

impair. Otherwise hope would wrongly be made the basis of faith, instead of its fruit and unfolding.

Thus we return to the note struck at the outset, a note of nearly complete agnosticism. Sin, while any sin remains, entails suffering and exclusion, for we worship One with whom evil cannot dwell. Whether it will or will not remain for ever, we cannot know ; nor is there reason to think that on earth we shall ever know. No one certainly is in a position to affirm that there must be those who eternally remain unsaved. This would be much more than to admit the possibility of eternal sin ; it would plant intrinsic moral dualism at the heart of things.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS : A REPLY.

DR. KIRSOPP LAKE, in the June number of the EXPOSITOR, has given us a suggestive and interesting survey of the problem of the Epistle to the Philippians as it affects the authenticity, integrity and date of the letter.

It is pure gain that in such a difficult question, dependent for its solution on subtle distinctions and complex considerations, the writer should be dispassionate in his dealing with the material and impartial in his presentation of the critical views held with regard to it. This, in the view of the present writer, is no small part of the merit of the author's larger work on *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*. He lays the material before his readers, tells them what expert critics think of it and what theories they deduce from it, indicating at the same time how far he himself goes along with them ; but always leaving, and even stimulating, the student to form his own conclusions.

The present writer is thus conscious of a very real debt of gratitude to the Professor, but he finds himself at variance

with much that is advanced in the present paper, while he is strengthened in his belief that the traditional view as to the integrity and place of origin of this Epistle is not dethroned by such arguments as those brought forward before our notice with such perspicuity by the writer.

Though I think that Dr. Lake's general considerations on the question of authenticity are misleading and the analogy, or rather comparison, of St. Paul and Napoleon inapplicable, it opens up too wide a subject to be dealt with in this paper ; and I wish to confine myself to the problems of integrity and date. And I can best state my objections to the line of argument on these two points by taking them in the reverse order adopted by the author.

Taking, then, the *date* of the Epistle as it is conditioned by the place of origin, we have to choose between Rome and Ephesus. And this raises the important question of imprisonment at the latter place. Are we in a position to admit the probability of St. Paul having been imprisoned there ? For my part, I think that the arguments and facts brought forward in its favour fail to secure for themselves any sure standing ground or to weaken the case for the traditional view.

As is well known, the fact most relied upon to justify belief in an imprisonment at Ephesus is the statement of St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 32) that he "had fought with beasts at Ephesus." Hitherto this statement has been interpreted generally, though not universally, as a metaphorical reference to his cruel ill-treatment at the hands of the people of that city. But if it can be accepted literally we are clearly bound so to receive it. But can we ? The obvious hindrance to our so doing lies in the fact of St. Paul's Roman citizenship. Dr. Lake would meet the difficulty by assuming that St. Paul in this case may not have been able to prove his status of citizenship.

To myself the plea seems an argument of despair. In all the cases mentioned the claim of St. Paul is never challenged, and all that we know of the position of affairs at Ephesus point to the unlikelihood of any such difficulty occurring there. At that time only heinous crimes were punished by exposure in the arena. What ground have we for supposing that by any ingenuity of his enemies an accusation of that extreme nature could be trumped up against him? If, moreover, they had done so, is it conceivable that the inveterate enemies of the Apostle at Jerusalem would have been ignorant or silent about it? What better support could they have had for their own accusations against him, or what more likely to prejudice him in the eyes of such men as Felix and Festus than the record of a trial and condemnation to the arena at Ephesus? Added to this we need to remember that Ephesus was no small isolated place, and communication with Jerusalem, Antioch or even Tarsus no very great matter in such a contingency. We have to do with a legal process not the action of an irresponsible functionary covering a few critical hours. Roman officials had to walk warily, and it would have required a fearless, if not reckless, man to disregard the claim to citizenship once lodged by the accused, and to condemn him to the arena without first according full opportunity to substantiate his claim. In the face of all these most unlikely contingencies we happen to know that St. Paul could not have run the risk of arbitrary treatment at the hands of a despotic official in this particular place since his circle of friends included men so high placed as the Asiarchs of the district.

Nor can the silence of St. Luke be so lightly passed over as Dr. Lake would have us think. Certainly "St. Luke does not tell us everything," but only those things which he regarded as suitable for his purpose. But he is wonderfully consistent in the pursuit of his plan, and most

readers would agree that this would naturally find a place in that plan as defined by Harnack.

As Dr. Lake thinks that St. Paul's phrase need not involve more than that he incurred the risk of being thrown to the beasts, he would have been on more sure ground if he had placed the Apostle's escape in the evidence which he was able to secure to prove his citizenship.

To the silence of St. Luke about this imprisonment must be added that of St. Paul himself in both his address at Miletus and in his second letter to the Corinthians. To the proud sensitive nature of the Roman citizen of Tarsus the lowest depth of humiliation had been reached when, in the night, he allowed himself to be let down in a basket from the walls of Damascus to escape the hands of the governor Aretas. Is it not strange that if this far greater indignity and degradation had been inflicted on him that he should have passed it over in silence ?

A further question arises as to whether any such accusation as would render the Apostle liable to be thrown to the beasts could be spoken of as "bonds in Christ," or could have been alluded to in so general a manner to the Philippians without explanation.

Apart from the question of imprisonment the references to the financial succour sent to him by the Philippians point rather to Rome than Ephesus. The statements fit the circumstances of the former better than the latter. There had been a cessation of gifts with a considerable lapse of time intervening before they had been "revived," and St. Paul tactfully seizes on the lack of opportunity as the explanation. So far as we are acquainted with them, the condition of things at Ephesus contradicts, while that of Rome supports, the situation. In the former place the Apostle had friends of good position, moving in a social circle far removed from poverty ; but he reminded his

disciples that he had not availed himself of their aid, but had worked with his own hands to supply his necessities.¹ Ephesus was no great distance from Philippi and means of intercourse between the two places easy; nor was the interval of time sufficient to allow of a cessation and revival of kindly intercourse in the ordinary sense of the words. But in Rome the exact opposite was the case; he was a prisoner, far removed from friends, dependent for eighteen months on the chance kindnesses of strangers like Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 16) and cut off during the long winter months from opportunity of communication with his Asiatic and Macedonian friends.

Thus, while an imprisonment is essential to the Ephesian theory, even if the difficulties surrounding it are overcome, others of no small significance remain.

While the references to the Prætorian Guard and to Cæsar's Household can be no longer regarded as decisive factors in the case, the presumption in favour of Rome has still to be reckoned with. And it is pressing the new facts too far to say that the statement with regard to the soldiery would suit Ephesus better than Rome because of the great disparity of numbers in the two camps. St. Paul does not say that he had become personally known to the whole Prætorian Guard, but that "his bonds in Christ," i.e. the circumstances of his detention and the cause of it, "his case," as we should say, had been made manifest throughout the whole Guard. This would be no exaggerated statement if in the course of eighteen months one in every twenty, or even ten, of the garrison had been brought into personal contact with him. Through these it might fairly be said that his case had become known throughout the camp of 9,000 men.

¹ How could he have said this if at the very time he had accepted help from others?

To pass now to the question of integrity doubts about which are raised chiefly by the abrupt transition of thought at chapter iii. 2. The impugners of the integrity of the letter make use here of a geological figure and speak of a new "seam" appearing at this place. But not very happily, for they have to admit that they cannot trace the seam or say where it ends, the fact being that the original strata immediately crop up again. There is, indeed, an unusually abrupt and vehement outburst against his opponents on the part of the writer, but it is at once followed by a passage comparable, for the spiritual elevation of its thought, with anything that St. Paul has written. The real problem here is to find some explanation of this outburst and the cause for the warning against "dogs," "evil-workers," and the "concision." To say that the passage (iii. 2-iv. 4) is an interpolation is no solution of the difficulty, for the sharp interruption of the writer's subject could not have been less apparent to the editor than to present readers, so that its insertion becomes only the more unintelligible. The brief exhortation could have been introduced far more appositely in more than one other place in the Epistle.

That the passage is thoroughly Pauline is admitted on all hands, and the explanation which finds most favour is that it is a piece cut out from a genuine second letter to the same Church. Dr. Lake, following Hausrath, inclines towards this method of cutting the knot; and he supports the theory by adducing both external and internal evidence, but depends chiefly on a general consideration which in his opinion favours the possibility of a telescoping of two authentic letters into one.

His argument from the analogous case of 2 Corinthians vi. 14-vii. 1 may be dismissed in a few words. To bring forward this other extremely intricate problem is in reality merely to create a prepossession in favour of a probability here and

no more. But there is no similarity in the two cases. The atmosphere of the two Churches, as well as their relationship to the Apostle were totally dissimilar. Strife, rivalries and confusion within, together with disputed authority, denunciation, estrangements and reconciliations, were the distinguishing marks of the former; whereas unbroken allegiance, with steady spiritual progress and mutual confidence, even to affection, pervaded the latter. While confusion in the literary remains of the Church of Corinth would faithfully reflect the early Christian life and apostolic intercourse there, so simplicity and directness would those of the latter.

After all, the combination of incomplete parts of distinct letters is only a working hypothesis for getting over an insoluble difficulty in the particular case of Corinth, and it would be altogether precarious to base any explanation of a single passage in a letter of an entirely different complexion on that.

With regard to the external support of the theory Dr. Lake is altogether unfortunate in his argument. He inquires whether there is any external evidence to support the partition theory, and answers that "there is a little." It is indeed a very little and he naturally does his best to make the most of that little. But not quite fairly. He misquotes his author, and is silent about interpretations of the passage by fully qualified scholars which are fatal to his argument. The evidence, of course, is that of Polycarp, who in his own letter to the Philippians is quoted as saying that St. Paul wrote certain advice to them "in all his Epistles." The sentence must have been written carelessly by Dr. Lake from memory, for the word "all" does not occur in the original. It is a more serious fault that he should have given his readers no hint that this passage has been thoroughly discussed by competent scholars, and that men so far removed from each other as

Bishop Lightfoot and Professor van Manen are agreed that the phrase does not necessarily imply that there was more than one Pauline letter to the Philippians known to Polycarp. The translation of the passage given by Lightfoot will commend itself to many as admirably fitting the context. Polycarp had mentioned St. Paul, and adds, "who, when absent, wrote to them instructions which they would do well to study for their edification in the faith." But if the reader thinks it necessary to give the more restricted meaning to *ἐπιστολάς* and translate it by "letters," then it is equally natural to understand, with Dr. van Manen, that Polycarp has in his mind "a group of Epistles written by St. Paul," and the passage suggests how early in his opinion the circulation of St. Paul's Epistles took place among the Churches.

In this connexion may we not fairly ask how Dr. Lake would account for only one letter, and that apparently the one we possess, being known to Marcion and Tertullian, if the two in their original forms were used by Polycarp. And in view of all the facts would it be too much, or be discourteous, to say that the external evidence for more than one Pauline letter written to the Philippians, so far from being small, is just worth nothing at all?

We are then driven back on the structure of the Epistle itself and have to inquire whether the internal evidence of its being a composite work, and the general consideration of the conditions under which the two letters would become public property, are sufficiently strong to override the unbroken tradition that the Epistle as we have it was the letter written by St. Paul.

It is all very well to write out the Apostle's words without the omission of the awkward passage, and then to rewrite it with its inclusion so as to enhance its awkwardness and to assure us that "something of a literary nature has

gone wrong." But if we go back to the beginning and read carefully enough to get ourselves into the attitude of the writer, we may be—not perhaps less startled but certainly less surprised—at the energy and abruptness of his warning. What do we find in these two first chapters? Very early in the letter we perceive that, for all the joyousness of heart and hopeful confidence, there is in the mind of the writer a deep undercurrent of anxiety and distress. He desires to keep on the surface and deliberately fixes his own and his readers' attention on the bright and happy turn of affairs. But both for himself and them the times are critical and the margin between success and failure extremely narrow. The malignity and shamelessness of his personal enemies might, as they intended, only too easily have led to the utter defeat of the Gospel, the failure of his mission, and his death. The greatness of the peril is his measure of the victory in sight, and of his joy in it. So too with the Philippians; his present joy in their spiritual progress is measured by the tremendous issues at stake. It is in no serene atmosphere that they have advanced to their happy position, nor for lack of danger: even now "strife and vainglory" may quickly spoil all; no machination of a resourceful enemy will be wanting to rob them of their citizenship in Christ: they must not be terrified¹ by these adversaries, but hold together, playing the athlete, as one man: his own part may shine out more gloriously, but, in fact, they are engaging in exactly the same conflict, and must work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Moreover, just as it is buoyant hope that has sustained him through all perils, so must they rejoice evermore.

Without wishing to minimise the abruptness of the shock which startles the reader in this vehement outburst of iii.

¹ The word occurs here only.

2, it is clear that if the above summary faithfully represents the thought of the first two chapters, Dr. Lake's method of approaching it tends to exaggerate the difficulty. For all its abruptness, it is no more than a passionate cry—in a louder tone and a higher key—characteristic of the writer and comparable to other exclamations found elsewhere in his writings.

We now come to the general consideration of the literary position which in Dr. Lake's opinion permits us to regard our present Epistle as a composite work. The process described is attractive for its simplicity and naturalness, but will not bear close scrutiny.

The manner in which we come to possess the collection of St. Paul's letters is briefly as follows :—In the first stage his letters were valued because they happened to contain good and valuable advice. In this period the receivers of his letters would naturally use their discrimination, preserving, and conveying to others, what in their judgment was of permanent value and importance, and discarding much that was ephemeral. But then the time would come when all that had been written by him would be treasured up simply because it was his. Thus each Church would become possessed of a bundle of material, in addition to some more important letters. Churches would exchange these, sending copies only—"for of course they would not send the originals." This period of interchange would be brief, so that the final collection made up of a main letter, of "odds and ends" and even fragments, perhaps never written by St. Paul, which had got in by mistake, would be complete and constitute the *Corpus Paulinum* as we have it to-day.

This, no doubt, gives us a delightfully simple evolution of an untrustworthy document, or rather series of documents. But the question immediately presents itself : What about

the original letters? and What were the possessors of these doing while incorrect collections, formed in this haphazard manner, were gaining vogue? We have but to put these questions to see the utter unreliability of the theory. We know that from the first the original letters were read openly in the Church (cf. 1 Thess. v. 27) and were probably kept in the archives with the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament. Even allowing fully for the difference between the literary atmosphere of the second century and that of our own time, can we ascribe so great ineptitude in literary matters to men of such intellectual calibre, as, for instance, Irenæus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria, as this indifference to the correctness of their material would involve?

The truth is that from the outset the analogy is false and ignores the chief factors of the case; e.g. the authoritative position of St. Paul and the jealousy of the several Churches over the letters received from him. We have not to do with the letters of a private person, however important, but of a man intensely confident of his Divine authority and unhesitatingly claiming it in his intercourse with the local Churches founded by him, no less than over individual disciples, as a solemn and sacred trust committed to him by Christ Himself. All alike fully recognised this; so much so that in the subsequent period leaders of the Church were aware that they could make no stronger appeal to any community than to their pride in their Founder and the fact that they had in their possession a letter written by him.

In the face of Dr. Lake's conception of this semi-private gathering of literary remains one is set wondering what has become of the discussion over the sharp distinction drawn by Marcion and others between the letters written to individuals and those to the Churches.

Still less, when we come to look into details, does the theory give satisfaction. Dr. Lake rightly speaks of "a very short time" intervening before all material from St. Paul's hand would be treasured by those possessing it. But we may be more precise, and safely assume that this would certainly date from his martyrdom, which in our particular case would give us some twelve years at the furthest since the first letter to the Philippians was written. Is it conceivable that in such a short time it would be possible for the original letters to have become ignored and their place taken by a bundle of heterogeneous oddments intermingled with the actual main portions of the authentic first letter?

We may have to differ from the standards accepted by the best Biblical scholars of the third and fourth centuries, who were mainly responsible for the formation of the Canon of the New Testament, and to modify their conclusions in several directions; but surely the most safe and prudent course would be to take fully into account all the information at their hands, and not venture to reconstruct the Apostolic literature on the general considerations adopted by Dr. Lake in his paper.

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