quite different from the later appellatio mentioned on p. 344 below) to veto the action of any other magistrate in Rome itself and within a mile outside the city walls; but this does not affect the present question.
47 The title of the law indicates that it was introduced either by Caesar or by Augustus; A. H. M. Jones gives reasons for dating it after 23 B.C. (Studies..., pp. 97 f.; cf. Sherwin-White, Roman Society..., pp. 57 f.).
48 Dig. xlviii. 6, 7; Paulus, Sent. v. 26. 1.
49 Studies..., p. 59.
50 The best-known instance is Pliny’s reference in his letter to Trajan about Christians (Ep., x. 96. 4) to those afflicted with this folly “quos, quia ciues Romani erant, adnotau in urbem remittendos”.
empire as the second century advanced—a tendency which reached its climax in A.D. 212 with the extension of the franchise to all freeborn provincials under Caracalla. In this as in other respects, when we think historically and not theologically, the picture given in Acts is true to the dramatic date of the book; the case of Paul’s appeal fits in with what we know of conditions in the late fifties of the first Christian century, and it is worthy indeed to be treated as a substantial addition to the available evidence.

The provincial judge had to send an explanatory statement (litterae dimissoriae) along with the accused man, and the inexperienced Festus was certainly glad to have the aid of the younger Agrippa in drafting this document. Agrippa, king of those areas north-east of the Roman province of Judaea which had formerly constituted the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, came to Caesarea to pay his respects to the new procurator on the morrow of Paul’s appeal to Caesar. (From A.D. 48 to 66 the Jewish high-priesthood was in Agrippa’s gift, and he was reputed to be well versed in Jewish religious practice.) He had an opportunity of hearing Paul for himself, and agreed that he could not reasonably be convicted on any of the serious charges brought against him; indeed, he might have been discharged there and then had he not appealed to Caesar, but for Festus to prejudge the issue now by discharging him would have been impolitic, if not ultra vires. To Rome, then, Paul was sent, under the custody of the centurion Julius.

Why did Paul appeal to Caesar? He did not do so while Felix was in office, presumably because Felix had virtually decided on his innocence and was simply postponing his formal acquittal and release. One day, Felix’s procrastination would come to an end and Paul would be discharged and be able to carry out his long-cherished plan of travelling to Rome and the west. So Paul might have hoped. But with the recall of Felix and his supersession by Festus a new and dangerous situation was developing for Paul; hence his momentous decision.

From what we know of Paul, we may be sure that the uppermost consideration in his appeal to Caesar was not his own safety, but the interests of the gospel. Seven or eight years previously he had experienced the benevolent neutrality of Roman law in the decision of Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, that there was nothing illegal in his preaching. He might reasonably expect a similarly benevolent neutrality of Roman law in the decision of Gallio.

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52 In A.D. 177 the Roman citizens among the Christians rounded up in Vienne and Lyons were not sent to Rome for trial; they were kept in prison where they were until the emperor’s ruling could be obtained (Eusebius, H.E., v. 1. 44), and even after he had ruled that they should be beheaded (instead of being put to death by torture, like the others) one of them, Attalus, was exposed to the beasts because the mob desired it so (ibid. v. 1. 50).
53 Acts xxv. 26 f.
54 Acts xxvi. 32.
55 Acts xxvii. 1; cf. p. 341 below.
favourable verdict from the supreme court in Rome. Not only so: even a man of smaller intelligence than Paul must have realized that the consideration which moved Gallio would not be valid much longer. Gallio had ruled in effect that what Paul preached was a variety of Judaism, and therefore not forbidden by Roman law. But, thanks in large measure to Paul’s own activity, it would soon be impossible to regard Christianity as a variety of Judaism, since it was now manifestly more Gentile than Jewish. A favourable hearing from the emperor in Rome might win recognition for Christianity, if not as the true fulfilment of Israel’s ancestral religion (which Paul believed it to be), at least as a religio licita in its own right. Besides, if Caesar in person heard Paul’s defence, what might the outcome not be? The younger Agrippa had politely declined to admit the logic of Paul’s argument, but Gentiles had regularly shown themselves more amenable to the gospel than Jews, and a Roman emperor might be more easily won than a Jewish client-king. It would be precarious to set limits to Paul’s high hopes, however impracticable they may appear to us in retrospect.

But would Caesar hear the case in person? This would not follow from the fact that it was to Caesar that Paul appealed. According to Tacitus, Nero announced at the beginning of his principate that he would not judge cases in propria persona, as his predecessor Claudius had done; and indeed, during his first eight years he generally delegated them to others. Mr. Sherwin-White is thus right in saying: “If Paul came to trial some time after the period of two years mentioned in Acts xxviii. 30, it is probable that his case was heard by someone other than the Princeps.” This “someone other” might be the praefectus praetorii, “representing the Emperor in his capacity as the fountain of justice, together with the assessors and high officers of the court”.

Paul’s voyage to Rome and his shipwreck on the way cannot detain us here. But at last he and his fellow-prisoners reached Rome. There, according to the Western text of Acts xxviii. 16, the prisoners were handed over by the centurion to the princeps peregrinorum, the “camp-commandant”. One Old Latin witness, the thirteenth-century Codex gigas, translates this title by princeps Peregrinorum. The existence of an official so entitled is attested by an African

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58 If Colossians is to be dated during his Roman imprisonment, his request for prayer in Col. iv. 2-4 may suggest the importance which he attached to his impending defence, which might afford him an opportunity of proclaiming the gospel before the most exalted audience in the world.
59 Acts xxvi. 28.
60 Annals, xiii. 4. 2.
61 It was evidently a new departure for Nero when in A.D. 62 he judged the case of Fabricius Veiento himself (Tac. Ann., xiv. 50. 2).
62 Roman Society, p. 112.
64 Sofonius Tigellinus succeeded to the office on the death of Burrus in A.D. 62, probably after the expiry of the δὲ ἐν τοῖς of Acts xxviii. 30. For three years Tigellinus had Faenius Rufus as joint-prefect, but Tigellinus was the more powerful of the two (Tac. Ann., xiv. 51. 5 f., xv. 50. 4).
inscription of Trajan’s time\textsuperscript{65}; he was presumably commandant of the \textit{castra peregrinorum} on the Caelian hill-the headquarters for legionary officers on furlough in Rome, and also (though perhaps not so early as this date) for the \textit{frumentarii} (literally “grain-officers”), the corps of centurions who served as liaison officers between Rome and the armies in the imperial provinces.

Mommsen, followed by Ramsay, regarded Julius as a member of this corps of \textit{frumentarii}, taking this to be the meaning of the “Augustan cohort” (\textit{σπείρα Σεβαστῆ}) of Acts xxvii. 1.\textsuperscript{66} In that case an additional duty of the \textit{frumentarii} would be the escorting of prisoners from the provinces to Rome. There is, however, no evidence that the \textit{frumentarii} acted as liaison officers or imperial police before the second century\textsuperscript{67}; their original duty, as their name implies, was the organization of the Roman grain supply. Even so, the fact that Julius took his prisoners for the greater part of their voyage on board a grain-ship,\textsuperscript{68} in which he exercised considerable authority,\textsuperscript{69} may suggest that he was a \textit{frumentarius} in the original sense.

The rendering of Codex gigas in Acts xxviii. 16 may, however, be no more than an intelligent guess; the stratopedarch in question could have been the commandant of some other camp the headquarters of the Praetorian Guard, for example. But the camp-commandant (\textit{princeps castrorum}) of the Praetorian Guard would be a less exalted figure than the \textit{praefectus praetorii}. In any case the longer Western reading of this verse, in which the word \textit{στρατοπεδάρχος} appears, is doubtful; but all forms of the text agree that Paul “was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier who guarded him.”

Paul stayed in Rome for two full years at his own expense—or on his own earnings. (Was he still able to work at his tent making as he had done elsewhere?) Whether or not we can accept the A.V. “in his own hired house” as a translation of \textit{ἐν ἑαυτῷ μισθώματι} (Acts xxviii. 30), he probably did remain under house arrest. That is to say, he was not kept in custody in the headquarters of the Praetorian Guard but “by himself”—\textit{ἐξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς} (“outside the camp”), as many Western authorities add. He was thus free to receive visitors, although he could not move about freely himself. Among his earliest visitors Luke mentions a deputation of Roman Jews, and their debate with Paul forms the last scene of Luke’s history—plainly with programmatic intent. The pattern of Jewish refusal of the gospel and Gentile acceptance of it, which has recurred earlier in his history, is recorded definitively in Rome, with Paul’s conclusive last word (after his quotation of Isa. vi. 10): “Take knowledge, then, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen to it” (Acts xxviii. 28).

But what of the two full years (\textit{ἀκολουθήσα}) of Paul’s detention? What happened at the end of this period? Some assure us quite

\textsuperscript{66} T. Mommsen, Gesammelte Schriften, vi = Historische Schriften, iii (Berlin, 1910), 546 ff.; Ramsay, St. Paul the Traveller..., pp. 315, 348.
\textsuperscript{67} Sherwin-White, Roman Society..., p. 109.
\textsuperscript{68} Acts xxvii. 6, 38.
\textsuperscript{69} Acts xxvii. 11.
confidently that it ended with Paul’s trial, conviction and execution; others, that it ended with his release—either through acquittal after trial, or because the case went against his accusers by default.

That Paul was executed at the end of the two years was contended fifty years ago by J. Vernon Bartlet. He argued that the prosecutors gave notice within the statutory time-limit (which he supposed, in the light of later usage, was eighteen months) of their intention to proceed with the case; that they arrived in Rome early in A.D. 62 and successfully prosecuted Paul; that he was condemned to death as a disturber of the peace of the provinces; that the earliest readers of Acts would know from Nero’s record, without having to be told explicitly, what the outcome of the prosecution would be (the more so in view of the Jewish sympathies of Poppaea Sabina, whose influence over Nero was then approaching its peak); and that in fact there are ominous overtones in Agrippa’s remark to Festus: “He might have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar” (Acts xxvi. 32).

If Paul was executed in A.D. 62, then his martyrdom was not, as is commonly supposed, an incident in the imperial attack on the Christians of Rome which followed the great fire of the year 64. This, of course, is no argument against dating his execution in 62, if the evidence points in that direction. But if Paul’s two years’ detention was followed by his conviction and execution, Luke’s failure to mention it is very odd indeed.

Alternatively we have the view variously propounded by Ramsay, K. Lake, and Professor Cadbury (a veteran authority in this field who is still happily alive and vigorous), that the case never came to trial because the prosecutors failed to appear within the statutory period. This suggestion has some antecedent plausibility. If the Sanhedrin had failed to persuade Felix and Festus of the soundness of their case against Paul, in spite of all the local pressure that could be brought to bear on the procurator of Judaea, they would be even less likely to succeed in Rome. Roman law was apt to be severe on frivolous prosecutors. On the other hand, no prosecution would be so frivolous as one in which the prosecutors failed to appear; and Roman law insisted that they must appear.

The statutory period of eighteen months, which was assumed by Bartlet on his side (provisionally) and by Ramsay and Cadbury on theirs, turns out on examination to be based on a misunderstanding. The year 62 was the one which was supposed to end the two years’ detention, but it was not the one in which the trial of Paul was held. The trial must have been held in A.D. 62, and the conviction and execution in A.D. 64.
on the wrong dating of a papyrus which records an imperial edict fixing a time limit of eighteen months for criminal cases submitted to the emperor from the provinces, whether by way of appeal or by reference as to a court of first instance. This document was first published towards the end of last century; Ramsay’s attention was drawn to it by J. S. Reid. But, as Mommsen recognized, the edict belongs to the third century, and the “appeal” which it has in view is the later procedure of *appellatio* against a sentence already passed, not the first-century procedure of *prouocatio*, which prevented the court of first instance from trying the case at all. In fact, there does not appear to be first-century evidence for any procedure permitting a case to lapse automatically by default. What evidence there is suggests that everything was done to compel the appearance of prosecutors and defendants and to prevent the abandonment of charges. A prosecutor who did not appear in court within a reasonable time would probably be penalized, but that would not imply the automatic discharge of the defendant.

The prolongation of Paul’s stay in Rome over two full years could have been due to congestion of court business as much as anything else; and if indeed he was discharged without his coming to trial, this (as Mr. Sherwin-White points out) would probably have been the result of an act of *imperium* on Caesar’s part. “Perhaps Paul benefited from the clemency of Nero, and secured a merely casual release. But there is no necessity to construe Acts to mean that he was released at all.”

If the evidence of Acts is inconclusive, then, do Paul’s epistles throw any light on the question? Whether they do or not depends on another question. Which, if any, of his epistles belong to the period of his Roman captivity? This must be the subject of a further inquiry.


http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/specialcollections/information/publications/bulletin/

Prepared for the web in April 2008 by Robert I. Bradshaw.

http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/

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76 Bartlet did not date the document in the first century; he refers to “eighteen months, which to judge from third century usage was the limit for capital charges sent on appeal from the provinces” (art. cit., pp. 466 f.).
78 T. Mommsen, *Le Droit Piral Romain*, ii (Paris, 1907), 158, n. 5 (“Tant au point de vue de la langue qu’au point de vue du fond, il nest pas possible de placer cet édit avec Mitteis (*Hermes*, 32, 630 sv.) à l’époque de Tibère, il appartient certainement auIIe siècle”).
79 For the distinction see A. H. M. Jones, *Studies*..., p. 57.
81 Ibid. p. 119.
ST. PAUL IN ROME. 2. THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

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I

PAUL'S Epistle to Philemon is short enough to be reproduced in full, in a fairly free translation.

Paul, prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our dear friend and fellow-worker, with our sister Apphia and our fellow-soldier Archippus, and the church that meets in your house: grace and peace be yours from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank God, my dear friend, when I remember you in my prayers, for I hear good news of the love and loyalty which you show to our Lord Jesus and all his holy people. So I pray that your Christian liberality, springing as it does from your faith, may lead you effectively into the experience and appreciation of every blessing which we have as fellow-members of Christ. Your love has brought me great joy and comfort, my dear brother; you have refreshed the hearts of God's people.

That is why I am making this request of you; I am making it for love's sake, although I could quite well exercise my authority in Christ's name and command you to do the proper thing. Yes, I could command you as Paul, ambassador of Christ Jesus; but I don't do that: I prefer to ask you a favour as Paul, prisoner of Christ Jesus.

The request I am making is for my son. My son? Yes, my son; I have acquired one here, prisoner though I am. His name is Onesimus—profitable by name and profitable by nature. I know that in former days you found him quite unprofitable, but now, I assure you, he has learned to be true to his name—profitable to you, and profitable to me.

Well, I am sending him back to you, though it is like tearing out my very heart to do so. My own inclination is to keep him here with me, and then he could go on serving me while I am a prisoner for the gospel's sake—serving me as your representative. But I do not want to do anything without your consent; I do not want the good turn you are doing me through his service to be done by you willy-nilly, but on your free initiative.

A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 10th of February 1965.

Taking προαθείτος in the sense of προαθείτως.
For aught I know, this was why you and he were separated for a short time, so that you might have him to yourself for ever, no longer as a slave, but something much better than a slave—a dear brother, very dear indeed to me, and surely dearer still to you, since he is now yours not only as a member of your household but as a fellow-believer in the Lord. You look on me as your partner, don’t you? Well, Onesimus is my representative: give him the welcome you would give me. Has he done you any wrong? Does he owe you something? Never mind; put that down on my account. Here is my I.O.U., written with my own hand. “I will make it good.”

(I scarcely need to remind you, of course, of the debt that you owe me; it is to me that you owe your very life!)

Yes, my dear brother, let me have this profit from you as a fellow-Christian. Refresh my heart in the name of Christ, to whom we both belong.

I write like this because I have every confidence in your obedience; I know you will do more than I say. And, by the way, please get the guest-room ready for me; I hope I shall soon be restored to you, thanks to your prayers.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings; so do my fellow-workers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, all of you.

It is admittedly question-begging to give a lecture on the Epistle to Philemon under the general heading “St. Paul in Rome.” Two questions, in fact, are begged: Was this epistle written by Paul, and was it written in Rome?

II

Was it written by Paul? Most critics have been content to leave the Pauline authorship intact. The epistle is too short for the most efficient computer to yield a significant analysis of its style and vocabulary.¹ If its authenticity is questioned, it is questioned mainly on account of the close association between this epistle and Colossians, which some find difficult to accept as Pauline. For Colossians and Philemon were plainly written at the same time and place, sent to the same place, carried by the same messengers. Practically the same companions of Paul send their greetings in both; of the six who do so in Colossians, five do so in Philemon. Apart from these, Archippus is mentioned in both; and in both Onesimus arrives at the same time as the letters.

¹ Cf. A. Q. Morton, The Times, 24 April 1963 (“there seems no reason to exclude it from the works of Paul.”)

Ernest Renan was so convinced of the genuineness of Philemon that for its sake he was willing to admit the genuineness of Colossians. “The Epistle to the Colossians,” he wrote, “though full of eccentricities, does not embrace any of those impossibilities which are to be found in the Epistles to Titus and to Timothy. It furnishes even many of those details which reject the hypothesis [of its pseudonymity] as false. Assuredly of this number is its connection with the note to Philemon. If the epistle is apocryphal, the note is apocryphal also; yet few of the pages have so pronounced a tone of sincerity; Paul alone, as it appears to us, could write that little masterpiece.”²

But Renan was a romantic, and would have been reluctant on that ground to abandon the authenticity of Philemon; a real biblical critic must be made of sterner stuff. And such was Ferdinand Christian Baur.

“What”, asks Baur, “has criticism to do with this short, attractive, graceful and friendly letter, inspired as it is by the noblest Christian feeling, and which has never yet been touched by the breath of suspicion?”³ Yet, he goes on, apostolic authorship cannot be taken for granted here; and since the other “captivity epistles” to which Philemon is so clearly related are not Pauline, it follows that this epistle is not Pauline; it is, in fact (says Baur), a Christian romance in embryo, comparable in this respect to the Clementine Homilies. The Clementine Homilies show how “Christianity is the permanent reconciliation of those of who were formerly separated by one cause or another, but who by a special arrangement of affairs brought about by Divine Providence for that very purpose, are again brought together; through their conversion to Christianity they know each other again, the one sees in the other his own flesh and blood.”⁴ So the Epistle to Philemon suggests that perhaps Onesimus and his master were separated for a short time in order that the latter might thenceforth have Onesimus to himself for ever, no longer as a slave, but as a dear brother.

³ Ibid. p. 83.
II

But even if it was written by Paul, was it sent from Rome? Here, debate has fastened on two points: (a) the length of the journey that Onesimus must have made from his master’s home to the place where Paul was in custody, and (b) Paul’s request for the preparation of the guest-room in view of his expectation of an early release and a visit to the Lycus valley. Do these two points suggest that Paul was fairly near the Lycus valley at the time (say in Ephesus, about 100 miles away) or much farther distant (say in Rome, more than 1,000 miles away)?

The case has been debated one way and the other, by none more ably than by Principal G. S. Duncan and Professor C. H. Dodd. Principal Duncan’s argument for Ephesus, because it was so much nearer to Colossae than Rome was, has been answered by Professor Dodd, who thinks the remoter city the more probable. Principal Duncan has replied to Professor Dodd, but the question remains unresolved.

With regard to Onesimus’s choice of a place of refuge, “only in the most desperate circumstances”, says Principal Duncan, “such as the letter gives us no reason to assume, would a fugitive from justice have undertaken over unknown and dangerous roads a journey of a thousand miles by land, together with two sea voyages extending over some five days, especially when comparatively near at hand there was a city with which he was no doubt already familiar, and which was of sufficient size to afford him all the security that he was likely to require.”

With regard to the visit proposed by Paul in verse 22, Principal Duncan goes on to say: “How natural such a visit would be at a

3 Encyclopaedia Biblica, col. 3696.

2 Since this lecture was delivered, New Testament scholarship has suffered a sad loss by the death of Principal Duncan on 8th April 1965.

W. C. van Manen, who rejected the authenticity of all thirteen Pauline epistles (including even the four Hauptbriefe which Baur admitted), added to Baur’s arguments against the genuineness of Philemon some considerations of his own. For one thing, the ambiguity of the direction speaks against Pauline authorship; since the letter is addressed by Paul and Timothy to three individuals and a household church, while the bulk of it is a personal letter from Paul to Philemon. “This double form... is not a style that is natural to any one who is writing freely and untrammelled, whether to one person or to many.” More probably the unknown author has modelled his composition on the letter of the younger Pliny to his friend Sabinianus, interceding on behalf of a freedman of the latter who has offended his patron and has sought Pliny’s good offices to bring about a reconciliation. The author of Philemon makes the freedman into a slave, and rewrites the letter so as to portray the ideal “relations which, in his judgment, that is according to the view of Pauline Christians, ought to subsist between Christian slaves and their masters, especially when the slaves have in some respect misconducted themselves, as for example by secretly quitting their master’s service.”

Such a combination of hypercriticism and naïveté is easily recognized for what it is. There is no need to propound such far-fetched explanations of a document which, in the judgment of most critics as of most general readers, bears a much more probable explanation on its face—namely, that it is a genuine letter of Paul, concerning a slave called Onesimus, who somehow needs the apostle’s help in restoring good personal relations between him and his master, and that Paul quite naturally takes the opportunity at the beginning and end of the letter to send greetings to other members of the household. Because of what they regard as the transparent genuineness of this epistle, several scholars who are unable to accept the whole of Colossians as Pauline feel constrained nevertheless to salvage some of it for the apostle—enough, at least, to keep Philemon company. 1
time when his activities, temporarily interrupted by imprisonment, were directed towards the evangelisation of Asia: not far from him as he lay at Ephesus were those churches in the Lycus valley which in some indirect way no doubt owed their origin to his missionary-work in the province, but which he had never so far visited, and in at least one of which, Colossae, the conditions gave him grave cause for anxiety. On the other hand, how unlikely was he to contemplate such a visit, let alone give thought to the provision of a lodging there, when he lay a prisoner at Rome. . . . From Rome he meant, not to turn back to the Lycus valley, but to advance into Spain.

To the argument that Onesimus was more likely to have fled to neighbouring Ephesus than to distant Rome, Professor Dodd says:

This seems plausible. But a moment’s reflection may convince us that we are here talking of things about which we know nothing. We cannot know either what was in Onesimus’s mind or what his opportunities for travel may have been. If we are to surmise, then it is as likely that the fugitive slave, his pockets lined at his master’s expense, made for Rome because it was distant, as that he went to Ephesus because it was near. But this meeting of the runaway slave with the imprisoned apostle is in any case an enigma. Did he mean to go to Paul? Or was he taken to him? Or was it the long arm of coincidence that brought about such an improbable meeting? No secure argument can be based upon an incident which we cannot in any case explain. ⑧

To the argument that Paul’s request for a lodging at Colossae comes more naturally if he was at Ephesus at the time than if he was at Rome, he says:

This is a real point in favour of the Ephesian hypothesis. At the same time we do not know that Paul would have held to his intention in the greatly changed circumstances. Like all practical men, he was open to change his mind, as in fact we know both from Acts and from the Epistles he not infrequently did. On the Roman hypothesis, the emergence of the Colossian heresy may well have led Paul to plan a visit to Asia before setting out on further travels, whether or not the promise was ever fulfilled. ⑨

These arguments of Professor Dodd, first publicly voiced in a lecture delivered in the Rylands Library, were taken up by Principal Duncan soon after they appeared in print in the Bulletin. On the first score Principal Duncan added little to what he had said before (apart from a footnote reference to Pongrácz’s suggestion that the Temple of Artemis would have afforded a place of refuge for Onesimus at Ephesus): on the second score he conceded that Paul might have changed his plans during his Roman imprisonment and decided to visit Colossae.

“But long before he could have arrived at that remote and unimportant town in the Lycus valley, must we not allow for the eager news preceding him of his release, his journeyings eastwards, his subsequent arrival at Ephesus or some such centre in Asia? That one so situated should bespeak quarters at Colossae suggests the air-mindedness of the twentieth century rather than the rigorous conditions, which Paul himself knew so well (2 Co. 11: 25 ff.), of travel in the first.” ⑧

On this last point it may be said that long before the air-minded twentieth century most readers of the epistle, including those who experienced travel conditions not noticeably less rigorous than those which Paul had to endure in the first century, took it for granted that Paul did from Rome bespeak quarters at Colossae. More important: it was not only the Colossian heresy that caused Paul concern. The developing situation in the province of Asia, as Paul learned of it from Epaphras and other visitors, may well have seemed to him to call urgently for his presence there as soon as he regained his freedom (if indeed he did regain it). In other parts of the province than the Lycus valley Paul’s opponents were exploiting his enforced absence to his detriment and (as he saw it) to the detriment of his converts and the cause of the gospel. Even if things had not yet come to the pass described in 2 Timothy i. 15, where “all who are in Asia” are said to have turned away from him, the beginnings of this trend could certainly be traced during Paul’s custody in Rome, if not earlier.

One slight pointer to Rome as the place of origin might be the inclusion of Luke and Mark among Paul’s companions at the time of writing. Luke was with Paul at Rome; we have no evidence that he was with him at Ephesus. Mark is traditionally

⑩ Ibid.
associated with Rome, not with Ephesus.\(^1\) But this pointer, if such it be, is far from conclusive.

Defenders of the view that the epistle and its companion epistles were composed during Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea could point out that Luke was very probably with Paul at that time; but (in spite of Lohmeyer's arguments)\(^2\) Caesarea hardly comes into the picture. One could understand Onesimus making his way to Ephesus because it was near, or working his passage to Rome because it was distant; but why should he go to Caesarea?

The place from which the Epistle to Philemon was written cannot, in fact, be determined from a study of this epistle alone. It must be determined, if at all, by taking into account the evidence of the epistles with which this one is most closely associated—in the first instance, the Epistle to the Colossians. When we look at Philemon by itself, the arguments for Ephesus are weighty. But when we take Philemon and Colossians together, these arguments are outweighed by the arguments for Rome as the place from which Colossians was written. This question calls for treatment on a later occasion.

IV

The picture sometimes given of Paul's meeting Onesimus as a fellow-prisoner is rather misleading. Principal Duncan is quite right in emphasizing "how very radically Paul's condition of imprisonment in Rome must have changed for the worse" following on two years spent in his own hired house (Acts xxviii. 30), he was reduced to sharing the same prison-cell as a fugitive slave."\(^3\) But there is no need to conjure up any such picture in our minds. The situation is more intelligible if we think of Paul as still living under house-arrest in his lodgings—albeit handcuffed to his military guard, and therefore technically a δεσμώς (verses 1, 9) or εν δεσμώσις (verses 10, 13)—when Onesimus came to him.

\(^1\) A visit by Mark to the province of Asia is implied in Col. iv. 10, but after the dispatch of Colossians.


\(^3\) St. Paul's Ephesian Minsttry, p. 73.

In this case we might consider a suggestion made many years ago by Professor E. R. Goodenough.\(^5\) He pointed out that Athenian law permitted a slave in danger of his life to seek sanctuary at an altar, and that that altar might be the hearth of a private family. The head of the family was then obliged to give the slave protection while he tried to persuade him to return to his master; he would no doubt use his good offices to try to mollify the master's wrath. If the slave refused to return, the householder's duty was to put the slave up for auction and hand over the price received for him to his former master. This provision survived in Egypt under the Ptolemies, and well into Roman imperial times, since it influenced Ulpian's legislation early in the third century A.D. Philo, who knew the Egyptian practice, modified the Deuteronomic law of the fugitive slave (Deut. xxiii. 15 f.) to conform with it.\(^6\)

Goodenough explained the case of Onesimus in terms of this provision, but found it necessary then to suppose that Paul was free at the time, and that the reference to his being "in bonds" might be figurative.\(^7\) But if the apostle was under house-arrest in his own lodgings, might not the place where he lived count as a "hearth" or "altar" within the meaning of the law—always supposing that Onesimus did avail himself of this legal provision?

There is no way of deciding how in fact Onesimus made his way to Paul. Perhaps Epaphras of Colossae, the evangelist of the Lycus valley (Col. i. 7), who was on a visit to Paul at the time (Col. iv. 12) and who is indeed described as Paul's συναρχάδος in Philemon 23, brought him to Paul because he knew that Paul would help him in his predicament. We cannot be sure. We may be quite wrong in supposing that Onesimus was a runaway slave in the usual sense of the word. It could, I suppose, he argued that his master sent him to Paul to fulfil some commission, and that Onesimus overstayed his leave—*amore Pauli*, perhaps\


\(^7\) He also cast doubt on the identity of the Onesimus of Philemon with Onesimus of Col. iv. 9 (op. cit. p. 182, n. 7).
(why not?)—and had to have a note of excuse from Paul begging pardon for his unduly long absence. Our ignorance of the details being what it is, the possibilities which might be canvassed are numerous.

The epistle throws little light on Paul's attitude to the institution of slavery. We get more formal teaching on this subject in the "household tables" of Colossians and Ephesians, and in remarks in other epistles.¹

¹ What this epistle does is to bring us into an atmosphere in which the institution could only wilt and die. When Onesimus is sent to his master "no longer as a slave, but as a dear brother", formal emancipation would be but a matter of expediency, the technical confirmation of the new relationship that had already come into being. If the epistle were a document on slavery, one could illustrate it copiously by accounts of the conditions of slavery under the Roman Empire, including an advertisement of 156 B.C. quoted by Professor Moule in his commentary on Colossians and Philemon, in which information is requested about a runaway slave and a description is given not only of the slave himself but of the goods which he had on him when last seen.²

V

If the epistle is not primarily a sociological document, what is it? We may gain a clearer idea of its nature and purpose if we ask three specific questions:

(i) What is Paul asking for?
(ii) Did he get it?
(iii) Why was the epistle preserved?

Although formally these are three questions, materially they are parts of one comprehensive question, covering the character of the document and its place in the New Testament. It will help us, moreover, to find an answer to this comprehensive question and the more specific questions which make it up if we look at one of the most important and fascinating books ever written on this epistle—a book which deals not only with these major questions but also with a number of subsidiary ones.

In 1935 Professor John Knox, formerly of the University of Chicago and now (since 1943) of Union Theological Seminary, New York, published a little book entitled Philemon among the Letters of Paul. The edition was a small one, and the book did not receive the attention which it deserved. In 1959 it appeared in a new and slightly enlarged edition. Meanwhile Professor Knox's views on Philemon had received wider currency in his introduction and commentary on the epistle in The Interpreter's Bible.³

The milieu in which Professor Knox's work took shape was the Chicago New Testament school led by the late Edgar J. Goodspeed. Goodspeed himself pioneered the view that the corpus Paulinum of ten epistles (that is, lacking the three Pastorals) was edited and published at Ephesus about the end of the first century A.D., and that the document which we call the Epistle to the Ephesians was composed by the editor to serve as an introduction to the corpus—an introduction setting forth what the editor took to be "the quintessence of Paulinism".² Other members of the Chicago school undertook supporting studies with a bearing on the central thesis, and Professor Knox's book belongs to this category.

He accepts the general Goodspeed position and asks the pertinent question: Why was Philon included among the letters of Paul? His answer, briefly, is that Philon mattered supremely to a man who played a prominent part in the publication of the corpus Paulinum. Who was that man? It was Onesimus.

The argument runs thus. When Ignatius, bishop of Syrian Antioch, was on his way to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts, about A.D. 110 or shortly after, the name of the bishop of Ephesus was Onesimus.³ "What of that?" it might be asked. Onesimus

₁ Col. iii. 22-iv. 1; Eph. vi. 5-9; 1 Cor. vii. 21-23; 1 Tim. vi. 1 ff.; 1 Peter ii. 18-21.
⁴ Ignatius, Eph. i. 3.
was a common enough name—especially a common enough slave-name. "Profitable" or "Useful" was a name bestowed on many slaves in accordance with a well-known principle of nomenclature, not because a slave was actually profitable or useful, but in the fond hope that the attachment of this name of good omen to him would make him so. Why, then, should one connect the Onesimus who was bishop of Ephesus about A.D. 110 with the Onesimus who figures in the Epistle to Philemon between fifty and sixty years earlier?

Because, says Professor Knox, Ignatius in his letter to the church of Ephesus shows himself familiar with the part of Ignatius' s letter to Ephesus where the language of our epistle is clearly echoed. Not only so, (dvalp.TJv O'ov) says, saying, the church of Ephesus shows himself familiar with the disturbed mind.

Philemon Philemon; worthy reference:

between fifty and sixty years earlier? one of the rare places in patristic literature

of our epistle is clearly echoed. Not only so, but the part of Ignatius's letter to Ephesus where the language of Philemon is echoed is the part in which Bishop Onesimus is mentioned—the first six chapters. In these six chapters the bishop is mentioned fourteen times; in the remaining fifteen chapters he is not mentioned at all, apart from reference: "obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undisturbed mind."

This consideration is impressive, if not conclusive. But there is one point which I find particularly impressive. In verse 20 of our epistle Paul, playing on the meaning of Onesimus's name, says, "Yes, my dear brother, let me have this profit from you (óναιμην σου) as a fellow-Christian." And Ignatius seems to echo this expression with the intention of making the same play on words when he says to the Christians of Ephesus: "May I always have profit from you (óναιμην δμων), if I am worthy." 4

This indeed does not demand the identification of the two Onesimi; it could simply be that the name of the contemporary bishop of Ephesus reminded Ignatius of the Onesimus of Philemon; as the earlier Onesimus, formerly unprofitable, was henceforth going to be as profitable as his name promised, so the second Onesimus was eminently worthy of his "well-loved name." 5 But the identification is not impossible; it is (I should say) not improbable. Whether the Epistle to Philemon was written about A.D. 61, or some six years earlier (as those think who date it in the course of Paul's Ephesian ministry), a lad in his later teens or early twenties when Paul wrote it would be in his seventies by the time of Ignatius's martyrdom—not an incredible age for a bishop in those days.

Professor Knox is not so convincing, when he makes Paul say, "The request I am making is for my son, whom I have begotten here in prison as Onesimus"—as though Onesimus were the new "Christian" name given him by his father in the faith. This idea is too far-fetched; not only, as has been said, was Onesimus a common slave-name, but Paul would not designate the young man by a name which his master would not recognize.

Apart from this, what has the possible identification of Paul's Onesimus with the bishop of Ephesus whom Ignatius knew to do with the preservation of the Epistle to Philemon among the letters of Paul? This, says Professor Knox: if (as the Goodspeed school believes) Ephesus was the place where the corpus Paulinum was edited about the end of the first century, then the Onesimus of Ignatius's letter was probably already bishop of Ephesus and in a position of responsibility in relation to the editing of the corpus. Why should he not have been the editor himself? In that case we need look no farther for the reason for the careful preservation of the Epistle to Philemon. But if Onesimus was editor of the corpus Paulinum, then (according to the Goodspeed school) he would have been the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians. If

Knox argues (op. cit. pp. 89 ff.) that Ignatius's reference (i. 1) to the Ephesian church's "well-loved name" (γονασηθήνεν σου δομοχ) is to be understood as an allusion to the name of its bishop, in whom the church was embodied: "I received in the name of God your whole community in Onesimus" (v. 3).

"I appeal to you for my child" (op. cit. p. 14). "Is Paul appealing on behalf of Onesimus? Or is he simply asking for Onesimus?... Paul, with all possible delicacy, is asserting a claim upon Onesimus" (op. cit. pp. 19 f.), i.e. he is asking that Onesimus be given (back) to him.

Op. cit. p. 21: he alludes (p. 90) to Ignatius's mention of "thy (sou) well-loved name, which ye have acquired by your righteous nature (δεκέτησθε φασις ἰσήμων)" according to faith and love in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 1).
that were so, Paul certainly did a wonderful piece of work the day he won Onesimus for Christ!

Professor Knox raises another interesting question. To whom is the Epistle to Philemon addressed? To Philemon, of course, is the natural answer. Yes, but not so fast. It is addressed not to Philemon alone; it is addressed to "our dear fellow-worker Philemon, our sister Apphia and our comrade Archippus, and the church in your house"—"your" in the singular. This is a place where it is useful to follow the Authorized and Revised Versions and retain the distinction between the singular and plural pronouns of the second person: "the church in thy house" (τῆς κοινῆς σου ἐκκλησίας). In whose house? The house of the person who is addressed in the second person singular from verse 4 to verse 24 of the epistle—Onesimus’s owner. And who was he? Philemon, again, is the natural answer—the person first mentioned among the addressees in verse 1 (just as the real author of the epistle is the person first mentioned among the senders in verse 1).

But Professor Knox does not think so. Onesimus’s owner, according to him, was not Philemon but Archippus, the third addressee. Why should Philemon have been Onesimus’s owner any more than Archippus? Confirmation that Archippus was Onesimus’s owner is sought in the cryptic reference to Archippus in Col. iv. 17, where Paul bids the Colossian church tell Archippus to see to it that he fulfils the ministry he has received "in the Lord." What Paul is doing there is enlisting the support of the Colossian church in persuading Onesimus’s owner to do what Paul wants him to do.

Who then was Philemon? He was overseer of the churches of the Lycus valley, who lived at Laodicea. Paul arranged that the epistle should be delivered to Philemon first because he could use his influence with Archippus; this was the "epistle from Laodicea," which Paul asked the church of Colossae to procure and read (Col. iv. 16).¹

What can be said of this reconstruction? It is quite probable that the cryptic reference to Archippus’s ministry had something to do with the "letter from Laodicea," since it comes immediately after the injunction to procure and read that letter. But one thing is certain: after the extraordinary delicacy with which Paul makes his plea for Onesimus in the Epistle to Philemon, it would be an incredibly flat-footed action to put pressure on Onesimus’s owner by name in another letter which was to be read aloud at a church meeting where the owner would presumably be present.² The reference to Onesimus in Col. iv. 9, on the other hand, is unobtrusive: "Along with Tychicus I am sending Onesimus, my trusty and well-loved brother, who is one of yourselves." No one could take exception to that, although doubtless it would add just a little more weight to Paul’s plea in the Epistle to Philemon. But there was no need to put on the spot a man to whom Paul was writing separately and saying, "I know you will do more than I say"; any attempt to put him on the spot before the church of Colossae would go far to neutralize the effect of Paul’s diplomacy in the Epistle to Philemon.

And it would if anything be still more disastrous for Paul to direct that the Epistle to Philemon should be read aloud to the assembled church at Colossae. True, in the Epistle to Philemon Paul sends greetings to "the church that meets in your house" as well as to Philemon, Apphia and Archippus—but that does not mean that the private contents of verses 4-22 were to be divulged even to the household church with which these three were associated, not to speak of the city church of Colossae.

What Archippus’s ministry was, which had to be publicly enjoined on him in Col. iv. 17, must be a matter of speculation; but there is no good reason to suppose that it is relevant to our understanding of the Epistle to Philemon. Nor was Archippus Onesimus’s owner. It is unlikely that this idea would have occurred to any one but for a desire to link the burden of the Epistle to Philemon with the ministry laid on Archippus in Col. iv. 17.

² Goodspeed held this view of the letter from Laodicea, but he made Archippus and Onesimus, as well as Philemon, live at Laodicea (Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 109 ff.).
The first person addressed in the Epistle to Philemon would naturally be the head of the house; Apphia and Archippus would naturally be members of his family—his wife and his son, perhaps. It was, then, in Philemon's house that the housechurch of verse 1 met, and when Paul goes on to say, "I am making this request of you" (verse 9), it is to Philemon that the request is addressed. It is Philemon who is Onesimus's master; the traditional title of the epistle is no misnomer.

VI

We return to our three specific questions.

(i) What is Paul asking for?

He is asking Philemon of Colossae, one of his own converts, not only to pardon his slave Onesimus and give him a Christ welcome, but to send him back so that he can go on helping Paul as he had already begun to do. Paul would have liked to keep Onesimus with him, but would not do so without Philemon's express and willing consent—not only because it would have been illegal to do so, but also, and especially, because it would have involved a breach of Christian fellowship between himself and Philemon.

(ii) Did he get it?

Yes; otherwise the letter never would have survived. That it survived at all is a matter calling for comment, but if Philemon had hardened his heart and refused to pardon and welcome Onesimus he would certainly have suppressed the letter.

(iii) Why was the epistle preserved?

Not only because it accomplished its purpose so far as Philemon was concerned, but also because Onesimus treasured it as his charter of liberty. And there is much to be said for the view that Onesimus did not remain a private Christian, but became in due course one of the most important figures in the life of the province of Asia—bishop of Ephesus, no less. It was in his lifetime that the corpus of Pauline letters was first collected and published, and wherever and by whomsoever this work was carried out, Onesimus (if he was bishop of Ephesus) could scarcely fail to get to know about it, and he would make sure that his Pauline letter found a place in the collection.
ST. PAUL IN ROME.
3. THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

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I

COLOSSAE was a city of Phrygia, situated on the south bank of the river Lycus (modern Çirikçusucu), a tributary of the Maeander (modern Menderes). It lay on the main road from Ephesus to the Euphrates, and accordingly finds mention in the itineraries of the armies of Xerxes and Cyrus the Younger, which marched along this road. Herodotus, in the fifth century B.C., speaks of it as "a great city of Phrygia"; Xenophon, at the beginning of the following century, describes it as "a populous city, wealthy and large". But later in the pre-Christian era it diminished in importance with the growth of neighbouring Laodicea and Hierapolis, and at the beginning of the Christian era Strabo calls it a small town. The site is now deserted, but the town of Honas (formerly a Byzantine fortress and seat of an archbishopric) lies three miles to the south-east. In New Testament times its population comprised indigenous Phrygians and Greek settlers, together with a number of Jewish colonists who settled in Phrygia from the time of Antiochus III (early second century B.C.) onwards.

The western region of Phrygia in which Colossae and the other cities of the Lycus valley lay formed part of the kingdom of Pergamum, which was bequeathed to the Roman senate and people in 133 B.C. by Attalus III, the last ruler of that kingdom, and reconstituted by them as the province of Asia.

Christianity was introduced to the Lycus valley during the years of Paul's Ephesian ministry (c. A.D. 52-55). So vigorously was evangelization prosecuted during those years that, according to Luke, not only the people of Ephesus but "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts xix. 10). While this work was directed by Paul, he was assisted by a number of colleagues, and through their activity churches were planted in some areas of the province which Paul was unable to visit personally. Among these were the churches of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis, which appear to have been planted by Paul's colleague Epaphras; this may be inferred from Paul's references to him in Col. i. 7 f.; iv. 12 f.

Within five years from Paul's departure from Ephesus, he found himself under house-arrest in Rome. Here, for a period of two years, he was able to receive visitors in his lodgings without difficulty. One of these visitors was Epaphras, the evangelist of the Lycus valley. He brought Paul news of the progress of the churches in that region. Much of his news was encouraging, but there was one disquieting feature: at Colossae in particular there was a strong tendency among the Christians to embrace a form of teaching which (although they themselves had no suspicion of this) threatened to subvert the gospel of grace which they had recently believed and to replace their Christian liberty with spiritual bondage. To safeguard them against this threat Paul sent them the Epistle to the Colossians.

II

The statements in the foregoing paragraph are based on several assumptions—two in particular: (i) that the letter to the Colossians has Paul for its author; (ii) that it was written during his imprisonment in Rome.

(i) On the point of authorship, Paul and Timothy are named together in the opening salutation as senders of the letter. It has been shown that most of the epistles in which Timothy's name is conjoined in this way with Paul's present some common literary features which mark them off from other letters in the corpus Paulinum; a natural explanation of this would be that in these letters Timothy served the apostle as his amanuensis.

But it has been urged against the Pauline authorship of this epistle that such a gnostic heresy as it presupposes could not have emerged before the second century A.D. There would be substance in this argument if the "Colossian heresy" exhibited the traits of fully developed Valentinianism or one of the other gnostic systems described by Irenaeus and Hippolytus or reflected in the Nag Hammadi papyri. But, as compared with such second-century systems, the "Colossian heresy" must be recognized as an incipient form of gnosticism. Evidence has indeed been forthcoming in increasing measure of the currency of incipient forms of gnosticism in the first century, especially in areas where Judaism found itself involved in dominant trends of Hellenistic and Oriental thought.

Some other arguments that have been brought against the Pauline authorship of Colossians boil down to the feeling that the author of Galatians, Corinthians and Romans could not have adapted himself as the writer of Colossians does to the situation with which this epistle deals. But this is seriously to underrate Paul's intelligence and versatility. The man whose settled policy it was to be "all things to all men" for the gospel's sake (1 Cor. ix. 22 f.) was perfectly capable of confronting what he regarded as the false gnost and worldly askesis taught at Colossae with the true gnost and spiritual askesis of Christ. For all his opposition to the "Colossian heresy", he readily takes up its characteristic terminology with a view to showing that the truth which it attempts to convey and only succeeds in distorting is perfectly embodied in Christ, the manifested "mystery of God" (Col. ii. 2).

It was pointed out some years ago by Professor Henry Chadwick\(^1\) that Paul in this epistle is doing two things at once: he is acting as the apologist for Christianity to the intellectual world of paganism at the same time as he is defending gospel truth within the church. His employment for apologetic purposes of the technical terms of the "Colossian heresy" in what has been called a "disinfected" sense\(^2\) goes some way to account for the differences in vocabulary which have been discerned between this epistle and Ephesians on the one hand and the Galatian, Corinthian and Roman epistles on the other.

Some scholars—notably H. J. Holtzmann\(^3\), Charles Masson\(^3\) and (most recently) P. N. Harrison\(^4\)—recognizing indubitably Pauline elements in Colossians, have tried to explain the presence of elements felt to be un-Pauline by supposing that Paul wrote a shorter Epistle to the Colossians. This shorter epistle, the hypothesis proceeds, was drawn upon by the Paulinist who wrote Ephesians; and the same Paulinist subsequently inserted substantial interpolations into the genuine Colossians in his own "imitable style",\(^5\) thus producing our present enlarged Colossians. Holtzmann attempted in this way to account for the curious phenomenon that, in passages common to Colossians and Ephesians, sometimes the one epistle and sometimes the other seems to be earlier. But A. S. Peake's criticism of Holtzmann's argument—"the complexity of the hypothesis tells fatally against it"—is equally valid against its more recent formulations.

P. N. Harrison incorporates with his formulation of this hypothesis the view which he takes over from E. J. Goodspeed that Ephesians was written by Onesimus; Onesimus, he concludes, was also the interpolator of Colossians.\(^6\) Two of the most substantial interpolations which Harrison discerns are the passages in Colossians i. 9b-25 and ii. 8-23, largely because of the high proportion of hapax legomena which they contain. But the argument from hapax legomena is precarious when applied to these two passages, since in the former liberal use is made of liturgical formulae, while the latter is above all others the passage in which the vocabulary of the "Colossian heresy" seems to be taken over and used in a "disinfected" sense.

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\(^1\) Chadwick, loc. cit. p. 272.
\(^2\) Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe (Leipzig, 1872).
\(^5\) P. N. Harrison, op. cit. p. 75. According to Harrison, the original letter consisted of Col. i. 1-6a, i. 6c-9a, i. 26-ii. 2a, ii. 5, 6, iii. 2-13, iii. 17-iv. 18.
(ii) As for the question whether Paul’s imprisonment at the time of writing Colossians (Col. iv. 3, 18) was his Roman imprisonment or an earlier one, I have elsewhere referred to two criteria which, in default of more explicit evidence, may help to determine the relative dating of the Pauline epistles. These criteria have to do with the development of Paul’s thought in certain fields. Here it is all too easy to argue in circles, determining the development of his thought from the order of his epistles, and then determining the order of his epistles from the development of his thought. But if we can establish some definite progression of thought on the basis of those epistles which can be dated on independent evidence, we may be able sometimes to suggest where, along the line of progression thus established, the other epistles should most probably be placed. Even so, we must beware of imagining that we can assume anything in the nature of linear progression when we are dealing with a mind like Paul’s.

The two criteria mentioned are Paul’s progression of thought in relation to (a) the eschatological hope and (b) the church as the body of Christ.

The former of these criteria does not take us very far with Colossians. In this epistle there is none of the apocalyptic picture-language which we find in the Thessalonian epistles and in some degree in 1 Corinthians xv. 51 ff., but the certainty of the parousia as the hope of the people of Christ is as clear as ever: “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Col. iii. 4). This is very much in line with Romans viii. 18-25, where the revealing of the sons of God in glory is the consummation for which the universe waits with longing expectancy; and the portrayal of Christ in Colossians i. 20 as the one through whom God plans to reconcile the universe to himself is in line both with that passage in Romans and with Philippians ii. 10 f., where the divine purpose is said to be that every knee should bow in Jesus’ name and every tongue confess that he is Lord.


2 E.g. 1 Thess. iv. 16 f.; 2 Thess. i. 7, ii. 3-12.

Much more decisive for the dating of Colossians is the other criterion—Paul’s conception of the Church as the body of Christ. A comparison of the setting forth of this conception in Colossians with its setting forth in 1 Corinthians and Romans suggests that Colossians marks a more advanced stage in Paul’s thinking on the subject than do 1 Corinthians and Romans. More will be said about this later in the paper; suffice it to note here that, whereas in 1 Corinthians and Romans the common life of Christians is compared to the interdependence of the various members of a body, the head (or a particular part of the head) being one member among others, in Colossians (and Ephesians) Christ is viewed as the head of the body. This more advanced stage in Paul’s thinking may reflect his reaction to the Colossian heresy: at any rate, it is difficult to date it during his Ephesian ministry, about the same time as 1 Corinthians and earlier than Romans. It follows that an Ephesian imprisonment is out of the question as the setting of Colossians; and if an Ephesian imprisonment is out, we have to think of either Caesarea or Rome. As between these two alternatives, Rome is the more probable on all counts.

This argument would, of course, be rebutted if the theory of two stages in the composition of Colossians were accepted; P. N. Harrison, for example, assigns all the occurrences of “head” and “body” in the epistle to the interpolator, and is thus able to date the genuine nucleus in Paul’s Ephesian ministry, “during a brief period of house arrest by friendly Asiarchs (Acts xix. 31), to keep Paul out of the reach of fanatical Jews, and avert a riot.” But the bibliographical improbability of this theory is such that it could be favourably considered only if powerful evidence were forthcoming in its support—and for such evidence we seek in vain.

1 Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 16-21.

2 Rome was a more natural place than Caesarea for Paul to receive visitors from all parts and have news of his converts in the Aegean world. If Ephesus is excluded as the place of origin for Colossians, it is excluded for Philemon by the same token (see BULLETIN, xlviii (1965-6), 85 ff.); in that case Rome must be adjudged much more probable than Caesarea as the place where Onesimus met Paul.

3 Paulines and Pastorals, p. 75.

4 It is not easy to decide why the genuine “nucleus” of Colossians should have been written at all.
III

We have no formal exposition of the Colossian heresy; its character must be inferred from the counter-argument of our epistle.

Basically the heresy was Jewish. This is evident from the part played in it by legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, the sabbath, new moon and other prescriptions of the Jewish calendar. But it was not the more straightforward Judaism against which the churches of Galatia had to be put on their guard. That Judaism was probably introduced into the Galatian churches by emissaries from Judaea; the Colossian heresy was more probably a Phrygian development in which a local variety of Judaism had been fused with a philosophy of non-Jewish origin—an early and simple form of gnosticism.

The synagogues of Phrygia appear to have been peculiarly exposed to the influence of Hellenistic speculation and consequent tendencies to religious syncretism.\(^1\) When the gospel was introduced to the region, a Jewish-Hellenistic syncretism would find little difficulty in expanding and modifying itself sufficiently to fit the general framework of the Christian story, and the result would be something not unlike the Colossian heresy as we can reconstruct it from Paul's reply to it.

In this heresy a special place was apparently given to angels, as agents both in creation and in the giving of the law.

As for the angelic agency in creation, one form of this belief appears in Philo, as Professor Chadwick has reminded us in his Manson Memorial Lecture for 1965.\(^2\) Another form seems to be attested by Justin Martyr, who refers to certain Jewish teachers who held that the words "let us make man" (Gen. i. 26) and "as one of us" (Gen. iii. 22) imply "that God spoke to angels, or that the human frame was the workmanship of angels"—whereas Justin held that the plural pronoun "us" denoted the Father and the Son.\(^3\) We may compare the statement in the Treatise on the Three Natures, discovered among the Nag Hammadi texts: "Some [Jewish sects] say that God is the creator of that which exists; others say that he created through his angels."\(^4\)

The angelic agency in the giving of the law is mentioned by three distinct New Testament writers (cf. Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2); it is attested in contemporary Jewish literature, as well as earlier in the Book of Jubilees and later in rabbinical commentaries.\(^5\) In the Colossian heresy the keeping of the law was regarded as a tribute of obedience due to those angels, and the breaking of the law incurred their displeasure and brought the law-breaker into debt and bondage to them. Hence they must be placated not only by the legal observances of traditional Judaism but in addition by a rigorous asceticism.

The angels through whom the law was given are described as "elemental beings" (στοιχεῖα), a term already used in the same sense in Galatians iv. 3, 9. But they are not only elemental beings but dominant ones as well—principalities and powers, lords of the planetary spheres, sharers in the divine plenitude (πληροφορία) and intermediaries between heaven and earth. Since they controlled the lines of communication between God and man, all revelation from God to man and all worship from man to God could reach its goal only by their mediation and with their permission. Christ himself, it was evidently held, had to submit to their authority on his way from heaven to earth, if not indeed also on his way back from earth to heaven.

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\(^{1}\) "More straightforward" than the Judaism of the Colossian heresy, but not absolutely straightforward Judaism, if the references to the στοιχεῖα in Gal. iv. 3, 9, are any guide. Cf. J. H. Ropes, The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians (Cambridge, Mass., 1929).

\(^{2}\) The statement sometimes quoted in this connection from TB Shabbat 147 b, to the effect that the wines and baths of Phrygia had separated the tribes from their fellow-Israelites, is of doubtful relevance; the location of Pragitha is uncertain, but it may have been a place in Palestine.

\(^{3}\) See p. 303, infra.

\(^{4}\) Justin, Dial., 62.

\(^{5}\) See G. Quispel's account in The Jung Codex, ed. F. L. Cross (London, 1959), p. 62. He ascribes the treatise to Heracleon. Cf. also Bereshith Rabba on Gen. i. 28: "When Moses came to the words, ' Let us make man ', he said, ' Lord of the world! What an opportunity is thus given to the heretics to open their mouths!' He answered: 'Write! Who wishes to go astray can go astray.'"

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Justin, Dial., 62.
All this was presented as a form of advanced teaching for a spiritual élite. The Christians of Colossae were urged to go in for this progressive wisdom and knowledge (γνώσεως), to explore the deeper mysteries by a series of successive initiations until they attained perfection (τελείωσις). Christian baptism was but a preliminary initiation; those who wished to proceed farther along the path of truth must put off all material elements by pursuing an ascetic regimen until at last they became citizens of the spiritual world, the realm of light.

Bishop Lightfoot, in his commentary on Colossians and Philemon (1875), traced this species of Judaizing gnosis back to the Essenes, to whom he devoted three dissertations at the end of the commentary, thus reverting to a subject which he had already broached ten years earlier in his dissertation on “St. Paul and the Three” in his commentary on Galatians.

Quite apart from the relevance of his dissertations on the Essenes to the theme of Colossians, Lightfoot shows his characteristic sobriety and accuracy of scholarship in his description of the Essenes and their doctrines—as may be seen on the one hand by the contrast between his account and that of C. D. Ginsburg’s essay on The Essenes, their History and Doctrines, published in 1864, and now on the other hand in the light of the vastly increased knowledge of the Essenes or a related group available to us from the Qumran texts. In the light of these texts, too, Lightfoot’s further thesis of a strong Essene element in Ebionitism is reinforced.

In relating the Colossian heresy to the Essenes Lightfoot argues (i) that Essene Judaism was “gnostic”, characterized by the intellectual exclusiveness and speculative tenets of gnosticism; (ii) that this type of Jewish thought and practice had established itself in that area of Asia Minor in the Apostolic Age; (iii) that the Colossian heresy was a brand of gnostic Judaism, because (a) it was clearly Jewish in its basis and (b) it was marked by several distinctive features of gnosticism: an intellectual élite (which insisted on σοφία, γνώσεως, σύνεσις, etc.), cosmogonic speculation (with emphasis on angelic mediation, the πνεύμα, etc.), asceticism and calendrical regulations.

More recently many of these features reappear in a catalogue of specific points of contact between the Qumran texts and the Colossian heresy. Professor W. D. Davies, for example, enumerates among these points of contact features of phraseology, calendrical niceties, sabbath regulations, food distinctions, asceticism, and emphasis on wisdom and knowledge, involving a special understanding of the world, of angelology, of the spirit of truth” and the “spirit of error”, and so forth.

Even so, we cannot without more ado identify the Colossian heresy as a variety of Essenism or of the Qumran doctrine. For one thing, we miss in the Epistle to the Colossians any reference to an insistence on ceremonial washings, which appear to have played an important part among the Essenes in general and at Qumran in particular. When baptism is mentioned in Colossians, it is mentioned not as the true counterpart to heretical ablutions but in connection with the “circumcision made without hands”

1 J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London, 1875), pp. 73 ff.
2 Reprinted with his treatise The Kabbalah in one volume (London, 1955).
5 With Col. ii. 18 (ι διάρκειν ἐμπεισκόντες) Professor Davies compares the description in IQM x. 10 ff. of “the people of the saints of the covenant instructed in the laws and learned in wisdom, who have heard the voice of Majesty and have seen the angels of holiness, whose ears have been unstopped, and who have heard profound things.”
(Col. ii. 11 f.)—perhaps by way of showing that the literal rite of circumcision has been superseded by the work of Christ. Instead, therefore, of talking of specifically Essene influence in the Colossian heresy, it might be better to use the wider term recently popularized by Principal Matthew Black and talk of the influence of “nonconformist Judaism” or “Jewish nonconformity.”

Behind Colossians, and some other areas of New Testament literature, several scholars have discerned a gnostic myth of Persian or Iranian origin which they believe to have been current in the Near East around the time when Christianity first appeared. The reflection of this myth in a New Testament document is usually sufficient to stamp it as post-apostolic—sufficient especially, if the document in question belongs to the corpus Paulinum, to stamp it as non-Pauline or at least deuto-Pauline.

One distinctive feature of this myth is the association or identification of Primal Man with the Redeemer-Revealer who comes from the realm of light to liberate exiles from that realm who have been imprisoned in material bodies in the lower world of darkness by imparting to them the knowledge of the truth. Much of the material on the basis of which this myth has been reconstructed—especially Mandaean and Manichaean literature—is later than the apostolic age, and is at least as likely to have been influenced by the New Testament as to have exercised an influence upon it. It is possible to defend the thesis that Primal Man and the Redeemer-Revealer are nowhere brought together in gnosticism except under the influence of the gospel, and one might even hazard the guess that one of the earliest attempts to re-state the gospel in terms of such a gnostic myth can be detected in the Colossian heresy. But the substantiation of this guess (if it is capable of being substantiated) is a task that must be undertaken on another occasion.


The whole elaborate structure of the Colossian heresy is condemned by Paul as so much specious make-believe. Far from representing a more advanced grade of religious truth than that proclaimed in the apostolic preaching, it was at every point inconsistent with that preaching. A system in which the planetary powers played so prominent a part must needs enthrone fate in place of God. If we may judge by the analogy of parallel systems, Christ was probably held to have relinquished successive portions of his authority to the planetary powers as he passed through their spheres on his way to earth, and if (as the Colossian heresy seems to have taught) it was these powers that made him suffer on the cross, that would be regarded as conclusive proof of their superiority to him.

Paul’s reply to this “human tradition” (Col. ii. 8) is to set over against it the tradition of Christ—not merely the tradition which stems from the teaching of Christ but the tradition which finds its embodiment in him. Christ, he says, is the image of God, the one who incorporates the plenitude of the divine essence, so that the elemental spirits have no share in it at all. And those who are members of Christ realize their plenitude in him; they need not seek, for they cannot find, perfection anywhere else. It is in Christ that the totality of wisdom and knowledge is concentrated and made available to his people—not to an elite only, but to all. And he is the sole mediator between God and mankind.

Far from the angels playing a part in creation, Christ is the one through whom all things were created, including the principalities and powers who figured so prominently in the Colossian heresy. Why should people who were united by faith with the creator of these powers think it necessary to pay them tribute? Again, far from these powers demonstrating their superiority to Christ, his death and resurrection reveal him as their conqueror. When on the cross they flung themselves upon him with hostile intent, he not only repelled their attack but turned the cross into the
triumphal chariot before which he drove them as his vanquished foes. Why then should those who through faith-union with him shared his death and resurrection go on serving those elemental spirits whom Christ had conquered? The Colossian heresy, with all its taboos, was no syllabus of advanced wisdom; it bore all the marks of immaturity. Why should those who had come of age in Christ go back to the apron-strings of infancy? Why should those whom Christ had set free submit to this yoke of bondage?

In his reply to the Colossian heresy, Paul develops the doctrine of the cosmic Christ more fully than in his other epistles. Adumbrations of it certainly appear in some of his other epistles. To Paul there was “one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor. viii. 6); this Christ was “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. i. 24), and God through the Spirit had revealed to his people that hidden wisdom, “decree before the ages for our glorification” (1 Cor. ii. 7), through ignorance of which the cosmic powers had crucified the Lord of glory and thus accomplished their own overthrow (1 Cor. ii. 6-10). And the liberation from such hostile forces procured by Christ in his death was not to be restricted to his people alone, but would in due course reach out to the whole cosmos (Rom. viii. 19-22). But what is suggested in passing in 1 Corinthians and Romans is expounded more fully and systematically in Colossians. (This, it may be added, is a further indication that Colossians is later than these two epistles.)

The language in which Paul portrays Christ as the one in whom and for whom the universe was created, and in whom all things hold together, is generally recognized nowadays to be based on an early Christian hymn or confession in which Christ is celebrated as the Divine Wisdom. Into the form-analysis of Colossians i. 15-20 I will not enter here; I should mention, however, that my colleague Dr. Ralph P. Martin, who has made a special study of early Christian carmina, has undertaken a detailed examination of this passage.  

A Wisdom Christology can be traced in various strands of first-century Christianity, the most notable evidence of it in the New Testament being Colossians i. 15-17, John i. 1-3 and Hebrews i. 1-3, three mutually independent passages. The root of this Christology, on which Paul and the Fourth Evangelist and the writer to the Hebrews alike drew, must be primitive indeed; and in view of the presence of what form critics call “Wisdom sayings” among the verba Christi in the Synoptic Gospels, it is not too hazardous to suggest that Christ’s occasional speaking in the rôles of Divine Wisdom is a major root of the Wisdom Christology of the Apostolic Age.

One Old Testament passage in particular has influenced those New Testament contexts in which Christ, as the Wisdom of God, is said to have created all things, and that is Proverbs viii. 22 ff., where Wisdom personified speaks in the first person as the beginning of God’s way, his darling first-born child and his assessor when he created the world. The wording of this passage underlies the description of Christ in Colossians i. 15 as “the first-born of all creation” and in Colossians i. 18 as “the beginning” (ἀρχή). Rabbinical exegesis added the word “beginning” in Proverbs viii. 22—“the beginning (Heb. ṭēshith) of his way”—to explain the “beginning” (Heb. ṭēshith) of Genesis i. 1; that is to say, the “beginning” in which God created heaven and earth was Wisdom. This sufficiently explains the curious use of the preposition ἐν in Colossians i. 16a (“in him were all things created”) where we might have expected the ἐν of agency; the “in” is the “in” of Genesis i. 1: if “in” in the beginning God created heaven and earth”, Christ, as the Wisdom of God, is the beginning “in” whom all things were created.  

But the hymn of Colossians i. 15-20 celebrates Christ not only as head of the old creation but as head of the new creation; this is the subject of the second strophe, beginning in verse 18.

1 Col. ii. 15.
2 The ἀρχή τοῦ ἄνων τοιούτου, probably identical with the κοσμοκράτορες of Eph. vi. 12. For Paul’s understanding of them see p. 285.
In the new creation, too, Christ is the "beginning", not this time as the "first-born of all creation" but as "first-born from the dead"—i.e. by resurrection. If in relation to the old creation he is "head" of every principality and power (Col. ii. 10) in the sense of being their ruler, in relation to the new creation he is "head" of his body the church, not simply in the sense of ruler but in the sense that he is so vitally united with his people that the life which they now live is derived from the life which he lives as first-born from the dead. The cosmos is not called his body, and to envisage an earlier form of the hymn in which the temple joins Christ.

Whatever form the hymn originally had, the description of Christ as "the head of the body, the church" (Col. i. 18) is most probably Pauline. All our evidence points to Paul as the originator of this way of expressing the church's vital unity with the church's Lord, "the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col. ii. 19). This, as we have seen, marks an advance on the use of this terminology in 1 Corinthians and Romans, where the church is "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 27) or "one body in Christ" (Rom. xii. 5), but Christ is not spoken of as the church's head.

A great variety of theories have been advanced regarding the source of the conception of the church as the body of Christ. Jewish, Gnostic and Stoic antecedents have been suggested. But most probably we have to do with a survival of the Hebrew concept of corporate personality. Christ and his people are so conjoined that on occasion Christ and his people together can be called "Christ". This is not the only phase of Paul's thought where oscillation between individual and corporate personality can be traced; but this phase was probably impressed indelibly on his mind when on the Damascus road he heard the challenge of the voice from heaven: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts ix. 4). Not that Paul immediately interpreted these words in terms of head and body, as Augustine later did; but the truth which they expressed is the truth which Paul expresses in Colossians (and Ephesians) when he speaks of the church as the body of Christ, drawing life and all other resources from him who is her head.

The advance from the language of simile in 1 Corinthians and Romans to what has been called the ontological and realistic language of Colossians and Ephesians may have been stimulated by Paul's consideration of the issues involved in the Colossian heresy. Far from being subject to the principalities and powers, he argued, Christ was their ruler, their head, by the twofold claim of creation and conquest. But as he was head of the old creation, so by his resurrection from the dead he was head of the new creation too; and as Paul had already repeatedly spoken of the church as the body of Christ, Christ's headship over the church could readily be conceived as an organic relationship, in which Christ exercised the control over his people that the head of a body exercises over its various parts. In this way not only is the living fellowship between the members of the church brought out (as in the earlier epistles referred to) but so is the dependence of all the members on Christ for life and power, and his supremacy is vindicated against a system of thought which threatened to cast him down from his excellency. In consequence "body" is used in Colossians and Ephesians in correlation with "head" rather than (as in the earlier epistles) with "spirit"; but this is no valid argument against identity of authorship.

1 Cf. Rev. i. 5.
2 Cf. W. L. Knox's argument that under the influence of Hellenism Paul moved from apocalyptic to cosmology, from Christ as omega to Christ as alpha (St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 90 ff.).
4 Cf. H. Schlier, Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief (Tübingen, 1930); E. Küsemann, Leib und Leib Christi (Tübingen, 1933).
"Christ crucified, . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 23 f.), the message preached to the Corinthians, is the message which Paul proclaims as the answer to the Colossian heresy. How foolish it was to pay tribute to the angelic powers through whom the law was given, as though they controlled the way from God to man and back from man to God! That way was now controlled by Christ, who had subjugated these powers and reduced them to the status of "weak and beggarly elemental spirits" (Gal. iv. 9).

The lords of the planetary spheres may play but little part in the world-outlook of man today—although the number of readers of the popular press who accept the invitation to "plan with the planets" suggests that they perhaps play a larger part than we think. Yet man today is unprecedentedly aware of powerful and malignant forces in the universe which he does not hesitate to call "demonic". He feels that they are operating against his welfare but that he is quite unable to master them, whether by individual strength or by united action. They may be Frankenstein monsters of his own creation; they may be subliminal horrors over which he has no conscious control. He knows himself to be involved in situations from which his moral sense recoils—but what can he do about them? If he and his fellows are puppets in the hand of a blind and unfriendly fate, what difference does it make whether they resist and be crushed immediately, or acquiesce and be crushed a little later?  

To this mood of frustration and despair Paul's answer would be his answer to the Colossian heresy. To be united to Christ, he would say, is to be liberated from the thralldom of demonic forces, to enjoy perfect freedom instead of being the playthings of fate.

Indeed, archaic as some of Paul's terminology is, his essential message is easily translated into the language of today. Whatever others might think, in his mind the principalities and powers were no longer the archons who governed the planetary spheres; he has "demythologized" them to stand for all the forces in the universe opposed to Christ and his people. Professor Bultmann points out that "in our day and generation, although we no longer think mythologically, we often speak of demonic powers which rule history, corrupting political and social life. Such language", he continues, "is metaphorical, a figure of speech, but in it is expressed the knowledge, the insight, that the evil for which every man is responsible individually has nevertheless become a power which mysteriously enslaves every member of the human race."  

I suggest that this knowledge, this insight, was present to Paul's mind and expressed by him in terms of the principalities and powers which, he affirmed, were unable to separate believers "from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 39).  

ST. PAUL IN ROME
4. THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

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I

FIFTY years ago—on 11 October 1916, to be precise—the first incumbent of the Rylands Chair in Manchester University delivered a lecture in this Library to which he gave the title “The Quintessence of Paulinism”. It was a characteristically judicious presentation of those features which Professor Peake considered (and rightly so) to constitute the pith of Paul’s teaching.

But there is a first-century document to which this same title, “The Quintessence of Paulinism”, might well be given. It is the document which we know by its traditional title, “The Epistle to the Ephesians”. My present purpose is to show that this document in large measure sums up the leading themes of the Pauline epistles, and at the same time the central motive of Paul’s ministry as apostle to the Gentiles.

II

I do not propose to enter into the question of the authorship of Ephesians, as I have no fresh contribution to make to it. The arguments for direct Pauline authorship have been most ably presented by E. Percy, those against by C. L. Mitton. I will not say, like a colleague of mine in another English University, that when I read Dr. Percy I feel that the epistle is non-Pauline,

1 A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 9th of November 1966.
3 Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe (Lund, 1946).
4 The Epistle to the Ephesians (Oxford, 1951).
while when I read Dr. Mitton I feel that it is Pauline after all. It is
the contents of the epistle, not the authorship, that I propose to
look at, and in this regard it will suffice to say, with G. B. Caird,
that Ephesians, "if it is not by Paul, is a masterly summary of
Paul's theology by a disciple who was capable of thinking Paul's
thoughts after him".  

Ephesians is not an easy document for New Testament
students to come to terms with. Markus Barth calls it "a
stranger at the door" of the Pauline corpus. E. J. Goodspeed
speaks of it as "the Waterfall of commentators"—an ambi-
guous expression. Waterloo may be a defeat to a Frenchman, a
victory to a Briton, but what does it mean on the lips of an
American? The context suggests that to most commentators
Ephesians means what Waterloo meant to Napoleon, not to
Wellington. More promisingly, Goodspeed describes the epistle
as "a great rhapsody of the Christian salvation". It reads, he
says, "like a commentary on the Pauline letters"—which is true,
but a trifle odd in a work which, a few lines previously, has
ferred to it as "a mosaic of Pauline materials". A mosaic
made up of fragments of a man's writings is not best calculated to
provide a commentary on them. 

In a recent book mention is made of an unnamed writer who
"anxious to preserve Ephesians for Paul", says that "Ephesians
may look like a compilation of Pauline phrases, but if looked at as a
whole it has a unity". "So", says the authors of the book, "has a
dilemma of stones, no matter what kind or by whom brought

1 The Apostolic Age (London, 1955), p. 133. Cf. S. H. Hooke; "Ephesians,
... if not by Paul, certainly belongs to the Pauline exposition of the glory" (Alpha
and Omega (Welwyn, 1961), p. 256). P. N. Harrison adds that the author of
Ephesians "knew how to put into words, and so make explicit, thoughts which are
implicit in Paul's other letters, but nowhere else so explicit as
(Deadly (ed.), Studies in Ephesians (London, 1956); also H. J. Cadbury, "The Dilemma

3 The Meaning of Ephesians (Chicago, 1933), p. 15.
4 The Meaning of Ephesians, p. 3.
5 The Meaning of Ephesians, p. 9.
6 The Meaning of Ephesians, p. 8.

8 The reference to Tycho in Eph. vi. 21 f. is almost a verbatim repro-
duction of Col. iv. 7 f.

together—if looked at as a unity." The analogy is inexact: the
structural unity of Ephesians is not like that of a pile of stones but
much more like that of its own "building fitly framed together". 
Such a careful literary structure, indeed, is no proof of Pauline
authorship; one could well imagine its being used as an argument
against Pauline authorship. But an elaborately constructed
work like this, with its own inner unity, a work which Samuel
Taylor Coleridge could characterize as "the divinest composition
of man", cannot properly be compared to a caim, or even to a
mosaic painstakingly pieced together with fragments from other
Pauline epistles.

III

"In form", says Goodspeed, "it is an encyclical." This is
a widely held view, and some support is given to it by the textual
phenomena of the salutation with which it commences, which
throw doubt on the originality of the words "at Ephesus". Perhaps we may call it a general letter to Gentile Christians,
more particularly in the province of Asia—Gentile Christians
who (like the readers of 1 Peter) needed to be shown what was
involved in their recent commitment to the way of Christ. The
personal notes at the end of Ephesians link it with Colossians,

1 A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, Paul : The Man and the Myth (London,
1966), pp. 27 ff.
2 Eph. ii. 21.
3 Table Talk, 25 May, 1830; see H. N. Coleridge (ed.), Specimens of the
Table Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London, 1835), p. 88. "The
Epistle to the Ephesians", Coleridge said on this occasion, "is evidently a
catholic epistle, addressed to the whole of what might be called St. Paul's
diocese... . It embraces every doctrine of Christianity... first, those doctrines
peculiar to Christianity, and then those precepts common to it with natural
religion."

4 The Meaning of Ephesians, p. 3. Goodspeed's own view, in which he is
followed by the "Chicago school" and by P. N. Harrison, was that Ephesians
was composed by the first editor of the Pauline corpus to serve as an introduction

5 To 'Epaphrodot (Rom. 26) 220 1739 Or. etc. See T. W. Manson in
BULLETIN, xxxi (1947-8), 228 f.; Studies in the Gospels and Epistles (Manchester,
1965), pp. 229 f.
6 The reference to Tycho in Eph. vi. 21 f. is almost a verbatim repro-
duction of Col. iv. 7 f.
and provide a formal justification for including a study of Ephesians in a series on "St. Paul in Rome".

Even apart from these personal references, Ephesians has other close links with Colossians, material as well as verbal. If in Colossians the cosmic role of Christ has been unfolded, Ephesians considers the implications of this for the Church as the body of Christ—what is the Church’s relation to Christ’s cosmic role, to the principalities and powers, to God’s eternal purpose? This change of perspective from Christ to the Church goes far to explain the different nuances with which such keywords as “fulness” (πλήρωμα) and “mystery” (μυστήριον) are used in Ephesians as compared with Colossians.

Ephesians has manifest affinities also with 1 Corinthians; in particular, it universalizes the teaching about the Church which in the earlier epistle is applied to the life of one local congregation.

Nor should its relation to certain parts of Romans be overlooked. If Paul in Romans emphasizes that “there is no difference” between Jew and Gentile (Rom. iii. 22; xi. 12), either “in Adam” or “in Christ”, Ephesians emphasizes that all the spiritual blessings which are available to men “in the heavenly realm in Christ Jesus” are accessible on an equal footing to Jews and Gentiles alike (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6, etc.). If Paul in Romans magnifies his office as apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 13) and tells how he has discharged this ministry, winning obedience from the Gentiles “from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum” (Rom. xv. 15-21), Ephesians presents him as “a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles” (Eph. iii. 1) and sees an astounding token of divine grace in the fact that Paul, of all people, has been chosen “to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. iii. 8).

1 See "St. Paul in Rome. 3. The Epistle to the Colossians", Bulletin, xlvi (1960-6), 265 ff.

2 He magnifies his office because it will be the indirect means of the conversion of his fellow-countrymen; apostle to the Gentiles though he is, he has closely at heart the spiritual welfare of his Jewish kith and kin. On the relation between Ephesians and Rom. ix-xi cf. H. Chadwick, "Die Absicht des Epheserbriefes", ZNTW, li (1960), 145 ff., especially p. 148.

3 Cf. the similar sentiment in 1 Cor. xv. 9 f.

In the light of such affinities between Ephesians and other outstanding letters in the Pauline corpus, it is not so easy to accept the view, expounded principally by Heinrich Schlier, that Ephesians is indebted for its dominant themes to Gnostic sources and only in two or three instances to the common stock of primitive Christianity. This thesis calls for serious study and evaluation, but I find it much less cogent than the interpretation of Ephesians as an exposition of dominant themes of Paul’s ministry.

IV

Among dominant Pauline themes justification by faith is the one that comes most readily to many minds. Luther’s discovery of justification by faith in the writings of Paul, and his use of it as a touchstone to determine, if not the genuineness, at least the value of everything handed down as sacred scripture, has, I think, made it difficult for many of his followers to see much else in Paul, and has inclined them to dismiss as non-Pauline, or at best as deuter-Pauline, any document in the Pauline corpus in which justification by faith does not play the central part that it does in Galatians and Romans. How does Ephesians fare in this regard? Certainly justification by faith is not a central theme in Ephesians, but it underlies the argument of the epistle, so much so that it is assumed rather than expressed, apart from Ephesians ii. 8 f. : “by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast.” This is precisely the point of

1 H. Schlier, Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief (Tübingen, 1930). From the common stock of Christian language about Christ’s saving work, he points out, his doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast.” This is precisely the point of

V

Less prominence is given to the parousia, the manifestation of Christ in glory. This theme is plain enough in Colossians (cf. Col. iii. 4, "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory"), but in Ephesians it is present only by implication. When, for example, the purpose of the Church’s hallowing and cleansing is said to be its presentation to Christ "in splendour, without spot or wrinkle" (Eph. v. 26 f.), this presentation is most naturally contemplated as coinciding with the parousia, as it certainly does elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. The parousia is also "the day of redemption" against which, according to Ephesians iv. 30, the people of Christ are sealed with the Holy Spirit.  

VI

This brings us to a major Pauline doctrine which is undoubtedly dominant in Ephesians—the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Central as it is to Paul’s teaching, this doctrine is practically absent from Colossians,  and in view of the affinity between Colossians and Ephesians it is all the more striking to note its dominance in Ephesians.  

In the New Testament in general the presence of the Holy Spirit is a sign that the last days have come, in accordance with the words of Joel ii. 28 quoted by Peter in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts ii. 16 f.). The presence of the Spirit, moreover, is the witness that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the one who (in John the Baptist’s words) would baptize with the Holy Spirit; in other words, the new era which Jesus’ passion and triumph inaugurated is the age of the Spirit to which the prophets pointed forward. This emphasis on the Spirit’s vindicating witness to Jesus as Messiah and Lord pervades the New Testament; it is found in Acts, in the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, and in 1 Peter. It is found also in Paul, in whose eyes the age of the Spirit has superseded the age of the Torah—hence his anathema in Galatians i. 8 f. against those who endeavour to reimpose the Jewish law on converts to Christianity, for to him the implication of such an attempt is that the age of the Torah is still running, therefore the age of the Spirit has not yet dawned, therefore Jesus was not the anointed Lord whose function was to inaugurate the age of the Spirit.  

But in addition to the general early Christian teaching on the Spirit, which Paul had received, he makes at least two distinctive contributions: (i) the Holy Spirit is the present earnest of coming resurrection and glory and (ii) it is in the Holy Spirit that the people of Christ have been baptized into one corporate entity. Both of these contributions, expounded in Paul’s “capital” epistles (those to the Romans, Corinthians and Galatians), are emphasized in Ephesians.

(i) The Holy Spirit is called in Ephesians “the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13). This does not mean, as the R.S.V. renders it, that he is “the promised Holy Spirit” (true though that is, as witness Acts i. 4 f., ii. 33); the context rather indicates that to those whom he indwells the Holy Spirit is himself the promise of resurrection life and all the heritage of glory associated with it. The locus classicus for this view of the Spirit is Romans viii. 9 ff. There “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead” will “quicken” the mortal bodies of those who

1 Acts ii. 33, v. 32.  
2 John xv. 26, xvi. 8-10, 14 f.  
3 1 John v. 7 f.  
4 1 Peter i. 12.  
5 Rom. vii. 6, viii. 2, 4; 2 Cor. iii. 3 ff.; Gal. iii. 2 ff.  
7 Rom. viii. 10 ff., especially verse 23; 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5.  
8 1 Cor. xii. 13.
believe in Jesus. He is “the Spirit of adoption” in the sense that he enables believers to realize their privileges and responsibilities as sons of God against the day when they will be publicly revealed as such. This “revelation of the sons of God” (for which, as Paul says, all creation eagerly waits in order to share “the liberty of the glory of the children of God”) is called our “adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies”. And of this consummation believers here and now possess the fruits.”

Ephesians i. 14, the “redemption of his own possession” (for which, as elsewhere Paul speaks of being “baptized into Christ” (Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3) or “putting on Christ” (Gal. iii. 27; Rom. xii. 14) with the plain implication that incorporation into Christ is involved, but it is in 1 Corinthians xii. 13, quoted at the end of the foregoing paragraph, that the Spirit’s part in this experience finds expression. And the i’s of 1 Corinthians xii. 13 are dotted and its t’s crossed in Ephesians iv. 3, where the readers are enjoined to be sure to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. This “unity of the Spirit” is the unity of the body of Christ into which the people of Christ are brought by his Spirit for, in the words which immediately follow, “there is one body and one Spirit” (Eph. iv. 4).²

In Ephesians ii. 19 ff. the Church is portrayed rather as a building than as a body (although, just as architectural language is used of the body in Eph. iv. 12-16, so biological language is used of the building in Eph. ii. 21); but here too it is “in the Spirit” that the building takes shape, as the individual components are bonded together by Christ the “corner-stone”. Here too it is in that same “one Spirit” that Jewish and Gentile believers together have common access to the Father (cf. Rom. v. 2), or (by a change of figure) constitute a holy dwelling-place or temple for God (an idea anticipated in 1 Cor. iii. 16 f.).

VII

These concepts of the body of Christ and the temple of God are interwoven with the concept of the New Man. In a mingling of the architectural and biological figures, we read in Ephesians iv. 13 ff. of the full-grown man (ἄρτηρ τέλειος), “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”, which is the climax of the Church’s development as the body of Christ is built up, growing


² Mark i. 8; John i. 33; Acts i. 5, xi. 16 and (by implication) xix. 1-6.

³ The “unity (δυναμεω) of the Spirit” which the readers are charged to keep is not, of course, the fact that there is one Spirit (which cannot be affected by anything they do or fail to do); it is a consequence of that fact. Eph. iv. 4-6 to some extent echoes 1 Cor. xii. 4-6; both passages include the co-ordinated “Spirit . . . Lord . . . God”. The repeated “one” in Eph. iv. 4-6 anticipates the later eastern creeds; cf. R. R. Williams, “Logic versus Experience in the Order of Gredal Formulae”, NTS, i (1954-55), 42 ff.
up to match him who is its head. Christ as the Second Man, the Last Adam, the head and embodiment of the new creation, meets us in Romans v. 12-19 and 1 Corinthians xv. 20-28, 42-50. When believers' putting on Christ is mentioned in Romans xiii. 14 and Galatians iii. 27, this (as we have seen) is not so much a question of personal imitation of Christ as of incorporation into Christ. So, when Colossians and Ephesians speak of putting on the new man, 'who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his creator' (Col. iii. 10), 'created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness' (Eph. iv. 24) the new man is Christ himself—not Christ in isolation from his people, but Christ in his people, the same Christ as Paul has in mind when he tells his Galatian converts that he endures birth-pangs over them 'until Christ be formed' in them (Gal. iv. 19).

When we bear these earlier Pauline references in mind, there is no need to look to extraneous sources for the concept of the "new" or "perfect" man. Neither need we be surprised that the Church in Ephesians is the Church Universal rather than the local congregation.

Ephesians, as has been said above, universalizes the church doctrine of 1 Corinthians, but the universal principle which finds clear expression in Ephesians is already latent in 1 Corinthians, which is addressed not only to 'the church of God that is in Corinth' but also to 'all those who in every place' call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. i. 1). The oneness of the Church is bound up with the fact that there is one Spirit, one Lord and one God; it follows that there is one people of Christ, indwelt by the one Spirit, confessing the one Lord and through him worshipping the one God, and comprising indifferently those who were formerly separated as Jews on the one hand and Gentiles on the other.

There are plainly to be recognized in the New Testament elements of what our German colleagues call Frühkatholizismus—early Catholicism. Chief among these elements is the conception of the Church throughout the world as a unity, which characterizes Ephesians. But it has been too generally accepted as axiomatic that early Catholicism has no place in authentic Paulinism, so that any document in which it appears, even if it bears Paul's name, cannot be a genuine epistle of Paul.1

Like so many other theological axioms, this one calls for scrutiny, and under scrutiny it loses something of its plausibility. We might a priori have expected Paul to think of Christians throughout his mission field as forming a unity. 'Israel after the flesh' did not exist only in local synagogues; it was an ecstatic reality. The synagogue in any place was the local manifestation of the whole "congregation of Israel". The same situation governed the new Israel.

What we should have expected a priori is confirmed by the evidence in the "capital" epistles of Paul that Paul had a deep concern for Christian unity—not only the unity of his own Gentile mission

1 Thus E. Kasemann says that "in the New Testament it is Ephesians that most clearly marks the transition from the Pauline tradition to the perspective of the early Catholic era"; he compares the epistle in this respect with Acts ("Ephesians and Acts", Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (Nashville, 1966), pp. 288 ff.). On this point H. Küng takes issue with Kasemann and others in the Structures of the Church (Eng. trans., London, 1965), pp. 142 ff., charging them with establishing a reduced New Testament canon within the received canon by relegating to an inferior status anything that savours of "early Catholic dogmas". S. Neill points out that in German Protestant theology the term Frühkatholizismus is used "always as a term of reproach" (The Interpretation of the New Testament (London, 1964), p. 160). It is noteworthy that when H. Schlier, author of Christus und die Kirche im Epheberbrief, became convinced that early Catholicism and other features commonly labelled "accretions" were part and parcel of apostolic Christianity, he not only became a member of the Roman Catholic Church but found it possible to regard Ephesians as an authentic epistle of Paul (cf. his commentary, Der Brief an die Epheser (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 22 ff.).
but the unity which embraced his Gentile mission on the one hand with the Jerusalem church and the Jewish mission on the other. Moreover, all Christians according to Paul were baptized “into Christ”, not merely into a local fellowship. All who were baptized into Christ (and had thus “put on” Christ) inevitably formed part of one spiritual entity. In baptism they had been united with Christ in his death, to rise with him in the resurrection and so “walk in newness of life” (Rom. vi. 3-5). They had, in other words, become members of the body of Christ, baptized into it “in one Spirit”. The Christians in Corinth are reminded that they are Christ’s body, and individually members thereof (1 Cor. xii. 27); similarly those in Rome are told that “we” (that is, not the Roman Christians alone but the Roman Christians in fellowship with Paul and others), “though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom. xii. 5). To Paul’s way of thinking Christ could no more be divided between the several congregations than he could be divided between the factions within the congregation at Corinth. The explicit appearance of the Church Universal in Colossians and more particularly Ephesians is a corollary of Paul’s understanding of the phrase “in Christ” and all that goes with it.

Language such as Paul uses to the Corinthian and Roman Christians about membership in the body of Christ could not be locally restricted, even if the occasions that called forth the “capital” epistles directed its application to the requirements of local fellowship. All believers—in Corinth and Rome, in Jerusalem and Ephesus, and everywhere else—had together died with Christ and been raised with him; as participators in his risen life they could not but constitute one Christian fellowship.

VIII

This experience of passing in Christ from death to life may also be expressed in terms of passing from darkness to light, and

1 An evident token of this is his collection for the Jerusalem “saints” (cf. Gal. ii. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 11-14; Rom. xv. 25-27).
2 Cf. the similar use of μέλη (“members”) in Eph. iv. 16, 25, v. 30.
3 Cf. the Attis initiation formula quoted in Firmicus Maternus, Err. prof. rei. 18. 1.
5 Here the relation between δώκινοι and φύειν should be borne in mind.

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it is so expressed in Ephesians v. 7-14. “Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord”, the readers are told, in language which has affinities elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, as also in the Johannine writings and in the Qumran literature. The point is driven home by the quotation of the tristich:

Awake, O thou that sleepest,
And from the dead arouse thee,
And Christ shall dawn upon thee.

Although this is introduced by the phrase δώκινοι λέγετε, as though it were holy writ, it is no precise Old Testament quotation, and has often been regarded as part of an early Christian baptismal hymn. The rhythm, it has been said, is similar to that of initiation formulae used in various mystery cults, but the content is entirely Christian. In the context of Ephesians v. 14, where the light reveals all things as they truly are, these words constitute a call to the sinner to abandon his old course and embrace a new way of life; they express the experience which, according to Paul, is sacramentally realized in baptism: “we were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead through the Father’s glory, so we too should walk in newness of life” (Rom. vi. 4).

IX

Emphasizing the equal incorporation within the Christian community of Jews and Gentiles—two groups which had previously been estranged from each other—Ephesians says that Christ “has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition”—the breaking down of this wall being otherwise described as his removal of the hostility between the two groups,
his annulling of "the law consisting of commandments, ordinances and all" (Eph. ii. 14 f.).

It is a commonplace with British commentators on Ephesians to suggest that this "middle wall of partition" may have been suggested by the barrier which separated the inner courts of the Jerusalem temple from the Court of the Gentiles, a barrier which Gentiles were forbidden to penetrate on pain of death. German commentators, on the other hand, are more inclined to think of the barrier which, in some Gnostic texts, separates the world beneath from the upper world of light. 2

Without examining the question whether this concept in its Gnostic form was current as early as the first century A.D., we may ask which of the two barriers provides the more apt analogy to the thought of Ephesians ii. 14. The barrier in the temple was a vertical one; the "iron curtain" of the Gnostic texts was horizontal. The division in view in Ephesians ii. 14 is not a division between the upper and lower world; it is a division between two groups of people resident in this world, and is therefore more aptly represented by a vertical barrier than by a horizontal one—the more so as the two groups which were kept apart by this "middle wall of partition" are exactly the same two groups as were kept apart by the barrier in the Jerusalem temple.

It may indeed be asked, as it is by M. Dibelius, 3 if the readers of Ephesians ii. 14 would have understood such an allusion. Perhaps not; but would they have understood a Gnostic allusion any better? There is in any case no emphasis on a barrier. But whatever the readers may or may not have understood, the writer may well have had at the back of his mind that

1 E.g. J. A. Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London, 1904), pp. 59 f. (On the barrier see Josephus, B.J.v. 194.)
2 E.g. H. Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser, pp. 126 ff., following his treatment of "Die himmlische Mauer" in Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief, pp. 18 ff.
3 This question is especially provoked when attempts are made to reconstruct the concept of the heavenly wall (or other Gnostic concepts) on the basis of Mandaean texts which are several centuries later than the New Testament age.
4 In Lietzmann's Handbuch zum NT, iii (Tübingen, 1911-13), 105; cf. H. Schlier, Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief, p. 18. E. J. Goodspeed sees the temple barrier here, but considers that its figurative use in this context was suggested by its actual destruction in A.D. 70 (The Meaning of Ephesians, p. 37).
hung before the holy of holies, that which is more probably envisaged in Ephesians is the one which forced Gentiles to keep their distance.

X

Something more in the nature of the horizontal barrier may, however, be discerned in another passage in Ephesians. In Ephesians iv. 8-10 there is a remarkable commentary in what we have now learned to call pesher style on the words of Psalm lxviii. 18. "When he ascended on high", the quotation runs (turning the second person of the original into the third), "he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men."

The context of Psalm lxviii seems to portray a triumphal procession ascending the sacred hill of Zion: the conquering hero is followed by a train of captives and his route is lined by his exultant fellow-citizens. The temple singers acclaim him as victor, and tell how he has "received gifts among men"—a reference, probably, to the tribute paid him by the vanquished. Or the leader of the triumphal procession may be no human conqueror but Yahweh himself, his invisible presence betokened by the Ark of the Covenant, safe home from leading Israel into battle and now being carried up to its shrine at the head of the procession. In this case the tribute of subject nations is paid direct to the God of Israel.

Whichever of these interpretations of the Psalm be preferred, it is not in terms of its historical setting that verse 18 is expounded in Ephesians iv. 8-10. Even if the historical setting had been taken into account, an acclamation of the God of Israel or of his Anointed King would have been equally appropriate for the present application of the words to the one who was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh but appointed Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 3 f.). What is most striking is that, instead of the Massoretic and Septuagint reading, "received gifts among men", a reading is here chosen which agrees with the Aramaic Targum and the Syriac version: "gave gifts to men". In the Targum this is interpreted of Moses ascending Mount Sinai to receive the tables of the law and deliver them as God's gift to men. But in Ephesians it is interpreted of Christ's ascent on high and his bestowal thence upon his church of the ministers or ministries necessary for its growth to maturity.

It is in the exposition of Psalm lxviii. 18 that a horizontal barrier is possibly implied. This is the barrier between "the lower parts of the earth" (τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς) and the upper world, "far above all the heavens" (ὑπέραινον πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν), which Christ broke when he ascended. But if it is implied, no particular stress is laid on it. On the verb "ascended" in the Psalm the comment is made:

What does this mean if not that he first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same who ascended far above all the heavens, in order to fill the universe.

In this exposition the crucial question is whether by "the lower parts of the earth" the earth itself is indicated (as being "lower" in relation to the world above), or the underworld (as being "lower" in relation to the earth). It is not possible to reach complete certainty. Comparison with Romans x. 6 f., where (in a pesher exegesis of Deut. xxx. 12-14) ascending into heaven is contrasted with descending into the abyss, suggests the latter interpretation; comparison with John iii. 13 (and the Gospel of John has special affinities with the Epistle to the Ephesians) suggests the former, for in John iii. 13 the Son of Man's ascent into heaven is paralleled by his coming down from heaven (that is, to earth). Traditionally the passage has been interpreted of the descensus ad inferos and the harrowing of hell, and the "leading captivity captive" has been understood in this sense; but in Ephesians the "leading captivity captive" appears simply in the quotation from the psalm, playing no part in the following exegesis. If there is any implied significance in the quotation of the words, they might refer to the despoiling of principalities and powers described in Colossians ii. 15. But this was effected on the cross, not in Hades. On the whole, I am disposed to take τῆς γῆς in τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς as genitive of definition—that is, to regard earth itself as being the "lower" realm into which Christ is here said to have descended. But the point of the reference to his successive descent and ascent, which is not
affected by our resolution one way or another of this crux interpretum, is that by this twofold movement Christ fills the universe, upper and lower realms alike, with his presence.¹

XI

One of the most interesting points of affinity between Ephesians and the Qumran texts lies in the idea of the "mysteries" of God. These "mysteries" are not arcana; they have been revealed, but even when they are revealed they remain mysteries until they are interpreted in terms of their fulfilment. The pattern of ráz ("mystery") and pesher ("interpretation") in the Aramaic sections of Daniel, where the former requires the latter to complete and explain it, reappears in the Qumran texts (preeminently in commentaries) and in the New Testament.² Paul, for example, speaks of himself and his fellow-apostles as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1)—saints of God called to proclaim that what had been "promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom. i. 2) was now accomplished, and was made plain by the fact of that accomplishment, being embodied in Christ and the gospel.

But Paul speaks not only of the mysteries in the plural, but also (comprehensively) of the "mystery" in the singular, for all the revelation of God has been consummated in Christ. So in Colossians ii. 2 f. he speaks of his desire that his readers and the other churches in the Lycus valley may attain "the knowledge of God's mystery—that is, of Christ himself—in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (but no longer hidden from those who have attained this knowledge). This mystery is unfolded in the gospel; so the doxology at the end of Romans mentions "my gospel and the proclamation concerning Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was shrouded in silence in eternal ages but has now been made manifest, and through prophetic writings, according to the commandment of the eternal God, made known to all the nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25 f.). As one called to make known among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8) Paul might well appreciate the honour of being entrusted with the stewardship of such a "mystery", nor is it surprising that at times he concentrates on some aspect of the gospel specially related to his own ministry and speaks of it as a mystery. In Colossians i. 26 f., for example, he calls the subject-matter of his ministry "the mystery which has been kept hidden from ages and generations but has now been made manifest to the people of God, to whom God has been well pleased to make known what is the glorious wealth of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you [even in you Gentiles], the hope of glory". That Gentiles would come to worship the God of Israel was a theme of Old Testament expectation; in Romans xv. 9-12 Paul reproduces a catena of passages from the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms to this effect. But that Gentiles should have the Messiah of Israel, now the exalted Lord, dwelling in their hearts by faith as the living hope of coming glory—this was something completely uncontemplated before: it was bound up with Paul's own Gentile apostolate and was the subject of a new revelation. Similarly in Ephesians iii. 9 the substance of this mystery now for the first time divulged is said to be "that the Gentiles should be joint heirs, fellow-members of the one body, sharers of the promise conveyed in Christ Jesus through the gospel". Not the Gentiles without the Jews, or even in preference to the Jews, but the Gentiles on the same basis as the Jews—Gentiles and Jews alike being reconciled to God "in one body through the cross" (Eph. ii. 16).³

ultimate purpose. In Ephesians iii. 9-11 the unfolding of the mystery hidden in God from ages past brings to light the purpose for which he has created the church, his "fellowship of reconciliation"—it is that through the church his many-coloured wisdom might be made known to all created forces, to "principalities and powers in the heavenly realm", "according to the eternal purpose which he conceived in Christ Jesus our Lord". And this eternal purpose, thus subserved by the church and due to be realized in the "fulness of the times", is concisely stated in Ephesians i. 9 f.: it is to bring all things together under the headship of Christ.

XII

In 1 Corinthians ii. 6 ff. Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that, for all their self-styled wisdom, he has to feed them with milk and not with solid food, because they are not yet spiritually mature. This immaturity was due not to deficiency in gnōsis (of which they had plenty of a kind), but to deficiency in agapē. "Nevertheless", he goes on, "to those who are mature we do impart wisdom... God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom ordained before the world for our glory... as it is written:

What eye never saw, what ear never heard,
What never entered the heart of man,
What God prepared for those who love him—
these are the things which God has revealed to use by the Spirit."

If we ask where in the Pauline corpus this divine "wisdom in a mystery" is imparted, we should direct our attention to the Epistle to the Ephesians.¹

¹ Cf. H. Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser, pp. 21 f.
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5. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

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FOUR years ago the first lecture in this series ended with the hope that, in view of the ambiguity of the closing sentences of Acts regarding the outcome of Paul's hearing before the emperor or his deputy, and Paul's fortunes at the end of his two years of house-arrest, Paul's own epistles might throw more light on the question. On this point it cannot be said that our hope has been fulfilled, whatever other matters of interest have emerged on the way.

Colossians and Ephesians, although written in captivity, do not provide the kind of evidence we should require. Philemon expresses Paul's expectation that he will soon be able to pay a further visit to friends in the province of Asia; this in itself has been used to cast doubt on the Roman provenance of this letter. Philemon, indeed, is so closely associated with Colossians that it must have been sent at the same time and from the same place, but we have argued that the doctrine of Colossians (especially the presentation of the church as the body of which Christ is the head) is too developed, in comparison (say) with 1 Corinthians and Romans, for this letter to be dated during Paul's Ephesian ministry, in which case it would be nearly contemporary with 1 Corinthians and earlier than Romans. Philippians, where also the hope of release is fairly confidently cherished, has not been treated in the present series, because I have inclined hitherto to date it during the Ephesian ministry, following in this regard my predecessor, who treated it in the course of his series on "St. Paul in Ephesus".

Perhaps insufficient attention has been given to the case for the Caesarean dating of the epistles dealt with in the present series of lectures. This case will shortly, I believe, be presented afresh by an American scholar, Dr. John J. Gunther, who has kindly permitted me to see part of his work in advance of publication. But even if all three were proved to be of Caesarean provenance—i.e. written during Paul's two years' custody under Felix, before his appeal to Caesar—the amount of relevant evidence to be gathered from them concerning Paul's Roman imprisonment would not be greatly diminished, for as it is there is little to gather except that, if they were indeed sent from Rome, Paul's immediate intention now was to return to Asia and not go straight on to Spain.

Another portion of Paul's correspondence which at least one scholar has interpreted in relation to his Roman imprisonment is 2 Corinthians x-xiii. That these four chapters did not originally belong to the same letter as chapters i-ix has been widely held for two or three generations, but those who have held this have tended to look on chapters x-xiii as part of the "severe letter" written between 1 and 2 Corinthians, to which Paul refers back in 2 Corinthians i. 5 f., 9, vii. 8, 12. There are, however, features in chapters x-xiii which suggest a later date than chapters i-ix: for example, what Paul says in 2 Corinthians xii. 18 about the mission of Titus to Corinth seems to refer back, after some lapse of time, to the sending of Titus announced in 2 Corinthians viii. 6 ff. But how long a lapse of time should be envisaged?

In 1949 L. P. Pherigo contributed an article to the Journal of Biblical Literature in which he argued that chapters x-xiii were written after Paul's release from the Roman imprisonment of Acts xxviii. 30 f. The case, though ably argued, is not cogent. There is nothing in 2 Corinthians x-xiii which presupposes a recent Roman imprisonment as its background; the theory,

1 A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 8th of November 1967.
2 Ibid. xlviii (1965-6), 273.
3 Ibid. xlviii (1965-6), 273.
4 Ibid. xlviii (1965-6), 273.
then it is not necessary to date all the authentically Pauline passages at the same time (and the same is true of the "fragment" hypothesis propounded by P. N. Harrison).

Some of the passages might then belong to earlier phases of Paul's career (his Ephesian ministry, for example), while others might belong to the last phase, such as the passage beginning "I am now ready to be poured out as a libation and the time of my release is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6) and probably the reference to Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 16-18).

It is appropriate to mention here two recent proposals towards a solution of the Pastoral problem, both associated with Manchester.

One is the Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in November 1964 by C. F. D. Moule and published in the Bulletin the following March. Professor Moule, recognizing on the one hand the difficulties in the way of accepting the Pastoral Epistles as completely Pauline in the customary sense, and on the other hand the improbabilities inherent in the "fragment" hypothesis (and I suppose also in the "editorial" hypothesis), suggests that for these letters Paul employed as his amanuensis a man whom he could trust with much greater discretion than could be allowed to any ordinary amanuensis—namely, Luke. The non-Pauline elements in them would then reflect Luke's thought rather than Paul's.

So far as the question of life-setting is concerned, Professor Moule suggests that 1 Timothy—for which, on this theory, Luke enjoyed the greatest freedom—was written shortly before Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment, when Paul wanted to send a message to Timothy in a hurry while he himself was particularly busy with preparations for leaving Rome after his release and perhaps with completing the judicial details just preceding his release.

The other proposal which I have mentioned is made in an unpublished thesis on "The Authorship and Date of the Pastoral Epistles" for which the University of Manchester earlier this

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II

We have still to look at the Pastoral Epistles. Their evidence is not conclusive, for even if their Pauline authorship be accepted simpliciter, such a sober historian of early Christianity as J. Vernon Bartlet found it possible to date all three in the period before Paul's arrival in Rome. If, on the other hand, they represent disiecta membra of Paul's correspondence and instruction, collected by one or more of his friends and disciples, and given a continuous form by means of editorial additions (a work of pietas such as some of us have undertaken from time to time),
year conferred the degree of Ph.D. on J. M. Gilchrist. He discerns two separate life-settings for the Pastoral Epistles—one post-Pauline, the other reflecting the situation in the middle fifties on Paul’s mission-field in Macedonia and Achaia. He accepts in general G. S. Duncan’s hypothesis, dating the Captivity Epistles during the Ephesian ministry, but with important modifications: in particular, he holds that in Acts xx. 1 Luke has telescoped two separate crossings of Paul into Macedonia and Achaia after a spell of trouble in Ephesus—the first after the Demetrius riot of Acts xix. 23 ff. and the second after the “affliction” of 2 Corinthians i. 8. He argues that the earlier occasion was that on which Paul paid his “sorrowful visit” to Corinth, but that he not only visited Corinth but made an extended tour of areas he had not previously visited, including Dalmatia, Epirus and Crete. On his departure for this tour he left Timothy behind in Ephesus to carry out the task indicated in 1 Timothy i. 3. When his visit to Crete was finished he left Titus behind there to carry out the tasks prescribed in Titus i. 5 ff. and then directed him to go on to Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10). The imprisonment which forms the setting of 2 Timothy iv. 9 ff. was endured (thinks Dr. Gilchrist) not in Ephesus but in Macedonia, after Paul left Ephesus for Europe for the second (and last) time.

The Pauline elements in the Pastoral are thus provided with their respective contexts; the non-Pauline features are accounted for by the supposition that, instead of being (as has often been suggested) attempts to construct what Paul might have written, they are attempts to reconstruct what he did write, in letters to Timothy and Titus, by someone who no longer had access to them but who partially remembered them. This “constructor”, who might perhaps be identified with Luke, operated somewhere between A.D. 85 and 95.

Such a summary as I have given fails to do justice to the skill with which the details of this reconstruction are pieced together, each of them correlated not only with passages in the Pastoral but with the data of the Pauline letters belonging to the middle fifties, especially 1 and 2 Corinthians.

If Dr. Gilchrist’s hypothesis were to be accepted, the Pastoral would have no bearing on the subject of St. Paul in Rome. But there is in them as they stand one reference to Rome: 2 Timothy i. 17. Referring to the landslide away from loyalty to Paul in the province of Asia, the letter goes on:

But may the Lord’s mercy rest on the house of Onesiphorus! He has often relieved me in my troubles. He was not ashamed to visit a prisoner, but took pains to search me out when he came to Rome, and found me. Pray God he may find mercy from the Lord on the great Day! The many services he rendered at Ephesus you know better than I could tell you (2 Tim. i. 16-18).

Here mention is made of one Onesiphorus, evidently an Ephesian who had proved very helpful during Paul’s ministry in his home town, who at some later date had occasion to visit Rome and sought Paul out in circumstances where to do so involved not only trouble and possible loss of face, but it may be danger too. It is usually inferred from the language used here that Paul was no longer enjoying the liberal custody of Acts xxviii. 16 ff. but undergoing more severe restraint. The circumstantiality and incidental character of this personal reference bespeak a genuine Pauline reminiscence, but if so, it cannot be dated before Paul’s Roman imprisonment. Some who would like to date the Pastoral or the Pauline fragments in them, to an earlier period in Paul’s career must come to terms with the phrase ἐπὶ Ἐφέσου. Some have dismissed it as a gloss or resorted to conjectural emendation, but there is no independent evidence to support such procedure, and the practice of removing an obstacle from the path of a hypothesis by emending the obstacle out of existence is not to be recommended. Dr. Gilchrist suggests that the man who rewrote the Pastoral from memory included this anachronism through a lapse of memory.

The scholarship and ability of Dr. Gilchrist’s reconstruction deserve high commendation. It is more satisfactory, however, to think of the reference to Onesiphorus in Rome in 2 Timothy i. 17 and also to the farewell words of 2 Timothy iv. 6–18 as both relating (not anachronistically) to some phase—a late phase—of St. Paul’s Ephesian Ministry.

1 Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (London, 1963), p. 170; reference should also be made to P. N. Harrison’s moving and vivid picture of Onesiphorus’s “one purposeful face in a drifting crowd” (The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles, pp. 127 ff.).

Paul's Roman imprisonment, and to envisage one of Paul's associates, such as Luke (2 Tim. iv. 11a), either as doing him the service which Professor Moule suggests or else as collecting, editing and publishing such remnants of Paul's correspondence after his death.

III

Even so, we have not come much farther forward in trying to discover what happened to Paul at the end of the "two whole years" of Acts xxviii. 30. Dr. Gilchrist, referring to this phrase, remarks that if someone said, "We had a whole fortnight of uninterrupted sunshine in November", we should know the sequel without being told: "only one thing follows an Indian summer". So the last few sentences of Acts show "that Luke well knows that winter followed for the church in Rome, and for Paul himself". 1

On the other hand, we have arguments for Paul's release at the end of these two years, such as those put forward in one of the most recent commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles—that of J. N. D. Kelly. Dr. Kelly argues that since Paul's martyrdom cannot be dated before the outbreak of the Neronian persecution of Christians following the fire which devastated Rome on July 18/19, a.d. 64, and since it is difficult to see how his house arrest could have lasted until then, it is most reasonable to infer that he was released after the expiry of the two years, and after a further spell of missionary activity was arrested again and imprisoned in Rome for the second and last time. 2 There is a weak link in this argument—it is not impossible that Paul's execution preceded the events of a.d. 64—but this may very well have been the course of events. Even so, Dr. Kelly goes on, when Paul's case came up for hearing during his second imprisonment, the verdict at the prima actio was non liquet or amplius: this required a further inquiry or secunda actio. The paragraph 2 Timothy iv. 9-18 belongs to the interval between these two actiones, but Paul knew that the outcome of the secunda actio was likely to be adverse, perhaps because of new developments outside his prison of which he had become aware. 3

One thing is clear: no dogmatic statements are justified when the sequel to Paul's first period of house arrest in Rome is under discussion. If we cannot affirm so confidently as tradition does that he was released (even Eusebius, who first records this tradition explicitly, introduces it with the phrase λόγος ἔχεται, "the story goes"), 4 neither can we affirm with James Moffatt that, "as a matter of fact, Paul was not released". 5 To such an unqualified affirmation one may legitimately reply, "How do you know?"—and no evidence was available to Moffatt that is not available to us. We may suspect that he was more influenced than a scholar should have been by the prevalent reaction of his day against traditional views. The more correct attitude is that of A. N. Sherwin-White, already quoted, that "there is no necessity to construe Acts [or any other New Testament book] to mean that he was released at all". 6

But release on the one hand and condemnation to death on the other do not exhaust the possibilities. A third possibility is that his libera custodia may have given place to a much stricter confinement, such as P. N. Harrison thinks he was enduring at the time when Onesiphorus took so much trouble to track him down. 7 A fourth possibility is that he may have been exiled. Clement of Rome, writing some thirty years after Paul's death, includes exile among his sufferings. 8 This suggests that there was an early tradition of exile—unless Clement, with rhetorical exaggeration, is talking loosely of Paul's enforced departure from one city after another in the course of his apostolic ministry. If exile in the proper sense is intended, when was he supposed to have been exiled, and what was supposed to be the place of his exile? 9 It would be odd if it was Spain—if Paul, having achieved

1 The Authorship and Date of the Pastoral Epistles (typescript in Manchester University Library, 1967), p. 162.  
2 A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, p. 9.  
3 See p. 272 below.
his ambition of visiting Rome by the unforeseen means of jour-\n\ning there under armed guard to have his appeal heard in \nCaesar’s court, later achieved his ambition of preaching in Spain \nby the unforeseen means of exile.

IV

We turn now to early evidence outside the New Testament. \nThe earliest is that provided by Clement of Rome, and it does \ndo not add much to our sum of positive knowledge. The letter \nwhich, as foreign secretary of the Roman church, he wrote in \nthe name of that church to the church of Corinth, begins by warning \nthe latter church of the terrible effects of jealousy and envy. \nSeven examples are given from the Old Testament; then \nClement continues:

But, to leave the examples of former days, let us come to those who were athletes
in the days nearest to our own. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most
righteous pillars of the church were persecuted, and maintained their athletic
contest unto death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles. Peter, on
account of unrighteous jealousy, underwent not one or two but many toils and
having thus borne witness, he made his way to his allotted place of glory. Paul,
on account of jealousy and strife, showed the way to the prize of endurance;
seven times he wore fetters, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a herald both in
the east and in the west, he gained the noble renown of his faith, he taught
righteousness throughout the whole world and, having reached the limit of the west,
he bore testimony before the rulers, and so departed from this world and was taken
up into the holy place—the greatest example of endurance.

In a rhetorical essay of this kind we do not expect the precision
which is properly looked for in a work whose primary purpose is
the supplying of historical information. Clement is not imparting
the facts to the Corinthians; he did not know them, but drawing
morals from facts which, in general outline at least, were common
knowledge to him and them. Indeed, even to us he does not say
anything concrete about Paul’s later life to supplement the
narrative of Acts from the point where it breaks off. That Paul bore
his testimony before the rulers could have been an inference from
the record of Acts, as well as being a reminiscence of the words of
Jesus about Paul to Ananias of Damascus: “he is a chosen
instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings

1 Cf. Hermas, Shepherd, Vision ii.4.3. 8 1 Clement v.1-7.

1 There may also be an echo here of the words of Matt.x.18; Mark xiii.9.
8 The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles, p. 107. 9 1 Clement vi.1.

and the sons of Israel” (Acts ix. 15). But what was “the limit of
the west” (τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως) that Paul reached? From
the standpoint of one who, like Clement, lived and wrote in
Rome, would it not indicate some place west of Rome, presumably
Spain? Perhaps it would, but even so we cannot be sure that
Clement knew for a fact that Paul did go to Spain; if he meant
Spain by τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, he might simply have been making
an inference from Paul’s statement of his plans in Roman xv. 24,
28.

On the other hand, we must give serious attention to the
argument for translating τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως not by “the
limit of the west” but by “the goal in the west”—Paul’s western
goal. Amid so many other athletic terms, τέρμα might well be
intended in the sense of “goal”. But even if we take Clement to
mean Paul’s western goal, the phrase is not unambiguous. For
Luke, Paul’s western goal was Rome, but for Paul himself it was
not Rome but Spain. P. N. Harrison, who argues convincingly
for the meaning “goal”, goes on to say: “the goal of this race
was certainly not Spain, but Rome, from whatever point in
the world-stadium one happened to be regarding it.” That,
however, is going too far, when we consider that in Paul’s own
programme Rome was but a temporary station on his way farther
west, or at best an advance base for the evangelization of Spain.
Yet it should probably be granted that, to a Christian of a later
generation, in the light of Paul’s martyrdom at Rome, Rome would
naturally suggest itself as the “goal” of his race; and this
interpretation is confirmed by the plain implication of Clement’s
language that the τέρμα τῆς δύσεως was the place where Paul
bore testimony before the rulers, and so departed from this
world."

As for the time of Paul’s martyrdom, Clement may be thought
to say something with a bearing on this when he goes on:

To these men of holy life were gathered together a great multitude of the elect,
who through their endurance amid many indignities and tortures because of
jealousy presented to us a noble example. . . .

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1 Clement v. 1-7.
That this is a reference to the persecution of Christians in Rome under Nero is hardly to be doubted: with Clement's πολύ πλήθος may be compared Tacitus's ingens multitudo. If we took Clement's language au pied de la lettre it would imply that Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom before the persecution which followed the great fire and, so far as Paul is concerned, that he was executed on conviction some time after the end of his two years' house arrest in Rome. But, although Moffatt and others were inclined to deduce this from Clement's language, to insist on it demands from him an exactitude in the use of terms which he probably did not intend. Moreover, "these men of holy life" need not be restricted to Peter and Paul, mentioned in the immediately preceding sentences; they may include the Old Testament heroes of endurance who are listed before Clement turns to "the good apostles". The most that can safely be said is that Clement bears witness to Paul's death at Rome under Nero.

V

The Muratorian fragment is a Latin list of New Testament books drawn up in Rome towards the end of the second century. My late colleague Dr. Arnold Ehrhardt has presented a convincing argument in favour of its having been originally written in Latin and not (as others had thought) translated from Greek. After its account of the Gospels, the list has this to say about Acts:

Then the "Acts of All the Apostles" were written in one book. Luke tells the "most excellent Theophilus" that the various incidents took place in his presence, and indeed he makes this quite clear by omitting the passion of Peter, as well as Peter's journey when he set out from Rome for Spain.

The author takes Paul's Spanish journey for granted. There is no indication that he had any independent evidence of this; in itself, the mention of this journey could be nothing more than an inference from Roman xv. 24, 28. But since it is mentioned along with "the passion of Peter", another source is indicated—the apocryphal "Acts of Peter".

This Gnostic work was probably composed about A.D. 180, shortly before the Muratorian list was drawn up. It is extant only in fragments in various languages. The best known fragment is the Vercelli manuscript (in Latin), which begins by describing Paul's departure from Italy by sea for Spain, and goes on to recount Peter's controversy in Rome with Simon Magus, ending with a description of Peter's crucifixion. It looks as if the Muratorian fragmentist is trying to explain why the contents of the Acts of Peter do not appear in the canonical Acts. If we are right in identifying the Acts of Peter as the source of his reference to Paul's departure for Spain, it is not an authority which inspires great confidence.

As for the fourth-century authors who report Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment—Eusebius, Jerome, etc.—they were merely repeating inferences of their predecessors, and doing so with proper caution: Eusebius, as we have seen, says that "the story goes" that he resumed his ministry of preaching after his first appearing before Caesar. Our literary sources, therefore, leave us with a verdict of "not proven" in this regard.

VI

Another witness from the closing decades of the second century is the Roman presbyter Gaius who, in the course of a controversial correspondence with the Phrygian Montanist Proclus, says that, if Proclus can invoke in support of his views the names of distinguished early Christians whose tombs can still

1 Tac. Ann. xv. 44.5.
3 Eusebius (Hist. Eccl iii.1.3) indicates that Origen bore similar witness in the third volume of his commentary on Genesis.
be pointed out in the province of Asia, he can improve on that, for (says he) "I can point out the trophies of the apostles: for if you will go to the Vatican hill or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church." 1 By "the apostles" Gaius meant Peter and Paul, claimed by the Roman church as its joint founders. By "trophies" 2 he means monuments marking the traditional sites of the martyrdom of the two apostles. He probably meant in addition that the bodies of the two apostles were buried on the sites indicated, since he is countering Proclus’s claim to show the tombs of early Christians in his home province. In any case, that Peter and Paul were actually buried at the places mentioned became a matter of general belief, on the strength of which the Constantinian basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls was built on the Ostian Way and that of St. Peter on the Vatican hill.

That Paul was beheaded, as tradition asserts, at Tre Fontane on the Ostian Way may be accepted provisionally in default of a rival tradition. There was no particular reason why tradition should pick on that spot in preference to another if in fact he was not executed there. In Rome (unlike, for example, Jerusalem) we are dealing with the corporate memory of an on-going community whose continuity was unbroken from the middle of the first Christian century onwards. By Gaius’s time a monument had been erected on the site in honour of Paul’s martyrdom (as one was erected on the Vatican hill, probably in the time of Marcus Aurelius, to commemorate Peter). 3

The small basilica which Constantine erected in Paul’s honour on the Ostian Way was replaced at the end of the fourth century by a larger one, which survived substantially until it was destroyed by fire during the night of 15/16 July 1823. The present building was reconsecrated by Pope Pius IX on December 10, 1854. Some details of the substructure were preserved in sketches made by the architect of the new building, Virgilio Vespignani, when a new confessio was constructed in front of the altar, instead of behind it (where the confessio in the old basilica had been). 4

The flooring of the high altar is formed by two slabs, one bearing the inscription PAVLO and the other completing it with a second line of letters, APOSTOLO MART ("to Paul, apostle and martyr "). The lettering belongs to the fourth century, and has been assigned by some epigraphists to a Constantinian date. There are several indications that the two slabs are no longer in their original position: there are signs that at one time they stood upright, alongside each other, so as to present one line of writing, or even at right angles, forming two of the four sides of the apostle’s memoria. 5

A further point of interest is that Paul’s memoria, like Peter’s, was located in a pagan necropolis, not the environment which later piety would have chosen.

There is a rival tradition—not to the site of Paul’s martyrdom but to that of his burial. In the Calendar of Philocalus (A.D. 354) and thence in the earlier part of the Liber Pontificalis (c. A.D. 530) Peter and Paul are associated with the site later occupied by the basilica of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way. 6 In the Depositio Martyrum included in the former document, an entry under 29 June (III Kal. Iul.) mentions that the remains of Peter (and Paul?) were deposited in Catacumbas in the consulsip of Tuscus and Bassus (A.D. 258), a date probably denoting the establishment of the apostolic cult on this spot. (This general area was then known as Ad Catacumbas, "By the Hollows.") Since the underground galleries there were the only early Christian cemeteries known in the Middle Ages, the term "catacombs" was extended from these cemeteries to denote others which were discovered from the sixteenth century onwards.) Although the reference

1 E. Kirschbaum, op. cit. pp. 165 ff. The confessio is the chamber round the tomb together with the shaft connecting it with the altar.
2 Kirschbaum, op. cit. pp. 179 ff.
3 A specially important examination of this rival tradition is provided by H. Chadwick, "St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome: The Problem of the Memoria Apostolorum ad Catacumbas", J.T.S., n.s., viii (1957), 31 ff.
to Paul is ambiguous in the Depositio Martyrum, the tradition that his remains as well as Peter's were deposited there is attested by a number of graffiti on the site invoking the names of Peter and Paul. The hymn Apostolorum Passio, dating from the middle of the fourth century (traditionally ascribed to Ambrose), describes how on 29 June the martyrdom of Peter and Paul was commemorated at three sites—the Vatican hill, the Ostian Way and the Appian Way. This attempt to meet the competing claims of rival sites was judged unsatisfactory: when Pope Damasus (A.D. 366-383), in the course of restoring the Christian cemeteries of Rome, turned his attention to the Memoria Apostolorum ad Catacumbas, he indicated what was henceforth to be the official line in the opening words of an inscription which he set up in the Basilica Apostolorum which was built over the memoria:

Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes
Nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris—

"Here you must know that the saints formerly dwelt, whosoever you are who ask for the names of Peter and Paul." In other words, their bodies once lay here, but are here no longer. These words, with their implication of a transference of the two bodies from the Appian Way to the Vatican hill and the Ostian Way respectively, represent an attempt to harmonize the conflicting traditions and divert the attention of pious pilgrims to the Constantinian basilicas. Some students of later days, beginning apparently with John Pearson, seventeenth-century bishop of Chester, envisaged a temporary translation of the apostles' bodies from the other sites to the Appian Way because of the circumstances of the persecution under Valerian (A.D. 258), when Christians were forbidden to hold their ordinary public meetings and access to their cemeteries was prevented. But this harmonistic reconstruction of two separate traditions, the one enjoying official approval and the other popular favour, has no independent evidence in its support. The temporary removal of the bodies and their restoration to the earlier burial-places are purely hypothetical events.

The "trophies" mentioned by Gaius were believed to mark the sites of the two apostles' martyrdom, but not necessarily the places where they were buried. From the mid-third to the mid-fourth century some Roman Christians at least regarded the site Ad Catacumbas as their burial place. It is not at all likely that there was any solid ground for this belief, but if there had been solid ground for thinking that Gaius's "trophies" marked their tombs this alternative location of the tombs probably not have enjoyed the vogue it did. In the circumstances of the Neronian persecution it may have been impossible for the Roman Christians to secure possession of the bodies or even to discover what had happened to them.

These, however, are relatively unimportant matters compared with the real memorials to Paul in Rome—those which he might have been gratified, though surprised, to foresee. The church and city of Rome have not forgotten their association, brief and limited as it was, with the Apostle to the Gentiles. Although Paul himself makes it plain that Roman Christianity flourished years before he first visited the city, the Roman church has claimed him as one of its two apostolic founders. Clement of Rome, as we have seen, appeals to the example of Peter and Paul. Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the Christians at Rome, will not lay commands on them, as Peter and Paul did; they were apostles, he is "a convicted criminal"—although they were no more than that in Roman law. Dionysius of Corinth (c. A.D. 170), writing to Pope Soter, sees a special bond between the churches of Corinth and Rome in that each was founded by Peter and Paul and profited by the teaching of both apostles. (While Paul would have deprecated nomination as one of the founders of the Roman

1. The wording, "III Kal. Iul. Petri in Catacumbas et Pauli Ostense Tusco et Baso consilus", seems to associate Peter with the site Ad Catacumbas but Paul with the Ostian Way.
2. "Tantae per urbim ambitum/Stipata tendunt agmina:/Trinis celebratur uuius/Festum sacrorum martyrum."
3. This is pointed out by Professor Chadwick, J.T.S., n.s., viii (1957), p. 41, n.2. E. Kirschbaum (op. cit. pp. 196 ff.) suggests that only the heads of the two apostles were transferred to the site Ad Catacumbas in 258.
church, he would have turned in his grave at the suggestion that Peter was joint-founder with him of the Corinthian church! Gaius of Rome, as we have seen, points to the "trophies" of Peter and Paul as the most illustrious material monuments of Roman Christianity. Irenaeus of Lyons, about the same time, reviewing the churches which were founded by apostles, gives pride of place to that "very great, very ancient and universally known church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul," and adds that they committed the episcopate in that church to Linus. This is in keeping with early tradition which names Peter and Paul as founders not only of the church of Rome but also of the Roman succession of bishops. Irenaeus's informant may have been Hegesippus, although Irenaeus himself was in sufficiently close touch with the Roman church to know directly what its local tradition was. Down to the middle of the third century the two apostles are regularly conjoined as joint founders of the Roman church; even Eusebius, in the fourth century, can on occasion name them in a Roman context in the order Paul-Peter (although in his Chronicle he mentions Peter only: "Post Petrum primus Romanam ecclesiam tenuit Linus").

But, as C. H. Turner put it, "in transcribing a catalogue it was easier to use one name than two, and as soon as the habit grew up of including the name of the Apostle-founder as the first of the list rather than as a title at the head of it, ... the use of a single name was dictated by the principle that there could only be one bishop at a time ", The naming of Peter alone is first attested in Hippolytus, who calls Pope Victor "thirteenth from Peter"—although even so this leaves Peter outside the numbered episcopal list. The first to attach dogmatic significance to the name of Peter alone at the head of the Roman list is Cyprian. So Paul in practice was largely set aside. Perhaps, as others have said, there is a symbolical fitness in the location of St. Paul's basilica outside the walls—but Paul might have understood and approved. He might even have approved of the choice of St. Paul's rather than St. Peter's for the common declaration of his namesake Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey during the latter's recent visit to Rome—who knows?

1 De unitate ecclesiae, 4; Epp. 43.5; 70.3; 73.7, etc.
THE ROMANS DEBATE—CONTINUED

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I. INTRODUCTION

The title of this lecture was suggested by the title of a symposium edited by Karl Paul Donfried and published in 1977 as The Romans Debate. This symposium brings together ten essays composed and published over the previous thirty years. The first of these essays originated as a lecture delivered by Professor T. W. Manson in the John Rylands Library in February 1948 and published in the Library's Bulletin, later in the same year, under the title 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others'. It seems, therefore, specially appropriate to devote this twenty-first Manson Memorial Lecture to the continuation of the debate.

The 'Romans debate' is the debate about the character of the letter (including questions about its literary integrity, the possibility of its having circulated in longer and shorter recensions, the destination of chapter 16) and, above all, Paul's purpose in sending it. This lecture confines itself mainly to the last of these issues. With regard to other questions, suffice it to say that the lecture presupposes the literary integrity of the document (from Romans 1:1 to at least 16:23) as a letter addressed to the Christians of Rome, and the probability that a later editor (Marcion, it appears) issued a shorter recension of it which has influenced the textual tradition but has no relevance for our understanding of the original work or for the destination of chapter 16.

Since that symposium was published, further contributions have been made to the debate. A few distinguished new commentaries on Romans have appeared, among them, in the Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Manchester on 19 November 1981.


1 The Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Manchester on 19 November 1981.
4Spain was annexed and organized as two Roman provinces (Hispania Citerior and Hispania Ulterior) in 197 BC, soon after the Second Punic War. Sicily was the first Roman province, annexed in 241 BC, at the end of the First Punic War; Sardinia and Corsica were annexed shortly afterwards (238 BC), and were administered as one province from 231 BC to the beginning of the fourth century AD.

THE ROMANS DEBATE—CONTINUED

relation to our present subject, special mention should be made of Ulrich Wilckens' work in the Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament. Apart from commentaries, there is an important monograph by Dr Harry Gamble on The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans. Here the various textual phenomena which Professor Manson discussed in his lecture of 1948 are reviewed afresh; the problem of chapter 16 is dealt with among others and answered—conclusively, in my judgement—in favour of a Roman destination. In fact I think that C. H. Dodd said as much as needed to be said on this subject in his Moffatt Commentary on Romans in 1932, but Dr Gamble has dotted the 'i's and crossed the 't's of the case for Rome.

On several aspects of the Romans debate there is widespread agreement. When Paul dictated the letter he had completed ten years of apostolic activity both east and west of the Aegean Sea. In the great cities of South Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and proconsular Asia the gospel had been preached and churches had been founded. Most recently Illyricum also had been visited. Paul now reckoned that his work in the eastern Mediterranean area was at an end: 'I no longer have any room for work in these regions', he said (Romans 15:23). He was essentially a pioneer, making it his ambition to preach the gospel where the name of Christ had never been heard before. But where around the Mediterranean shores could he find such a place in the later fifties of the first century? Paul was not the only Christian missionary in the Gentile world, though he was the greatest, and several Mediterranean lands which he had not visited had probably been evangelized by others. But Spain, the oldest Roman province after Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, remained unevangelized; Paul
resolved that he would be the first to take the gospel there. To Spain, then, he turned his eyes.

A journey to Spain would give him the opportunity of gratifying a long-cherished desire to visit Rome. He had no thought of settling down in Rome: it was no part of his policy to build, as he said, on someone else's foundation. But a stay in Rome would enable him to enjoy the company of Christians in the capital and to renew acquaintance with a number of friends whom he had met elsewhere and who were now resident there. After his missionary exertions in the east, and before he embarked on a fresh campaign in the west, it would be a refreshing experience to spend some time in Rome. No doubt there would be an opportunity, during such a visit, to exercise his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. But any converts that he made by preaching the gospel in Rome would be added to the Christian community already existing in the city: there was no question of his forming them into a separate Pauline church.

One thing only remained on his programme before he could fulfill this plan. He had to go to Jerusalem with the delegates of churches in his Gentile mission-field who were to hand over to the leaders of the mother-church their churches' contributions to a relief fund which Paul had been organizing among them for some years. When this business had been attended to, then, said Paul to the Roman Christians, 'I shall go on by way of you to Spain' (Romans 15:28).

This, then, as may be gathered from information given in the letter, was the occasion of Paul's writing to the Christians of Rome. The letter was sent from Corinth, early in (probably) AD 57.

But if the primary purpose of the letter was to prepare the Roman Christians for Paul's visit to them, how is that purpose related to its main content? This question, indeed, is the crux of the Roman debate, and an attempt will be made to answer it. In trying to answer it, we shall bear in mind that Paul, while dictating the letter, had three places specially in mind—Rome, the home of the people to whom the letter was addressed; Spain, where he planned shortly to inaugurate the next phase of his apostolic ministry; and Jerusalem, which he was to visit in the immediate future to complete a project very close to his heart. A consideration of these three places, one by one, should help us to come to terms with some important aspects of the Romans debate.

II. THREE PROSPECTIVE VISITS

1. Rome

This document is, in no merely nominal sense, Paul's letter to the Romans—a letter addressed, in all its parts, to a particular Christian community in a particular historical situation. Communications between Rome and the main centres of Paul's mission-field were good, and Paul was able to keep himself informed, through friends who visited Rome or were now resident there, of what was happening among the Christians of the capital.

It is plain from Paul's language that the Christian community in Rome was large and active, enjoying a good reputation among churches elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. The origins of Christianity in Rome are obscure. The words of the fourth-century commentator called Ambrosiaster are frequently quoted in this regard: The Romans had embraced the faith of Christ, albeit according to the Jewish rite, although they saw no sign of mighty works nor any of the apostles. We know too little about Ambrosiaster's sources of information to accept this as an authoritative statement, but it certainly agrees with such other evidence as we have, not least in relation to the Jewish base of early Roman Christianity.

1 Romans 15:20.
2 Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 2 Corinthians 10:12–16.
3 Romans 1:13–15.
It is probable that Christianity reached Rome within a few years of its inception, given the degree of social mobility in the Roman Empire in those days. The people most likely to take it to Rome were Hellenistic Jewish Christians, members of the group in which Stephen and Philip played a leading part. The name of the Synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem, with which Stephen was associated, suggests a link with Rome (if the libertinis in question were the descendants of Jews who were taken as captives to Rome by Pompey to grace his triumph in 61 BC and subsequently emancipated). The introduction of Christianity into the Jewish community of Rome was bound to lead to the same kind of disputes as its introduction into other Jewish communities; and if such disputes played their part in the constant tumults in which, according to Suetonius, the Jews of Rome were indulging (adsidue tumultuanites) in the principate of Claudius, we can understand his further remark that these tumults were stirred up by 'Chrestus' (impulsore Chresto).

We have ample evidence for the use of Chrestus/Xρηστος and Chrestiani/Xρηστιανοι, in Latin and Greek alike, as mis-spellings for Christus/Xριστος and Christiani/Xριστιανοι. It is about as certain as can be with such an allusion that the person referred to is Jesus Christ. Had he been another, otherwise unknown, bearer of the name Chrestus, Suetonius would probably have said impulsore Chresto quodam. It is not at all likely that the reference is to another messianic claimant, a rival Christ—e.g. Simon Magus—whose presence in Rome under Claudius is attested elsewhere.

Chrestus was as common a slave-name as its near-synonym Onesimus. For the incidence of Chrestus in Rome cf. CIL vi. 668, 880, 975, 1929, 3555, 7460, 7846, 11707, 14058, 14433, 14805, 20770, 21531, 22837, 26157, 28324, 28659, 37672, 38735. While Suetonius has the spelling Chresto here, he has Christiani in Nero 16.2. But inTacitus, Ann. 15.44.3 the MS Medicus 68.2 had originally (it appears) Chrestianos, which was corrected to Christianos by a later hand. Tacitus himself, however, may have spelt the word Christianos, since he links it closely with Christus (auctor nominis eius). In the NT the first hand in Vaticans consists precisely as the spelling Xρηστος. The apologists exploit the confusion between the two forms: 'We are accused of being Xρηστος but it is unjust that one should be hated for being Xρηστος' (Justin, Apol. 4.5).

There is no evidence that Simon Magus claimed to be the Messiah, and in any case a pagan writer would not have said impulsore Chresto if he had meant 'at the instigation of a Messiah'.—Chrestus for Suetonius was a personal name, as it was for pagans in general.

True, Jesus Christ was not in Rome during the principate of Claudius. But Suetonius may well have understood his sources (wrongly) to mean that he was. Tacitus knew that Christ was executed under Tiberius, but Suetonius had not the same concern for historical precision. If his sources told him that the rioting among the Jews of Rome was caused by disagreement about the claims of Christ, it was a natural, if mistaken, inference that Christ himself was in Rome at the time.

It was because of these riots, says Suetonius, that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. He does not date the expulsion edict: Orosius, early in the fifth century, says that it was issued in AD 49. Orosius's inaccuracy in the very act of supplying this information does not inspire confidence, but the record of Acts makes AD 49 a probable date.

Luke says that, when Paul first visited Corinth, he met a Jew named Aquila, 'lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all

most suggestive example' of the type of agitator in question. Simon's presence in Rome in the time of Claudius is mentioned by Justin (Apol., i. 26.2). An even more improbable identification of Chrestus than that with Simon Magus—namely, with James the Just—has recently been proposed by B. E. Thiering, The Gospels and Qumran (Sydney, 1981), p. 271.

That he was indeed there at that time is argued by R. Graves and J. Podro, Jesus in Rome (London, 1957).

2Tacitus, Ann. 15.44.4. See p. 347, n. 1.

3Orosius (writing AD 417–18) quotes Suetonius on the expulsion and says that Josephus dates the incident in AD 49 (Hist., 7.6.15 f.). But there is no reference to the incident in the extant writings of Josephus.

4The question arises of the relation of the expulsion recorded by Suetonius to an action of Claudius dated by Dio Cassius (Hist., 60.6) to the first year of his principate: 'When the Jews [sc. of Rome] had again multiplied to a point where their numbers made it difficult to expel them from the city without a riot, he did not banish them outright but forbade them to meet in accordance with their ancestral way of life.' If this ban on meetings was later lifted, then perhaps Claudius, 'annoyed that his relaxation ... had led to a repetition of disorder, reacted more severely than before, this time with an expulsion' (E. M. Smallwood, The Jews under Roman Rule (Leiden, 1976), pp. 215 f.).
the Jews to leave Rome' (Acts 18:2). The reference in Acts 18:12 to Gallio as proconsul of Achaia during Paul’s stay in Corinth enables us to date Paul’s arrival in that city in the late summer of AD 50; it is therefore quite probable that Priscilla and Aquila left Rome the previous year.¹

Since Paul, in his references to Priscilla and Aquila, never implies that they were converts of his own, the likelihood is that they were Christians before they left Rome—perhaps, as Harnack suggested, foundation-members of the Roman church.²

In Claudius’s expulsion of Jews, no distinction would be made between those among them who were Christians and the majority who were not. The expulsion could have gone far to wipe out the Roman church. But perhaps it did not wipe it out altogether. If in AD 49 there were some Gentile Christians in Rome, they would not be affected by the edict of expulsion. By AD 49 Gentile Christianity was firmly rooted in several cities of the eastern Mediterranean, and if in the eastern Mediterranean, why not also in Rome, to which all roads led from the imperial frontiers? We do not know this for certain: what we can say is that by the beginning of AD 57, when Paul sent his letter to the Roman Christians, the majority of them were apparently Gentiles.³

After the expulsion of Jews from Rome, if the course of events may be so reconstructed, the small group or groups of Gentile Christians in the city had to fend for themselves. But they continued to receive accessions of strength in the years that followed. They were probably not organized as a single city church, but existed as a number of separate house-churches, conscious nevertheless of the bond which united them in faith and love. Some of these house-churches, indeed, may have been associated with the imperial establishment. It is at a later date that Paul refers to ‘saïnts . . . of Caesar’s household’ (Philippians 4:22).⁴

¹Gallio’s entry on the proconsulship is dated to AD 51 (if not earlier) by Claudius’s rescript to the Delphians of AD 52 (SIC 2, 801). Cf. A. Plassart, L’inscription de Delphes mentionnant le Proconsul Gallion’, Revue des Études Grecques, box (1967), 372 ff.


³This is a reasonable inference from Romans 1:13; 11:13.

⁴See Bulletin, ixxi (1980–8), 265.

But the evidence of Romans 16:10 f. suggests that there were Christians in some of the groups that made up ‘Caesar’s household’ of slaves and freedmen—among the Aristobuliani, for instance, and the Narcissiani.¹

When, around the time that Nero succeeded Claudius in the principate (AD 54), the expulsion edict became a dead letter (like earlier expulsion edicts of the same kind),² Jews began to return to Rome, and Jewish Christians among them. Priscilla and Aquila seem to have returned soon after the end of Paul’s Ephesian ministry (AD 55); their residence in Rome served as the headquarters of a house-church (Romans 16:5) as their residence in Ephesus had done (1 Corinthians 16:19). There were no doubt other Jewish house-churches added to the Gentile house-churches already existing. What kind of reception did these returning Jewish Christians meet with from their Gentile brethren? It is implied in Romans 11:13–24 that the Gentile Christians tended to look down on their Jewish brethren as poor relations. Paul, discussing the place of Jews and Gentiles in the divine purpose, warns his Gentile readers not to give themselves airs: even if they are now in the majority, they should bear in mind that the base of the church—of the Roman church as well as of the church universal—is Jewish.

Caution must be exercised when evidence is sought in this letter for the state of the Roman church at the time of writing, lest we find ourselves arguing in a circle. It is all too easy to draw inferences from the letter about the state of the church, and then use those inferences to help us in understanding the letter.

Here, however, we have a letter from Paul explicitly addressed to the Christians of Rome: ‘to all God’s beloved in Rome’ (Romans 1:7). True, there is one textual tradition which omits the phrase ‘in Rome’ both here and in verse 15, but this omission cannot be original. The sense requires a place-name, and no other place-name than Rome will fit the context (this is no circular letter in


²E.g. the expulsion under Tiberius in AD 19 (Josephus, Ant. 18. 65, 81 ff.; Tacitus, Ann. 2.85; Suetonius, Tiberius, 36), ascribed by Philo (Leg. 159 ff.) to the malignity of Sejanus.
which a variety of place-names might be inserted in a blank space left for the address. The omission of the reference to Rome can best be explained, as T. W. Manson explained it, by the supposition that Marcion struck it out, after his rejection by the Christian leaders in Rome, to show that in his judgement such a church did not deserve the honour of being addressed in a letter from the only true apostle of Christ.¹

Paul writes to the Roman Christians, he says, because he hopes to pay them a visit soon. He had planned to visit their city on earlier occasions but had not been able to put those plans into action. One of the occasions he has in mind may have been the time when he first set foot in Europe. Having crossed the Aegean to Thessalonica in AD 49, he found himself travelling from east to west along the Egnatian Way, evangelizing first Philippi and then Thessalonica. Had nothing interfered with his programme he might have continued his westward journey until he reached one of the Adriatic termini of the Egnatian Way, after which the natural course would have been to cross the Straits of Otranto to Brindisi and proceed along the Appian Way to Rome.² He was prevented from doing this by the riots which broke out in Thessalonica while he was there—impulsore Chresto, it might have been said there also, for he and his colleagues were charged with proclaiming ‘another emperor, namely, Jesus’ (Acts 17:7). Paul was not only forced to leave Thessalonica and proceed no farther along the Egnatian Way; as he turned south he found that there was no place for him anywhere in Macedonia, and he was unable to settle until he reached Corinth, where he stayed for eighteen months.

But even if he had been left in peace to continue along the Egnatian Way, it would have been an inopportune time for him to visit Rome: it was just then that Claudius issued his expulsion edict. A visit to Rome must await a more convenient season, and early in AD 57 the way seemed more propitious for such a visit than ever it had been before.¹ The situation had changed: Nero was now on the imperial throne, halfway through his first quinquennium, which was greeted, especially in the eastern provinces, as a kind of golden age.

This, then, is the background to the letter and there is general agreement that Paul sent it to prepare the Roman Christians for his prospective visit. But why, it may be asked, did he send a letter with these particular contents? He mentions his visit only at the beginning and at the end; what is the relevance to the Roman Christians of the main body of the letter?

After his preliminary remarks about his occasion for writing, Paul launches into a sustained and coherent statement of the gospel as he understood it, with special emphasis on the justifying grace of God, available on equal terms to Jews and Gentiles (1:16–8:40). Then comes a careful inquiry into God’s purpose in history, with particular reference to the place of Jews and Gentiles in that purpose (9:1–11:36). Various ethical admonitions (12:1–13:14), including a problematic paragraph on the Christian’s relation to the state (13:1–7), are then followed by a particular paraenesis on the mutual responsibilities of the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak in faith’ within the Christian community (14:1–15:13). Next, Paul makes a short statement about his activity as apostle to the Gentiles thus far (15:14–21), together with an account of his plans for the immediate and subsequent future (15:22–33). The letter comes to an end with the commendation of Phoebe, who is taking it to its destination (16:1 ff.), and a series of greetings to twenty-six individuals, who belong to at least five groups or house-churches (16:3–15). Greetings are sent from ‘all the churches of Christ’, presumably those of the Pauline mission-field (16:16). A final admonition (16:17–20) is followed by greetings from

¹The date AD 57 is indicated by forward (from Gallio) and backward (from Festus) dating. By Pentecost of the year in which Romans was written Paul had arrived in Judaea; not long after his arrival he was detained in custody in Caesarea, and remained there for two years, until Festus became procurator (Acts 24:27). There is numismatic evidence for dating the accession of Festus in AD 59 (cf. F. W. Madden, History of Jewish Coinage [London, 1864], p. 153; A. Reifenberg, Ancient Jewish Coins [Jerusalem, 1947], p. 27; see also E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, i [Edinburgh, 1973], p. 465, n. 42).

²T. W. Manson, ‘St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans’, 226–9 (Studies, pp. 227–30); see, however, H. Gamble, The Textual History, pp. 29–33, 100 ff.¹
named individuals among Paul's present companions (16:21-3), and by a benediction (16:24) and doxology (16:25-7) of disputed authenticity.  

If we knew more about the current situation in the church of Rome, it might be seen that the detailed contents of the letter are more relevant to that situation than can now be established. But it will be rewarding to look at the contents section by section.

As regards his lengthy statement of the gospel (1:16-8:40), it was in any case expedient that Paul should communicate to the Roman Christians an outline of the message which he proclaimed. Misrepresentations of his preaching and his apostolic procedure were current, and must have found their way to Rome. It was plainly undesirable that these should be accepted in default of anything more reliable. Paul does not, for the most part, refute those misrepresentations directly (there are a few incidental allusions to them, as in Romans 3:8, καθὼς βλασφημοῦμεθα) but gives a systematic exposition, showing how, if the contemporary plight of mankind, Gentile and Jewish, is to be cured, God's justifying grace, without discrimination among its beneficiaries, is alone competent to cure it.

This exposition is carried on largely in terms of a debate or dialogue with the synagogue. Paul must have engaged in this kind of exchange repeatedly in the course of his preaching—what, for example, were the terms in which some members of the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch 'contradicted what was spoken by Paul' (Acts 13:45)?—but it was probably relevant to the state of affairs in Rome. The rioting which attended the introduction of Christianity into the Jewish community of the capital some years previously was sparked off by arguments not dissimilar, perhaps, to those voiced in the Jerusalem synagogue where Stephen's teaching was first heard. Paul's exposition of the new faith had different emphases from Stephen's, but was sufficiently like it to provoke the same kind of violent reaction, as indeed it did from one city to another.

Paul's gospel, we know, was charged with promoting moral indifferentism, if not with actively encouraging sin, and the form of his argument in this letter implies his awareness that this charge was not unknown in Rome: 'Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?' (Romans 6:1). He makes it plain, therefore, that the gospel which he preaches is not only the way of righteousness, in the sense of the righteous status which God by his grace bestows on believers in Christ, but also the way of holiness, in which 'the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit' (Romans 8:4).

The relation of chapters 9-11 to the plan of the letter as a whole has been much debated. It has been said that, if Paul had moved from the end of chapter 8, with its celebration of the glory which consummates God's saving work in his people, to the beginning of chapter 12, with its practical application of that saving work to the daily life of Christians, we should have been conscious of no hiatus. Yet Paul judged it fitting to grapple at this point with a problem which, as he confesses, caused him great personal pain.

Israel, the nation which God had chosen to be the vehicle of his purpose of grace in the world, had as a whole failed to respond to the fulfilment of that purpose in Jesus Christ. Paul was conscious of this as a problem for himself both on the personal and on the apostolic level. If in Israel's failure to respond he saw wit large his own earlier unbelief, that very fact brought hope with it: as his eyes had been opened, so his people's eyes would surely be opened. For this he prayed incessantly. Indeed, if Israel's salvation could be won at the price of his own damnation, he would readily pay that price. He would gladly have devoted his life and strength to the evangelizing of his people, but he was specifically called to be Christ's apostle to the Gentile world. Yet he trusted that even by the evangelization of Gentiles he would indirectly do something for the advantage of his own people: they would be stimulated to jealousy as they saw increasing numbers of Gentiles enjoying the gospel blessings which were the fruit of God's promises to the patriarchs, and would waken up to the

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2Acts 6:9 f.; see p. 338 above.
realization that these blessings were for them too—that in fact they should properly have been for them first, since they were the descendants of the patriarchs and the inheritors of those promises. This prospect enhanced the prestige of his apostleship as he contemplated it: 'inasmuch as I am the Gentiles' apostle, I glorify my ministry in order to make my kinsfolk jealous and thus save some of them' (Romans 11:13 f.).

But it is not simply to share with the Roman Christians his concern for Israel and his appreciation of the significance of his apostleship that he writes like this. His theme is relevant to the situation in Rome. It is in this context that he warns the Gentiles among his readers not to despise the Jews, whether the Jews in general or Jewish Christians in particular, because God has not written them off. They continue to have a place in his purpose, and his purpose will not be completed until, with the ingathering of the full tale of Gentile converts, 'all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:25 f.). Gentile Christians must not pride themselves on the superiority of their faith, but remember that they are what they are only by the kindness of God. This will induce in them a proper sense of humility, and respect and understanding for their fellow-believers of Jewish stock.

The paragraph about the Christian's relation to the secular authorities (Romans 13:1-7) is best understood in the light of the Roman destination of the letter. This is not a universal statement of political principle. The injunction to 'render (ὑπόδοτε) to all their dues' (13:7) may indeed be viewed as a generalization of Jesus' precept: 'render (ὑπόδοτε) to Caesar what belongs to Caesar' (Mark 12:17). That precept was addressed to a particular situation in Judaea, in face of a firmly held and violently defended doctrine that for Jews of Judaea to pay tribute to a pagan overlord was to take from God the things that were his and hand them over to another. That situation, of course, did not exist in Rome. But in generalizing the dominical precept Paul has in mind the situation which did exist in Rome and in other cities throughout the empire.

Eight years previously, it appears, the introduction of Christianity into Rome had led to riots. About the same time, according to Luke, the arrival of Paul and his fellow-preachers in Thessalonica provoked the charge that they were the men who had subverted the whole world and kept on 'acting against the decrees of Caesar' (Acts 17:6 f.). The name of 'Christian' had subversive associations in Rome and elsewhere: some at least remembered that the founder of the movement had been executed by sentence of a Roman judge on a charge of sedition. It was most important that Christians in the imperial capital should recognize their responsibility not to give any support by their way of life to this widespread imputation of disloyalty, but rather refute it by punctilious obedience to the authorities and payment of all lawful dues. Thus far the representatives of imperial law had, in Paul's experience, shown at least a benevolent neutrality to the prosecution of his mission. The time was to come, and that in Rome itself, when this would no longer be so. When Caesar demanded the allegiance which belonged to God, his demand had to be refused. But Caesar had not yet done so, and Paul does not mention this eventuality. His approach to the matter is relevant to the situation of Roman Christians at the time and in the circumstances of their receiving the letter.

Equally relevant to the Roman situation is the practical section in Romans 14:1-15:7 in which Paul deals with the relation between the 'strong' and the 'weak' in the Christian fellowship—the 'weak' being those who scrupulously abstained from certain kinds of food and paid religious respect to certain holy days, while the 'strong' (like Paul himself) had a more robust conscience with regard to such externalities.

There is a degree of resemblance between what Paul says here and what he says to the Corinthian church on the issue of eating or avoiding the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice to a pagan deity (1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:14-30). But in this section of the letter to the Romans there is no direct word about eating εἴδολοθυτα (an issue bound to be acute in a mainly Gentile church like that of Corinth). The distinction here is rather between the believer who can, with a good conscience, eat food of any

1 Cf. the only mention of the trial of Jesus by a pagan author: 'Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat' (Tacitus, Ann. 15.44.4).

2 Notably Gallio, who refused to take up a complaint against him at Corinth (Acts 18:12-16).
kind and treat all days alike, and the believer whose conscience forbids the eating of any but vegetable food and the doing of ordinary work (however normally legitimate) on a holy day. The principle of mutual considerateness which Paul inculcates in this section would, of course, cover the issue of ἐδολολήττα, but if Paul has one particular situation in mind here, it is a situation in which Jewish and Gentile Christians have to live together in fellowship. It was to such a situation, indeed, that the Jerusalem decree was addressed a few years before, but Paul takes a different line from the decree. The decree urged abstention from ἐδολολήττα and flesh from which the blood had not been completely drained; Paul urges his readers to consider one another.

It was not simply that Jewish Christians continued to confine themselves to kosher food and to observe the sabbath and other holy days, while Gentile Christians practised complete liberty in both respects. The situation was probably more complex. Many Jewish Christians had become more or less emancipated from legal obligations in religion, even if few were so totally emancipated as Paul was. On the other hand, some Gentiles were more than willing to Judaize, to take over the Jewish food restrictions and Jewish regard for holy days, even if they stopped short at circumcision. We have examples of this tendency to Judaize in our own day, even if it is not expressly called Judaizing; and in the apostolic age we have only to think of Paul’s Gentile converts in Galatia, who were not only beginning to keep the Jewish sacred calendar but even to accept circumcision.

Among the house-churches of Rome, then, we should probably envisage a broad and continuous spectrum of varieties in thought and practice between the firm Jewish retention of the ancestral customs and Gentile remoteness from these customs, with some Jewish Christians, indeed, found on the liberal side of the halfway mark between the two extremes and some Gentile Christians on the ‘legalist’ side. Variety of this kind can very easily promote a spirit of division, and Paul wished to safeguard the Roman Christians against this, encouraging them rather to regard the variety as an occasion for charity, forbearance and understanding.

Instead of laying down rules which would restrict Christian freedom, Paul makes it plain that, religiously speaking, one kind of food is no worse than another, one day no better than another. It is human beings that matter, not food or the calendar. Christian charity, on the one hand, will impose no limitations on another’s freedom; Christian charity, on the other hand, will not force liberty on the conscience of someone who is not yet ready for it. The scrupulous Christian must not criticize his more emancipated brother or sister; the emancipated must not look down on the over-scrupulous. The only limitation that can properly be imposed on Christian liberty is that imposed by Christian charity, and it can only be self-imposed. No Christian was more thoroughly emancipated than Paul, but none was readier to limit his own liberty in the interests of his fellow-Christians. In such matters as abstinence from food or observance of days he conformed to the company in which he found himself: in themselves they were matters of utter indifference. This example he recommends to others. For the rest, they should do what they believe to be right without forcing their convictions on others or thinking the worse of others if they do not see eye to eye with them.

2. Spain

If Spain plays a less crucial role in the letter than either Rome or Jerusalem does, it is no merely peripheral one. Not only did Paul’s plan to visit Spain provide him with an opportunity to gratify his long-cherished desire to see Rome, but it enabled him to invite the Roman Christians’ collaboration in the next phase of his apostolic enterprise. It meant, moreover, that he could tell the Roman Christians of his plan to visit them without giving them cause to suspect that he was coming to put down his roots among them or assert apostolic authority over them. At the same time, by assuring them of his ardent longing to make their

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2 Cf. Juvenal, Sat., 14, 96 ff.  
3 The varieties need not be demarcated so distinctly as in P. S. Minear, The Obedience of Faith (London, 1971), pp. 8 ff., where five different outlooks are identified.

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1 Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:13; 10:33; Romans 14:14.  
2 Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.
acquaintance he makes it plain that he does not simply see in their city a convenient stopping-off place on his way to Spain. Rome probably lay no less close to his heart at this time than Spain did.1

But why should he think of evangelizing Spain? If he judged his task in the Aegean world to be complete and wished to adhere to his policy of confining his ministry to virgin soil, his range of choice in the Mediterranean world, as has been said, was limited. By AD 57 the gospel had certainly been carried to Alexandria and Cyrene, if not farther west along the African coast. The close association between proconsular Asia and Gallia Narbonensis would suggest that the evangelization of the former territory in AD 52–5 led quickly to the evangelization of the latter. But Spain, for long the chief bastion of Roman power in the west, beckoned Paul as his next mission-field.

We have no idea what contact, if any, Paul may have had with people from Spain who could have told him something of conditions in that land.2 One thing is certain: the language which had served him so well in his ministry hitherto, and served him equally well in his present communication with Rome, would not be adequate for the evangelizing of Spain. Spain was a Latin-speaking area. Paul was probably not entirely ignorant of Latin, but he would require to speak it fluently if he was to do effective work in Spain. It was perhaps in order to spend some time in a Latin-speaking environment that he had recently paid a visit to Illyricum. We should not, in fact, have known about his visit to Illyricum but for his mentioning it in Romans 15:19 as the westernmost limit of his apostolic activity thus far.

If Illyricum provided him with some linguistic preparation, there were other kinds of preparation required for such an enterprise as he contemplated in Spain. In earlier days the church of Syrian Antioch had provided Paul and Barnabas with a base for the evangelization of Cyprus and South Galatia. Later, when Christianity had been established in Corinth and Ephesus, these

1Chrysostom goes farther: 'he mentions Spain in order to show his eagerness and warmth towards them (the Roman Christians)' (Homilies on Romans, 30 [on Rom 15:28]).

two cities provided Paul with bases for the evangelization respectively of the provinces of Achaia and Asia. But where would he find a base for the evangelization of Spain if not in Rome? He does not in so many words ask the Roman Christians to provide him with such a base, but he sets the situation before them in such a way that they would see his need of one and could, if they were so minded, spontaneously offer to supply what was needed. 'I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain', he says, 'and to be sped on my journey there by you (ὑμῖν προεμφυτήν ἐκεί), when first I have enjoyed your company for a little' (Romans 15:24). Here certainly is one facet of his purpose in writing—not, of course, the only one. What the sequel was—whether or not he did go to Spain, and whether or not the Roman church did provide him with a base—is quite unclear, and is in any case irrelevant to our investigation of the purpose of the letter.

3. Jerusalem

Towards the end of his personal remarks in Romans 15, Paul tells the Roman Christians that, before he can come to their city and spend some time with them on his way to Spain, he must for the present go to Jerusalem 'with aid for the saints' (Romans 15:25). This is a reference to his involvement in the Jerusalem relief fund, which we know from his Corinthian correspondence to have been very much on his mind for some time back.1

One obvious reason for mentioning the relief fund to the Roman Christians was to explain why he could not set out for Rome immediately: this business of delivering the collected money to Jerusalem must be completed first. Therefore he could not give them even an approximate date for his arrival in Rome—as things turned out, it was just as well that he did not try to give them one! Even if nothing untoward happened, there was no way of knowing how long the business would take. According to Luke's record, he hoped to be in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost (which in AD 57 fell on May 29).

But evidently Paul is not merely advising his friends in Rome that there may be some delay in his setting out to see them: he tries, tactfully, to involve them in his Jerusalem enterprise. He does

1Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15.
not, either expressly or by implication, invite them to contribute to the fund. It had been raised among the churches of Paul's own planting, in which the Roman church had no place. Indeed, just because the Roman Christians were not involved in the fund in this sense, Paul could tell them about it in a more relaxed manner than was possible in writing to people whom he wished to make a generous contribution. The Gentile churches, he says, are debtors to Jerusalem in respect of spiritual blessings; it is but fitting that they should acknowledge that debt by imparting to Jerusalem such blessings as they could impart—material blessings, monetary gifts.

It is plain from his Galatian and Corinthian letters that Paul was greatly concerned to preserve his churches' independence of Jerusalem. Yet here he himself acknowledges their dependence on Jerusalem for the gospel itself. Indeed, we learn more here than anywhere else of Paul's real attitude to Jerusalem. Throughout his letters there is an ambivalence in his relation to the Jerusalem church and its leaders: on the one hand, they must not be allowed to dictate to his churches or himself; on the other, he must at all costs prevent his apostolic ministry and the Gentile mission from having the ties of fellowship with Jerusalem severed. This appears clearly enough in Galatians: in the very context in which he asserts his independence of Jerusalem he tells how he went up to Jerusalem on one occasion and laid his gospel before the leaders of the mother-church. Later, when (as he hoped) the large-scale participation of Gentiles in the blessings of the gospel would stimulate the Jewish people to jealousy and move them to claim their own proper share in those blessings, Paul's apostolic activity to the time of writing: 'from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.' It is evident from Acts and from Paul's own testimony that it was not in Jerusalem that he first preached the gospel. Why then does he give Jerusalem pride of place in this statement? Perhaps because Jerusalem is the place where, by divine decree, the preaching of the gospel is initiated:

out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3).

This primacy of Jerusalem is recognized in the Lucan tradition—for example, in the direction 'beginning from Jerusalem' in the risen Lord's charge to his disciples (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 1:8). Paul appears to acknowledge this primacy not only in Romans 15:19 but elsewhere in his letters. He had, in fact, a greater regard for the Jerusalem church and its leaders than they evidently had for him, and was indeed, as the late Arnold Ehrhardt put it, 'one of the greatest assets for the Jerusalem church' because, either by his personal action or under his influence, versions of the gospel which were defective by the standards of Jerusalem were brought into conformity with the line maintained in common by Paul and the leaders of the mother-church. And it is a matter of plain history as well as a 'theological presupposition' that, from the inception of the church until at least AD 60, 'Christendom' (in the words of Henry Chadwick) has a geographical centre and this is Jerusalem. Gentile Christians might be free from Judaism; they remained debtors to Zion.

Jerusalem also played a central part in Paul's understanding of the consummation of God's purpose in the world. He himself, as apostle to the Gentiles, had a key place in that purpose as he understood it—not only directly, as the progress of the gospel prospered under his hand among the Gentiles, but also indirectly, when (as he hoped) the large-scale participation of Gentiles in the blessings of the gospel would stimulate the Jewish people to jealousy and move them to claim their own proper share in those

\[1\text{Galatians 2:2–10.}\]
blessings. This development would mark the climax of gospel witness in the world and precipitate the parousia. This seems to be the point of Paul's quotation of Isaiah 59:20 f. in this context (Romans 11:26 f.). He quotes it in the form: 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.' The Hebrew text says 'to Zion'; the Septuagint version says 'for Zion's sake'. Paul has apparently derived 'from Zion' from Psalm 14:7//53:6, 'O that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!' The implication is that the climax of salvation is closely associated with Jerusalem. Not only did the gospel first go out into all the world from Jerusalem; Jerusalem (if we interpret Paul aright) would be the scene of its consummation. And Paul's own ministry, as he saw it, had a crucial role in speeding this consummation.

No wonder, then, that Paul related his ministry closely to Jerusalem. This adds a further dimension of meaning to Paul's organizing of the Jerusalem relief fund and to his resolve to be personally present in Jerusalem with the messengers of the Gentile churches who were to hand it over. It was not only his response to the request of the Jerusalem leaders at an earlier date that he should 'remember the poor' (Galatians 2:10); it was not only an acknowledgment on the part of the Gentile churches of their indebtedness to Jerusalem and a means of promoting a more binding fellowship of love between them and the church of Jerusalem. It was all that, but it was at the same time the outward and visible sign of Paul's achievement thus far, the occasion of his rendering to the Lord who commissioned him an account of his discharge of that commission. It was also, in his eyes, a fulfilment of prophecy.

One of the prophets of Israel had foreseen the day when 'the wealth of nations' would come to Jerusalem, when foreigners would 'bring gold and frankincense and proclaim the praise of the LORD'. 'They shall come up with acceptance on my altar', said the God of Israel, 'and I will glorify my glorious name' (Isaiah 60:5–7). A careful study of Romans 15 leads to the conclusion that Paul sees this promise being fulfilled in the impending visit of Gentile believers to Jerusalem, carrying their churches' gifts and prepared to join their fellow-believers of Jerusalem in thanksgiving to God. It was this vision that prompted his earnest prayer that 'the offering of the Gentiles (προσωρόφα τῶν ἔθνων) might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15:16). This language echoes that of Isaiah 66:20, where the brethren of the Jerusalemites will be brought 'from all the nations as an offering to the LORD'. In the Old Testament context the 'brethren' in question are Jews of the dispersion; for Paul they are fellow-members of that extended family which embraces believing Gentiles and believing Jews—together children of Abraham.

The Gentile Christians brought their monetary offering, but they themselves constituted Paul's living offering, the fruit of his own λειτουργία. Paul would not have thought of presenting this offering anywhere other than in Jerusalem. Hence his decision to accompany the Gentile delegates as they travelled there to hand over their churches' gifts to the mother-church. He may have had it in mind to render an account of his stewardship thus far and to re-dedicate himself for the next phase of his ministry in those very temple precincts where, more than twenty years before, the Lord had appeared to him and confirmed his commission to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17–21). His Gentile companions could not accompany him into the temple, but there in spirit he could discharge his λειτουργία and present as a 'pure offering' the faith of his converts through which the name of the God of Israel was now 'great among the Gentiles' (Malachi 1:11).

He may indeed have hoped that on a later occasion, when his contemplated evangelization of Spain was completed, he might pay a further visit to Jerusalem with a fresh offering of Gentiles from 'the limit of the west' and render a further, perhaps the final, account of his stewardship.¹

But at the moment his visit to Jerusalem with the fruit of his Aegean ministry had to be paid, and he could not foresee how it would turn out. He lets his Roman readers fully into his motives for paying the visit, and shares with them his misgivings about the outcome. That the ‘unbelievers in Judaea’ would stir up trouble for him as on previous occasions was only to be expected; but would the gift-bearing Greeks (*Danaos et dona ferentes*) 1 be ‘acceptable to the saints’ (*Romans* 15:31)? Paul could not feel sure on this score, and he invites the Roman Christians to join him in earnest prayer that his hopes and plans would be fulfilled. If things turned out otherwise, then all the care which had gone into the organization of the fund, all the high hopes which Paul cherished for the forging of a firmer bond of affection between the mother-church and the Gentile mission, would be frustrated. Whether or not the leaders of the Jerusalem church did in fact accept the gifts in the spirit in which they were brought is disputed, but it does not affect our understanding of Romans. 2 One thing is clear: Paul was anxious that they should so accept them, and he seeks the prayers of the Roman Christians to this end.

Did he seek more than their prayers? Their prayers were all that he explicitly asked for, but did he hope that they would read between the lines and do even more than he asked?

We may certainly dismiss the view that the letter is addressed only ostensibly to Rome but is essentially directed to the Jerusalem church—that Paul throughout the letter really develops the argument which he hoped would be effective in Jerusalem. 3 There is nothing in the letter to suggest that its contents are not primarily intended for Roman consumption; we have argued indeed that its contents are as a whole suited to the Roman situation, as they are for the most part unsuited to the Jerusalem situation.

But might Paul be hinting that the Roman Christians could do something to pave the way for a favourable reception in Jerusalem? 4 We have no direct information on such contact as may have existed at this date between the Christians of Rome and the church of Jerusalem, but it would be surprising if there were no communication between them. There would, however, be no time for the Roman Christians to get in touch with Jerusalem between their receiving this letter and Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem. Paul was evidently on the point of setting out for Jerusalem when he sent the letter (*προεξοθομαν, ‘I am on my way’, he says in Romans 15:25). If the year was AD 57, he left Philippi about 15 April—‘after the days of Unleavened Bread’ (*Acts* 20:6)—and reached Caesarea with his companions about 14 May. Even if Phoebe left Cenchreae a month before Paul set out for Jerusalem (mid-March was the earliest date for the resumption of sailing after winter), 2 she would not have reached Rome much earlier than mid-April, and there was no way that messengers from Rome could reach Judaea before Paul did, even if they had set out as soon as the letter was received. 3

But Paul certainly did wish to involve the Roman Christians as closely as possible with his Jerusalem enterprise, and if the Jerusalem leaders could be given to understand (tactfully) that Rome was being kept in the picture, this might have influenced their reception of Paul and his Gentile friends.

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1 Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.49.
2 J. D. G. Dunn thinks it most likely that ‘the Jerusalem church refused to accept the collection’ (*Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* [London, 1977], p. 257). (For my part, I think it more likely that they did accept it.)
3 Amplifying the suggestion of F. Fuchs that the ‘secret address’ of the letter is Jerusalem (*Hermeneutik* [Bad Canstatt, 1963], p. 191), J. Jervell argues that ‘the essential and primary content of Romans (1:18–11:36) is a reflection upon its major content, the “collection speech”, or more precisely, the defense which Paul plans to give before the church in Jerusalem’ (*The Letter to Jerusalem* [1972], in *The Romans Debate* ed. K. P. Donfried, p. 64).
5 *Vegetius, De re militari* 4.39. Even a journey by land could not have begun much earlier.
6 It would not have made much difference to the timing if Phoebe went to Rome by the Via Egnatia rather than all the way by sea. The promptest journey from Rome to Judaea took nearly five weeks; for example, news of the death of Tiberius on 16 March AD 37 (*Tacitus, Ann.* 6.50), reached Jerusalem on the eve of Passover (*Josephus, Ant.* 18.122–4), which in that year coincided with the full moon of April 17 or 18. Cf. A. M. Ramsay, ‘The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post’, *JRS*, xv (1925), 60–74.
III. CONCLUSION

In short, not only in his impending visit to Jerusalem to discharge the relief fund and not only in his subsequent Spanish project, but in all the aspects of his apostleship Paul was eager to involve the Roman Christians as his partners, and to involve them as a united body. He did not know how much longer time he had to devote to the evangelization of the Gentile world. He may have believed himself to be immortal till his work was done (he never explicitly says so), but for one so constantly exposed to the risk of death it would have been irresponsible to make no provision against the time when death or some other hazard would prevent him from continuing his work. He had his younger associates, we know—men like Timothy and Titus—who could bear the torch after his departure. But if he could associate with his world vision a whole community like the Roman church, the unfinished task might be accomplished the sooner. The influence of that church sprang not only from the centrality of the imperial capital and its unrivalled means of communication with distant regions, but even more (he had reason to believe) from the outstanding faith and spiritual maturity of which the Roman Christians gave evidence. An individual might suffer death or imprisonment, but a church would go on living. Therefore in all the parts of his letter to the Romans he instructs them, he exhorts them, he shares with them his own concerns and ambitions in the hope that they may make these their own. These hopes and ambitions embraced not only the advance of the Gentile mission but also the ingathering of Israel which, he was persuaded, would follow the completion of the Gentile mission. Because of its history and composition, the church of Rome was uniquely fitted for this ministry. That its members might see the vision and respond to it Paul sent them this letter. 1

Did the Roman Christians rise to the occasion? The witness of history is that they did. From now on, and especially after AD 70, Christendom, which could hitherto be represented by a circle with its centre at Jerusalem, became rather (in Henry Chadwick’s figure) an ellipse with two foci—Jerusalem and Rome. 1

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1 The Circle and the Ellipse, p. 29.
It cannot seriously be denied that most of the features of advanced Catholic ritual have little or no direct warrant in the New Testament. It is frequently urged in support of such ritual that it can be traced in unbroken sequence back to the fourth century. “No sooner did the primitive Church emerge from the centuries of persecution, and acquire freedom from external repression, than it gave full and wonderful expression to its devotional spirit in elaborate and beautiful Symbolic ways.”

Antiquity, however, is no guarantee of apostolic authority, especially as there is a gap of nearly three centuries between apostolic days and the introduction of the greater part of these ritual practices into the Church. Indeed, far from our being able to find Scriptural authority for these practices, all the available evidence on their provenance goes to show that they were taken over into the Church from the various Mystery cults which were so popular throughout the Roman Empire in the early centuries of our era.

The appeal to the Fathers cannot take the place of an appeal to the Apostles. “The most honoured of the Fathers were men whose minds were impregnated by the superstitions of Pagan religion, or the subtleties of Pagan philosophy.... They were ‘near the fountain’ of Christianity, forsooth; yes, but they were nearer still to the cesspool of Paganism. And inquiry will show that it is to the cesspool that we should attribute every perversion of the truth which to-day defaces what is called the Christian religion.”

The proof of the descent of Catholic ritual from the Mysteries is not the object of this paper; for such proof, the reader may consult such works as R. Reitzenstein’s *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, or S. Angus’s *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*. One of the most striking examinations of the subject was made in 1901 by G. H. Pember in *The Church, the Churches and the Mysteries*, the third section of which, “The Mysteries and Catholicism”, was a detailed and convincing demonstration of the Mystery origin of many of the most characteristic features of Romanism in particular. It is a matter for much satisfaction that this section has been reprinted this year.

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1 Throughout this paper the adjective “Catholic” is used, not altogether accurately, to denote those sections of Christendom which most insist upon the term (such as the Roman, Greek, and Anglo-Catholic communions), and which cultivate the advanced ritual here referred to.


3 Sir R. Anderson, *The Bible or the Church*, pp. 42 f. Though not the whole truth about the Fathers, thank God, this statement is certainly true, and it is the relevant portion of the truth about them for the purpose of our present study.

4 It will be said in reply that, even if such an origin can be proved, these pagan practices, when taken over by the Church, were baptised and invested with a new spirit, being redeemed and purified from their pristine associations: “by their fruits ye shall know them, not by their roots!” Our present study is frankly an inquiry into the roots, and we are ready to appraise the fruits independently as we find them. If, however, these fruits involve a greater attention to outward forms and ceremonies than to inward and spiritual realities, the interpolation between God and man of mediators other than the One of God’s appointing, the obscuring of the simplicity that is in Christ, and the worship of the creature instead of, or as well as, the Creator (by whatever technical term that worship may be designated), then we shall conclude that the fruits partake of the nature of the roots—which is what we should have expected in the natural course of things.
(1941) in a volume of Pember’s writings entitled *Mystery Babylon the Great*, edited by his literary executor, Mr. G. H. Lang, and published by Oliphants Ltd.

Not only did Pember trace Catholic ritual back to the Mystery religions, but through these to the ancient ritual of the Babylonians. He was by no means the first to argue for such a connection between Babylon and Rome. The early Protestant identification of the Apocalyptic “Babylon the Great” (Rev. xvii. 5) with the Church of Rome suggested a connection that was more than verbal and metaphorical. About the middle of last century a series of works appeared in Britain which sought to prove that the worship of the Roman Church could be traced back through pagan Rome to the religion of ancient Babylon. The stimulus to this research was probably afforded in large measure by Catholic Emancipation and the development of the Tractarian movement.

One of the earliest of these works was *Lares and Penates* in Cilicia, by William Burckhardt Barker (died 1850). The eighth chapter of this work, entitled “Magi and Monks”, described certain relics of Anatolian religion, from which the author deduced that after the Persian conquest of Babylon, the headquarters of the Babylonian hierarchy were transferred to Pergamum, whence they passed to Rome in 133 B.C. when Attalus III, the last Pergamene king, bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman state.5

The thesis was taken up and developed in 1852 by H. J. Jones, who contributed to the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* a series of four papers, sadly deficient in historical accuracy, entitled “Is Rome Babylon, and Why?”6 But neither Barker nor Jones treated the subject with anything like the thoroughness of the Rev. Alexander Hislop, Free Church Minister at Arbroath, whose book, *The Two Babylons*, appeared in 1857, and speedily ran into several editions. This monument of study and erudition aimed at proving that the Papal system was identical with the worship of Nimrod (or Ninus) and his wife Semiramis.7

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In defence of his thesis Hislop ranged the whole world from ancient days down, to his own, finding everywhere marks of the Babylonian origin of all pagan and Papal worship. To his wide reading he added an etymological inventiveness which traced words all over the globe to

5 I am acquainted with this work of Barker in a posthumous edition of 1853. The argument referred to is on pp. 432 ff. of this edition. The transference of the Babylonian worship to Pergamum is unknown to classical history, which first mentions Pergamum in connection with the Anabasis of the Ten Thousand (401 B.C.). The “palladium of Babylon, the cubic stone” which Barker says the Babylonian priests took with them to Pergamum must be intended to be identified with the black meteorite image of Cybele, taken to Rome in 204 B.C. from Pessinus, according to most historians, but from Pergamum, according to Varro (see below). I am aware of no suggestion in classical literature that this image came from Babylon. The only argument I have seen for a connection between Babylon and Pergamum is in Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, ch. vii. He refers to an oracle of Apollo quoted by Pausanias, x. 15, which addresses Attalus I as τεταρτοκέρος, “bull-horned”, an epithet belonging properly to Bacchus. As Hislop elsewhere identifies Bacchus with Nimrod (ch. ii), he concludes that the Attalids sat in the seat of the priest-kings of Babylon, and “were hailed as the representatives of the old Babylonian god”.

6 These papers were reprinted at Torquay in 1900 as “Prophetic Papers” 31 to 34 “issued by the World-wide Prayer Union for the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ”. It is in this later form that I have made their acquaintance, through the kindness of Mr. G. H. Lang. Their dependence on Barker’s work is clear.

7 For Nimrod see Gen. x. 8 ff. Ninus appears as the eponymous founder of Nineveh in Diodorus ii. 1-20. Diodorus borrowed his account from Ctesias. The historical Semiramis (cf. Herodotus i. 184) was Sammuramat, regent-mother of Adad-nirari IV of Assyria (810-782 B.C.), but most of the romantic tradition of Semiramis handed down by Diodorus and others belongs in origin to the Syrian goddess Atargatis (the same as Ishtar), whose daughter she was fabled to be.
“Chaldee” roots. For him “cannibal” (actually a variation from “Carib”) was Aramaic kahnā Ba’al, “priest of Baal”; the old North European deity Zernebogus, whose name is pure Slavonic and means “black god”, the prototype of the horned and hoofed devil of popular tradition, was Zer-nebo-Gus, which bears some likeness to the Aramaic equivalent of “Seed of the prophet Cush” (in other words, Nimrod, the son of Cush). This kind of argument, of course, has been invalid for something like three-quarters of a century. The science of philology no longer depends on fortuitous similarities. The laws of development and change in language have been observed and recorded, and etymologies must conform to these. Great tracts of Babylonian life and history that were unknown in Hislop’s day have since been brought to light. We now know that the original language of Babylonian religion, far from being what he and his contemporaries called “Chaldee” (which was really Aramaic), was not a Semitic language at all, not even the Semitic tongue now called Akkadian, anciently spoken in the Euphrates and Tigris valleys, but Sumerian, a language with no certain affinity to any other known language, unless to some dialects of the Caucasus region.8

Obviously, therefore, Hislop’s argument stands in need of radical revision in order to be brought up to date. In place of his reliance on the classical authors’ accounts of Babylonian history and worship, eked out by the then very recent discoveries of Layard, we should have to base our arguments on the firsthand information on these subjects which we possess as the result of a century’s archaeological research. It may well be asked how far Hislop’s conclusions would stand the test of such a revision. It is the object of this paper to select, out of the mass of available evidence, a few points which, when joined, seem to form a line connecting Babylonian religion with the ritual carried out to-day throughout great sections of Christendom. These and related facts must be taken into consideration by any writer who would do for readers of the twentieth century what Hislop did for those of the nineteenth.

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II

The connection between the Mysteries and the paganised Christianity of later Roman times is clear enough when the evidence is examined; their connection with early Babylonian religion is less clear, but it is part of our present purpose to indicate some evidence for such a connection. Babylonia had its Mysteries dating back to very early times. According to A. Jeremias (The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East, Eng. trans., p. 83), these Mysteries (nisirtu) were revealed to Enmeduranki,9 one of the antediluvian kings, and jealously guarded by succeeding generations of initiates. That these Mysteries were believed to secure fellowship with the divine, Jeremias inferred from the fact that the ascent of the planet-towers was considered to be well-pleasing to God, and from certain features of the celebration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz.10 The worship of Tammuz is a most fruitful field for research in connection with our present study, although Jeremias himself is an unsafe guide in these matters. He belonged to the now discredited Pan-Babylonian school of comparative religion, which made the mistake of regarding the astral stage in Babylonian religion as the original one, and endeavoured to trace back to this stage practically all the

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8 The Georgian scholar M. Tseretheli shows evidence for a relation between Sumerian and the South Caucasian language-group. F. Hommel held that it was related to Turkish, comparing; e.g., Old Turkish tengere, “god”, with Sum. dingir. See M. Ebert’s Realexikon der Vorgeschichte vi. 261 f., xiii. 125.
9 Enmeduranki, the seventh of the ten Sumerian antediluvian kings, corresponds to the Euedorachos of Berossus and to the Enoch of Scripture. The tradition of his receiving these mysteries lies behind the copious Enoch literature shortly before and after the time of Christ.
10 See Ezek. viii. 14.
religions of mankind, not excepting the Biblical revelation.\textsuperscript{11} The astral stage in Babylonian religion certainly goes back to very early times, but it was in fact superimposed upon a still earlier nature-cult in which the more elemental deities of the earth and the corn were the objects of worship.

The earliest settlers in Babylonia were the Sumerians. They seem to have come from the east (cf. Gen. xi. 2), and to have had cultural contacts with the civilisation uncovered by recent excavation at Mohenjo-daro in the Indus valley. The culture and religion of the Sumerians were taken over by the Semites who entered Babylonia from Arabia. Sumerian religion was originally monotheistic, consisting in the worship of the Skygod An (see the late Professor Langdon’s article, “Monotheism as the Predecessor of Polytheism in Sumerian Religion”, in \textit{The Evangelical Quarterly} for April, 1937). Later it developed a complicated and bewildering multiplicity of deities, ultimately numbering about 5,000. The first step in the direction of polytheism was the worship of the Earth-goddess as the Skygod’s consort. Early pictographs from Ereh associate with him the goddess of that city, Innini, the Queen of heaven,\textsuperscript{12} i.e., the planet Venus. But her worship goes back to the preastral period, when the great Earth Mother was worshipped as the consort of the Sky Father.\textsuperscript{13} Earlier than her astral name Innini is Mami (“Mother”) or \textit{dingir}-Mah (“Great Goddess”), the latter being her title in the Assyrian theogony. At a very early stage she was associated with Tammuz, whose name represents Sumerian \textit{Duynu-zi}, “faithful son”.\textsuperscript{14} Dumuzi comes fifth in the list of the ten antediluvian kings, his name being preceded by the determinative ideogram \textit{dingir}, “god”. The analogy of the Attis and Adonis myths suggests that the original form of the Tammuz story told how a young king, beloved by the Earth-goddess, died for her sake.\textsuperscript{15} Tammuz appears also as the son and brother of the goddess. The Sumerians told how the goddess went to Arallu, the abode of the dead, to seek Dumuzi, and how the earth languished and lay desolate while she was absent there, as it did in the myths of Demeter and Isis.

When the Semites arrived in Babylonia, they came as the heirs of an astral religion differing in several respects from that of the Sumerians. In Sumerian religion the Sun was masculine and the Moon feminine; among the early Semites the Moon was masculine and the Sun feminine. So, too, the planet Venus was originally regarded as a male deity by the Semites;

\textsuperscript{11} The Pan-Babylonians (the name was of their own choosing) set out to explain all religions in terms of astral mythology. Apart from Jeremias, the most famous members of the school were the archaeologist H. Winckler, who founded it, and E. Stucken, who in his three volumes, \textit{4stralmythen} (Leipzig, 1901-7), extended the system to cover all the peoples of the earth. The school received its death-blow from F. Kugler in \textit{Im Bannkreis Babels} (Münster, 1910). English readers will find brief criticisms in W. Schmidt, \textit{The Origin and Growth of Religion}, pp. 91 ff.; E. A. W. Budge, \textit{Rise and Progress of Assyriology}, pp. 280 ff.; A. S. Yahuda, \textit{The Accuracy of the Bible}, 226.

\textsuperscript{12} See Jer. vii. 18; xlv. 17 ff., 25. The primitive pictograph of Innini in her original role of Earth Mother was a serpent coiling round a staff, which appears later as the symbol of Aesculapius, and is well-known to-day as the badge of the R.A.M.C. Others may decide what connection, if any, this has with the brazen serpent of Numbers xxii. 8 f.

\textsuperscript{13} “Sky Father” is also the literal translation of Sanskrit Dyauspītī, Gk. Δύαυς πατήρ, Lat. Iuppiter, \textit{Diespiter}, etc., forms which indicate a primitive Indo-European monotheism similar to the Sumerian.

\textsuperscript{14} According to S. H. Langdon, \textit{Semitic Mythology} (\textit{Mythology of All Races}, v.), p. 346. To this important work by Langdon, I am indebted for most of the information about Sumerian and Semitic mythology in this paper. Dumuzi appears as Daozos in the king-list of Berossus.

\textsuperscript{15} For the many widespread forms of this myth see J. G. Frazer, “Adonis, Attis, Osiris” (\textit{The Golden Bough}, Part iv).
but the Semites of Babylonia (the Akkadians), in adopting the Sumerian theology, retained their own name for the planet (Ishtar), but changed the sex, so that Ishtar became a female deity, and took over all the functions of the Sumerian Innini, both as Earth Mother and as the planet Venus, the Queen of heaven. The Sumerian influence was so powerful over the territory of the northern and western Semites that the change of sex was imposed on the deities of the Sun, Moon, and Venus in all these parts. In South Arabia, however, the primitive Semitic cult was preserved, with the female Sun, the male Moon, and the male Venus as principal deities.

The Sumerian myth of Dumuzi and Innini appears in an Akkadian form as the story of Tammuz and Ishtar. Like Innini, Ishtar goes to the underworld in search of Tammuz, in order to effect his resurrection, and all love forsakes the earth until her return. In the city of Babylon the priesthood devised

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a mystery-play, or ἡρῴν λόγος, as the Greeks would have called it, dealing with the death and resurrection of the local god Bel-Marduk, and drawn from the analogy of the Tammuz myth. In Syria Tammuz was known as Adoni (“my lord”), Graecised as Adonis, and the chief seat of his worship was Gebal (Byblos). It is significant that, according to Plutarch, it was to Byblos that Isis went in search of the body of Osiris. This argues a connection between the Osiris and Tammuz myths, and such a connection is definitely asserted by Wallis Budge, who assures us that “the myth of Bel-Marduk and the myth of Osiris are, mutatis mutandis, identical.... The substantial identity of the two myths is proved by their contents, but there is evidence, of a philological character, which suggests that Bel-Marduk and Osiris are one and the same god” (Babylonian Life and History, p. xv).

It is worth noting that Hislop’s identification of Tammuz with Nimrod rests on a more secure basis than he knew. Nimrod the founder of cities is, according to Langdon, identical with the Sumerian god Ninurta (whose name also appears in the form Nimurta); and “like all gods who were ‘sons’, Ninurta was originally also Tammuz, son of the Earth-mother, and died each year with the perishing vegetation.... The cult of Ninurta spread to the West in early times, and a temple of Ninurta at Gebal is mentioned in the fifteenth century [B.C.]… it is obvious that not only the Adonis cult of Gebal was borrowed from the Tammuz cult of Sumer, but that Ninurta... has a direct connection with the Sumerian and Phoenician cults of the dying god” (Semitic Mythology, pp. 131 ff.).

Langdon shows reason to believe that the Ninurta myth influenced Indo-Iranian mythology. And the widespread cult of the Mother-goddess in modern India, which excavations in the Indus valley enable us to trace back to Chalcolithic times, may also have a Sumerian origin. But it is in the West that we find clearest traces of Sumerian influence: “there is no doubt but

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16 Ishtar is the Babylonian form of the goddess’s name. It corresponds to S. Arabian ‘Athtar and Phoenician ‘Ashstart (Graecised Astarte). In the O.T. form ‘Ashtoreth the vowels of bosheth, “shame”, have replaced the original ones of the last two syllables. The Greek forms Atargatis and Derketo found as names of the Syrian goddess represent ‘Athtar-’Ate, in which the S. Arabian form is coupled with ‘Ate, the Aramaic name of the Mother-goddess. The word Asherah, so frequent in the O.T., is shown by the Ras Shamra documents to have been the name of another goddess, distinct from ‘Ashtart.

17 De Iside et Osiride, 15 ff.

18 See Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilisation, by Sir John Marshall (reviewed by W. Fulton in The Expository Times, xlv. pp. 102 ff.). At a much later date we find the Earth Mother (Prthivi) addressed in the Veda as the consort of the Sky Father.
that this entire cult of a dying god who descends yearly to the shades of the nether world, mourned with annual wailings by women, and in imitation of whose supreme sacrifice his priests emasculated themselves in the cults of Phoenicia, Phrygia, and Rome, is either wholly of Sumerian and Babylonian origin, or profoundly influenced by the Tammuz cult” (Langdon, op. cit., p. 76).

III

Throughout Asia Minor we find from early times abundant evidence of the cult of a great Mother-goddess. Her most primitive name was Ma, by which she was known in historical times in Cappadocia: “Ma, the Mother of the gods”, as she is called in an inscription. With this name we may compare Mami and Mah, which we have already mentioned. Elsewhere in Asia Minor she received names from various centres of her worship—Cybele, Agdistis, Pessinuntica, the Idaean Mother. At Ephesus we find her later worshipped as the many-breasted Artemis, an altogether different deity from the virgin huntress who bore the same name among the Greeks. The Greek Demeter (“Earth Mother”), celebrated in the Eleusinian Mysteries, was Anatolian in origin according to Sir William Ramsay (Asianic Elements in Greek Civilisation, p. 81). The Anatolian goddess was also identified at an early date with the Cretan Rhea.

In Phrygia Attis plays to Cybele the part that Tammuz plays to Innini in the Sumerian myth. The Attis worship presents so many features in common with the Tammuz and Adonis cults that a common origin is almost certain. Thus Ed. Meyer speaks of “the close relation, indeed identity, of the cult and saga of the Adonis of Byblos with the Attis cult”. Meyer ascribes this identity to Anatolian influence on Syria. That there was Anatolian influence on Syria and even Babylonia at an early date is true: the Hittite king Hattusilis I conquered Aleppo and raided Babylon about 1800 B.C., and about two centuries later we find another Hittite king, Telepinus, reigning as far south as Damascus. But long before our earliest evidence for Anatolian influence in Syria and Babylonia, we find clear traces of Sumero-Akkadian influence not only in Syria, but in Anatolia as well.

The invasion of Asia Minor by the Indo-European Hittites about 2000 B.C. seems to have put an end for the time being to a long-standing occupation of the eastern part of that peninsula by Babylonians and Assyrians. Long before the reign of Sargon of Akkad (c. 2650 B.C.) there was established at Kanes in Cappadocia (modern Kültêpe) a Babylonian commercial settlement. When this settlement was threatened by

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19 The votive inscription Μητρὶ Θεῶν Μα is quoted by A. Rapp in W. H. Roscher’s Lexikon der griechischen and römischen Mythologie, ii, col. 1652.
20 See Acts xix. 24 ff.
21 E.g., Euripides Bacchae 58 f., Lucretius ii. 600 ff., Lucian de dea Syria 15, Strabo x, 3. 15.
23 See the article “The Coming of the Hittites into Asia by B. Hrozný in The Evangelical Quarterly for April, 1930.
the surrounding peoples, Sargon marched to its aid. A number of cuneiform tablets found in this part of Asia Minor and dated c. 2200-2000 B.C. witness to the continuance of such settlements several centuries after Sargon.

So far-reaching was the Sumero-Akkadian influence in Anatolia in the third millennium B.C. that the cuneiform script, which developed out of the picture-writing devised originally by the Sumerians for their own language, and which was adopted by their Semitic neighbours for a language for which it was by no means so well suited, was also adopted for the languages of Asia Minor. When the Indo-European Hittites arrived, they took it over for their language also, and in the archives of the Hittite Empire discovered at Boghaz-koi no fewer than eight languages have been deciphered, all written in cuneiform, with complete Sumerian and Akkadian words and syllables interspersed among the native words. The magic, astrology, and ritual of Asia Minor, as revealed by cuneiform texts, were thoroughly Babylonian in origin. The Hittites took over names of deities from Babylonia and applied them to their own deities. Thus Hattusilis III (c. 1295-1260 B.C.) worshipped as his patroness a goddess of the Hittite city Samuhas, whose name is given as Ishtar. Hittite religion also had its dying god Telepinus, and its sacred marriage between the thunder-god Teshup and the Mother-goddess. Garstang has pointed out the resemblance between the Hittite sacred marriage and that depicted for us by Lucian at Syrian Hierapolis, between the Syrian goddess Atargatis (the same as Ishtar) and her consort Kombabos. 24 We may also compare the description of the Phrygian Mysteries given by Ramsay in *Asiatic Elements in Greek Civilisation*, pp. 294 ff., and the part played by the sacred marriage (ἰερὸς γάμος) in Old Attic Comedy.

We do not, of course, exclude the possibility of the cult of a Mother-goddess having existed in Anatolia before the beginning of Babylonian influence in that land, but whether it did or not, Anatolia had come so thoroughly under Babylonian influence by the time that we first have any certain acquaintance with its history and religion that we may safely follow Langdon in tracing back to a Sumerian source the Mother-goddess and dying god cults as we find them in Anatolia in historical times.

Babylonian and Assyrian influence in Anatolia, only temporarily and not entirely checked by the Hittite Empire, was

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resumed after the weakening of that Empire, and lasted until the sixth century B.C. When the Persian Empire succeeded the Babylonian, and organised into an administrative unity all the territory between the Aegean and Libya on the west and India on the east, there was ample opportunity for intercourse between far-distant peoples, and a religious fusion resulted. This fusion was fostered by the impartial attitude of the Great King himself, who, though personally a Zoroastrian, was solemnly invested with the sovereignty at Babylon as the chosen of Bet-Marduk, and by the Hebrew prophet was acclaimed as the anointed of Jehovah (Isa. xlvi. i). With the extension of the Persian Empire the cult of Mithras was introduced to the west. This deity, of Indo-Iranian origin, first appears as worshipped by the king of Mitanni on a Boghaz-koi tablet of c. 1500 B.C. In the Veda he is celebrated in his Sanskrit name Mitra as one of the great gods; in the Zend-Avesta he appears as the spirit of light on the side of Ahura-mazda. Later, as the god of fertilising warmth, he came to be regarded as the consort of

24 Lucian *de dea Syria*, 19 ff. Kombabos is probably the same in origin as Humbaba of the Gilgamesh epic. For the comparison of the Hittite and Syrian rites cf. J. Garstang in Hammerton’s *Encyclopaedia of Modern Knowledge*, iii. p. 1561 (in an article, “Hittite History revealed by the Spade”), and elsewhere.
the Indo-Iranian Mother-goddess Anahita, who was identified in Anatolia with the Cappadocian Ma. The persistence of the Mithras cult in Anatolia may be seen in the first century B.C. in the name Mithradates, borne by so many of the kings of Pontus. In Anatolia there took place some degree of fusion between the Mithras and Cybele cults. From the latter the former took over the rite of the *taurobolium*,

25 to which regenerating efficacy was ascribed in the later Roman Empire.

“In this fusion of religions” under the Persian Empire, says W. R. Halliday, “the dominant influence was naturally exercised by Babylon, which had for long been the leader of civilisation in the Middle East. It was from the Chaldaeans no doubt that the worship of Mithras first acquired its elaborate astral features” (*The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*, p. 285).

IV

A primitive connection with Asia Minor was rooted in Roman tradition. The legend that the ancestors of the Romans were Aeneas and his companions who escaped from Troy appears in Naevius (235 B.C.), and is immortalised in Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Aeneas, according to the legend, brought to Italy the Lares and Penates of Troy (*Aen*. ii. 293), including, according to other accounts, the Palladium, which was kept in the temple of Vesta (Ovid, *Tristia*, iii. 1. 29).

The truth underlying this legend is to be found in the Anatolian origin of the Etruscans. Herodotus says that they came from Lydia (i. 94), and his account is supported by recent research. Their Greek name Τυρσηνοί, earlier Τυρσανοί points to their identity with the Tursha, who formed part of the coalition of sea-peoples which in 1221 B.C. attacked Egypt and was repulsed by Merneptah. The Etruscan settlement in Italy was an incident in the general dispersal of peoples from the Eastern Mediterranean around that time. That it is to be connected with the Aeneas legend is evident from the fact that the Fall of Troy (dated by the Parian Marble 1209 B.C.) was another incident in the same movement. Philology lends its support to archaeology in pointing to Anatolia as the home of the Etruscans. Little enough is known about the Etruscan language, but we know enough to trace a resemblance to Lydian and other Anatolian languages and to a language found on inscriptions in Lemnos.

26 Rome fell for a time under Etruscan domination. The very name Rome is Etruscan, and Ramsay traces it back to an Anatolian root (*Asianic Elements in Greek Civilisation*, p. 89). Etruscan religion exerted a deep influence on Roman religion. Among the Etruscan deities, a prominent place was taken by the Mother-goddess Thufftha (also the goddess of night and of the dead), who doubtless was identical originally with the Anatolian Mother-goddess.

Among other Oriental features of Etruscan worship must be mentioned divination, especially by the inspection of the liver. This inspection was carried out by *haruspices*, who persisted

25 The word originally referred to the sports of the bullring so characteristic of the Minoan civilisation in Crete. The Mithraic rite, however, consisted of bathing in the blood of a sacrificed bull; the devotee thus became in *aeternum renatus* and received the title *tauroboliatus*.

26 In the light of these Lemnian contacts the statement in Thucydides iv. 109 is interesting, that Tyrrenians (Etruscans) settled in Lemnos at one time. Thucydides identifies them with the Pelasgians.

well into imperial times. The famous bronze liver of Piacenza, divided into zones for the guidance of *haruspices*, is the chief monument of this form of Etruscan divination, and it reminds us of similar models found in Anatolia and Babylonia, where divination by liver-inspection, was also practised (cf. Ezek. xxi. 21). That the terminology of the Anatolian liver-models is Babylonian points clearly to the source of this method of divination.  

The first direct contact between the Roman state and Asia Minor known to Roman historians took place in 204 B.C. At that time Hannibal was still in Italy, and a Sibylline oracle advised the Romans that he could be driven out if they fetched from Pessinus in Asia Minor the Great Mother of the gods. An embassy was sent to Attalus I of Pergamum, who facilitated their quest, and the “Great Idaean Mother of the gods” was brought home to Italy in the form of a black stone, no doubt one of the many meteorites which had divine honours paid to them in the ancient world, such as the Trojan Palladium and the image of Ephesian Artemis (Acts xix. 35). In Rome the image was installed in the temple of Victory until a suitable shrine of its own could be provided. An annual festival, the Megalesia, was instituted to commemorate her arrival and celebrated from the 4th to 10th April. Under the Empire we find another festival celebrated in her honour, from 15th to 27th March. This festival is first mentioned by Lucan (i. 599), and therefore was probably instituted in the reign of Claudius, who appears to have patronised the worship of Cybele. The high spot of the March festival was the Hilaria, a carnival (*feriae statuiae*) in honour of the goddess, celebrated on the 25th. The coincidence with Lady Day is significant.

The Cybele cult in Phrygia was wild and orgiastic. The Phrygian immigrants found it in Anatolia when they arrived there from Thrace, and into it they introduced elements from the even wilder worship of their own deity Sabazios. In Rome the wildness of the cult was considerably modified, but its character could not but be offensive to the staid Roman mind. Cybele, however, or the *Magna Mater*, as she came to be called in Rome, did justify her presence there, for shortly after her arrival Hannibal was driven from Italy and conquered. Her cult, therefore, with its train of Galli, the effeminate priests who had made themselves eunuchs in imitation of Attis, had to be tolerated, but until the reign of Claudius no Roman citizen might become her priest. Yet the wild sensuousness of the cult appealed to those emotions which were but little catered for in the dull state religion, of Rome. That there was a craving for something more enthusiastic than the state religion is shown by the popularity of the worship of Bacchus, which was rigorously suppressed in 186 B.C. Bacchus or Dionysus was also a deity of Anatolian origin, who under the name Iacchus was associated with Demeter in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

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28 D. Randall-MacIver (*The Etruscans*, p. 125) says straight out that this Etruscan divination “is certainly derived from Chaldaea”. For the Anatolian liver-models see p. 140 of the section “Kleinasien” contributed by A. Gotze to *Kulturgeschichte des alten Orients* (Munich, 1933; one of the many volumes in Iwan von Müller’s *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*). This section by Götze is one of the best accounts available of the early history of Asia Minor, including the Babylonian influence on that land.

29 The earliest account of the coming of Cybele to Rome is in Livy xxi. 11, 14. Cf. also Ovid, *Fasti* iv. 179 ff., with Sir J. G. Frazer’s notes. Varro (*de lingua Latina* vi. 15) brings the image, nor from Pessinus, but from the Megalesia, a shrine outside the wall of Pergamum.

30 The authority for the statement about Claudius is the sixth century writer Joannes Lydus. Reasons for believing it are given by F. Cumont in *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain* (3rd edition, Paris, 1929), pp. 87 ff. This book is a most valuable contribution to our subject. There is an, English translation from an earlier edition, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Kegan Paul, 1911).
The Anatolian Mother-goddess was introduced to Rome in another form in 82 B.C., when Sulla on his return from the East brought with him the cult of the Cappadocian Ma. This cult, however, never attained great vogue in Rome, and was soon incorporated in the Cybele cult. With the rise of the Empire the Cybele cult became more reputable. Augustus tells us that he built Cybele a temple on the Palatine (Res Gestae Diui Augusti iv. 8), and after Caligula’s patronage of Isis worship, Claudius could do no less for one who was by now a naturalised Roman goddess of two and a half centuries’ standing, and so he removed all the restrictions which had hitherto been placed on the worship of Cybele.

When the Roman dominion began to extend to Asia, Asiatic influence was bound to increase in Rome. The first Asiatic province was formed from the kingdom of Pergamum, when Attalus III died in 133 B.C. and made the Roman state his legatee. In Asia kings were revered as divine. An exactly similar veneration of the Roman Republic was difficult, in the absence of one man in whom the divinity might be focused, although thirty-three years earlier the Bithynian king Prusias II addressed the Roman senate as ἄρχων (Polybius xxx. 16). When an Emperor arose, however, here was something which the Orient could understand.

In Julius Caesar for the first time since the founding of the Republic (traditionally dated 509 B.C.) the Romans had a man who was for all practical purposes a priest-king, though he refused the title rex. In 63 B.C., as Pontifex Maximus, he became head of the state religion, and his title of perpetual Imperator, granted in 45 B.C., marked him out as the supreme ruler. But Oriental kings were accorded divine honours; so must it be with Caesar. His statue was erected in the temple of Quirinus (the deified Romulus, founder of Rome), bearing the inscription DEO INVICTO. But the most significant of his religious innovations was the inauguration of the worship of Venus Genetrix. This was not the old Roman Venus, but a new creation. Aphrodite or Venus was the legendary mother of Aeneas, and to Iulus, the son of Aeneas, Caesar’s family, the gens Iulia, traced its origin. In the original form of the story the mother of Aeneas was probably the Mother-goddess of Asia Minor. Caesar’s introduction of her worship emphasised her rank as the divine Mother, with the corollary that he himself was the divine Son.

Caesar went too far, and offended Roman sentiment, with fatal results to himself. Augustus discovered how to secure even greater power without infringing the letter of the Roman constitution. He was not accorded divine honours at Rome until his death. But in the East he was venerated as a god during his lifetime, and it is significant that it was in Pergamum, the
old capital of Attalus, that the first temple and priesthood of the cult of “Rome and the Emperor” were instituted, from 29 B.C. onwards (Tac. Ann. iv. 37).

Until the reign of Gratian (A.D. 375-383) the Roman Emperors continued to bear the title Pontifex Maximus, even after the Christianisation of the Empire. Gratian renounced it, considering it unfitting for a Christian Emperor. In view of the pre-eminence of the Roman see, it is not surprising that the Bishops of Rome were given or assumed the ancient title which the Emperor had vacated, especially as pontifex was by this time in current use for a Christian priest or bishop. The fact that the Papal title “Supreme Pontiff” is pagan in origin proves little in itself; but we shall see that the kinship of the Papal system with the religion of pagan Rome is more than merely titular.

VI

We have already traced the progress of Mithraism from Persia to Anatolia. According to Plutarch (Pompey, 24), it was introduced to the Roman Empire by the pirates whom Pompey settled in Cilicia in 67 B.C. after clearing them from the Mediterranean. Mithraism, with its offer of eternal regeneration by the shedding of blood in the taurobolium, became very popular throughout the Empire, and of all the cults current in the early centuries of our era was the most formidable rival to Christianity. Mithraism had its Mysteries, with seven stages of initiation (evidently connected with the seven planets, and of Babylonian origin), its love-feasts, its supreme pontiff, its celibate priests and consecrated virgins. A detailed study of the debt of Catholic ritual to Mithraism yields some remarkable results. Another of its legacies was the date of Christmas, for the 25th December was observed as the birthday of Mithras (Dies Natalis Invicti Solis) long before it was adopted as the conventional date of our Saviour’s birth. It was essentially a man’s religion, and was carried by soldiers to the farthest bounds of the Empire. The military element in its technical vocabulary is striking; the initiates were the militia dei, their initiatory oath the sacramentum (the word originally indicated a soldier’s oath of obedience). Such military terms are also found in the vocabulary of Bacchus and Isis worship, and even in the New Testament the Christian is compared to a good soldier of Christ Jesus who fights against spiritual foes with heavenly armour; but in later times. much of the language of the Mystery Religions made its way into the terminology of the Church. Clement of Alexandria, as a counterblast to these religions, used many of their technical terms in a Christian sense. Such an adaptation of a pagan vocabulary had obvious dangers. “Even in a writer like Clement one is continually struck with how dim, at points, becomes the dividing line between Christian Platonism and pagan religious philosophy” (Halliday, op. cit., p. 251). The language of Neoplatonism was indebted to that of the Mysteries, and to Neoplatonic language much of the scholastic vocabulary of the Middle Ages can be traced, through Victorinus Afer, the translator of Plotinus into Latin.  

Further contributions to the religious melange of the Empire were made by Isis worship, which survived successive attempts to expel it from Rome; by the cult of the Syrian goddess Atargatis, which Nero cultivated for a time (Suetonius, Nero, 86); by the followers of Mani,

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35 Cf. E. Benz, Marius Victorinus and die Entwicklung der abendländischen Willensmetaphysik (Stuttgart, 1932); P. Henry, Plotin et l’Occident (Louvain, 1934).
who devoted twelve years to the traditions of the wise men of Babylon, according to the legend, after he received the divine command to separate himself from his surroundings;\(^{36}\) by the Emperor Elagabalus (A.D. 218-222), priest of the Baal of Emesa in Syria, who tried to elevate his deity to the supreme place in the Roman pantheon, and by Aurelian, who after his conquest of Palmyra in A.D. 273 brought to Rome the worship of the Palmyrene Baal.

All these rituals—Anatolian, Egyptian, Syrian, Persian—took the form of Mysteries, in which the great events of their respective mythologies, the ἱεροὶ λόγοι, were presented dramatically to the worshippers. Their close contact with each other produced a considerable degree of syncretism, the more readily because there was a basic similarity between them all, which is not surprising if they can all be traced back to a common origin. The primal Mother-goddess who came to be worshipped under so many differing forms and names resumed in this syncretism her pristine unity. The words are famous

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in which Isis reveals herself to her devotee Lucius (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* xi. 4):—

> I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of all that are in hell, the principal of them that dwell in heaven, manifested alone and under one form of all the gods and goddesses. At my will the planets of the sky, the wholesome winds of the seas, and the lamentable silences of hell are disposed; my name, my divinity is adored throughout all the world, in divers manners, in variable customs, and by many names. For by the Phrygians, the first of all men, I am called Pessinuntica, the mother of the gods; by the autochthonous Athenians, Cercopian Minerva; by the sea-girt Cyprians, Paphian Venus; by the arrow-bearing Cretans, Dictyinnian, Diana; by the trilingual Sicilians, Stygian Proserpine; by the Eleusinians, their ancient goddess Ceres; by some Juno, by others Bellona; by some Hecate, by others Rhamnusia; and principally both sort of the Ethiopians which dwell in the east and are lightened by the sun’s morning rays, and the Egyptians, who excel in, all manner of ancient doctrine and worship me in their proper ceremonies, call me by my true name, Queen Isis.

This composite Mother-goddess took a powerful hold on the imagination of the peoples of the Empire. With the Christianisation of the Roman state, she ceased gradually to be worshipped as Cybele or Isis, but her worship continued to flourish none the less. In *The Evangelical Quarterly* for October, 1934, Professor C. B. Lewis in an article, “Survivals of a Pagan Cult”, argues convincingly that the Cybele cult survived in the poetry of the troubadours in the veneration for “the loved one far away”. Nor can it be seriously disputed that the worship (hyperdulia, to use the technical term) of the Virgin Mary in many of its features is but the continuation of the Mother-goddess cult under another name. We have already noted the coincidence of her festival on Lady Day with the *Hilaria Matris Deum*. “It is interesting to note in passing,” says Dr. T. R. Glover, “that the land which introduced the Mother of the Gods to the Roman world, also gave the name Ὁσιοτόκος (Mother of God) to the Church”,\(^{37}\) and again, “There is evidence to

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\(^{36}\) A. Jeremias, *The O.T. in the Light of the Ancient East*, p. 84, n. 2.

\(^{37}\) The title Theotokos received official ecclesiastical sanction at the council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, but it had been used incidentally before that, especially by the Alexandrian Fathers, from Origen onwards.
show that the Madonna in Southern Italy is really Isis renamed" (The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire, pp. 21, 23). The title “Star of the Sea” by which the Virgin is addressed in many hymns was given to Isis by her sailor devotees in the Roman Empire. And other parallels will occur to those who read the following account of Isis worship by Dr. W. R. Inge: “her worship… was organised upon a plan very like that of the Catholic Church. There was a kind of pope, with white-robed shaven priests. The toilet of the ‘Madonna’ was attended to every day. Daily matins and evensong were sung in her temples. There was a great festival in the autumn, at which the death of Osiris-Serapis was lamented, while there was rejoicing over his resurrection”. The one discrepancy between this ritual and that of the Catholic Church is the date of the death and resurrection of the god. This fell in the autumn in Egypt, because the chronological framework of the Osiris myth in that land was based on the rise and fall of the Nile. Elsewhere, however, the death and resurrection ceremonies took place at the spring equinox. In Rome, for example, the death of Attis was celebrated on the 24th March, the dies sanguinis. Many elements in the Mass and in the Easter celebrations belong not to the Christian worship of apostolic days, but to the Mystery representations of the death and resurrection of the Dying God.

It is no part of our present purpose to give an account of the details of the Mystery ritual, or to examine its relation to Catholic ritual, but rather to provide an outline of Prolegomena to such a study.

“The truth that catholicism arose from a transformation of primitive Christianity in the atmosphere of the pagan mysteries is often denied”, says the Bishop of Birmingham, “but the known facts are decisive. It is to be regretted that detailed evidence is not as full as we could wish, inasmuch as documents describing the mystery-beliefs have largely perished. Their destruction was probably deliberate. Yet enough remains to show that the beliefs of Catholicism repudiated by a sound instinct at the Reformation were precisely those mystery-religion accretions which were alien from the moral and spiritual simplicity of Christ’s teaching.”

38 Similarly Frazer: “Ancient Egypt may have contributed its share to the gorgeous symbolism of the Catholic Church as well as to the pale abstractions of her theology. Certainly in art the figure of Isis suckling the infant Horus is so like that of the Madonna and child that it has sometimes received the adoration of ignorant Christians” (The Golden Bough, one vol. ed., p. 383).
39 Cf. Frazer, ibid.
41 E. W. Barnes, Scientific Theory and Religion, p. 631. That which guided the Reformers in rejecting these accretions was more than a “sound instinct”; it was the settled principle of admitting nothing that was contrary to “God’s Word written.”. See also Harnack’s History of Dogma, Vol. iv, pp. 268 ff., the chapter entitled “The Mysteries and Kindred Subjects”; E. Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church (Hibbert Lectures, 1888), Lecture X, “The Influence of the Mysteries upon Christian Usages”.

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