

immediately observed. He then called upon his friend with an invitation to visit him, which was readily responded to, and on his arrival he was shown into the study. It happened exactly as Kircher had planned. His friend no sooner observed it than he inquired whence it had come and to whom it belonged. 'Shall I tell you, my friend,' said Kircher, 'that it belongs to no one, that it was never made by anyone, but came here by mere chance?' 'That,' replied the atheist, 'is impossible; you jest.' This was Kircher's golden opportunity, and he promptly and wisely availed himself of it. 'You will not, with good reason, believe that this small globe originated in mere chance, and yet you will contend that those vast heavenly bodies, of which this is but a faint diminutive resemblance, came into existence without either order, design, or a creation!' His friend was first confounded, then convinced, and ultimately abandoning all his former scepticisms, he gladly united with all who reverence and love God in acknowledging the glory and adoring the majesty of the great Creator of the heavens and earth and all their host.—W. M. TAYLOR.

THERE is a remarkable sentence or two in the preface to John Wesley's first volume of sermons, in which that great evangelist gives us the secret of his method of Bible-study. 'Here am I,' he says, 'far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift my heart to the Father of Lights. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. And what I thus learn, that I teach.' To Wesley, then, there were two great

realities—the visible *Book*, and its invisible but ever-present *Author*; and to a man of his training and spiritual susceptibilities the one would have been a perfect enigma without the other. He saw *God* at the beginning of every section of Holy Scripture.—W. MIDDLETON.

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The Historical Background of the Epistle to the Philippians.

BY THE REV. H. A. A. KENNEDY, M.A., D.Sc., CALLANDER.

CONSIDERABLE vagueness has prevailed as to the order in which 'Philippians' stands among the Epistles of the Captivity. Lightfoot and Hort have lent the weight of their authority to the opinion which would place it first in the series. Meyer, Weiss, Lipsius, Holtzmann, and others are equally decided in assigning to it the last place. We do not intend at present to examine the arguments on either side. We wish rather to discover as clearly as possible what the Epistle itself has to say of the circumstances in which it was written, of the historical background which lies behind it. We believe that the situation is to be gathered rather

from a few casual hints than from any direct statement.

It is admitted on all hands that the undertone of the whole Epistle is joy, a hopeful joy, which is only now and then overshadowed by a more sober mood. Now this joy is by no means accidental. It comes persistently into view. Nothing is allowed to mar it. Is it not, then, Paul's deliberate intention to write to the Philippians in a cheerful tone, and must not this be done with the express purpose of correcting some erroneous impressions which they had formed? From the personal nature of the joy which he emphasizes, these

erroneous impressions probably related to himself. Indeed this is made almost certain by 1¹²: τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, 'My circumstances have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.' μᾶλλον shows that their anticipations had been deceived. Not only had his affairs *not* turned out unfavourably, as they feared, but, on the contrary, to the advantage of the gospel and of him, its preacher.

What were the circumstances in Paul's experience which they dreaded? These can only be pieced together from informal references in the Epistle. In 1⁷ he tells them that he thinks of them as sharers with him in the grace of God: ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 'Both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.' We believe that here he is speaking, not metaphorically, but with definite facts before his mind. He is a prisoner. But he has been in that condition for long. There has been a further development of the situation. The protracted delay in the hearing of his case (Ac 28³⁰: ἐνέμεινεν . . . διετίαν ὅλην ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι, 'He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling,' R.V.) has come to an end. His ἀπολογία has begun. Of course this ἀπολογία is at the same time a defence of the gospel. Nay. His appearance in the Roman court of justice is something more. It is a βεβαίωσις of the gospel. βεβ. was a technical legal term, equivalent to the Latin *auctoritas* or *evictio* (see Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, p. 100 ff.). It signified the guarantee which the seller in a transaction gave to the purchaser against any claims that might be laid to the object purchased. Paul's presence before the Roman magistrates is a guarantee for the gospel.

Now we begin to see some light on the Philippians' anxiety. So long as Paul lived in his own lodging, although a prisoner technically, he was, to all intents and purposes, a free man. But now the final issue has come. The necessary documents have been handed in from the lower court. Probably this process has caused the delay.¹ Everything will henceforth turn on the decision of the higher tribunal. Paul is now a prisoner in reality, perhaps removed to one of the gloomy State-prisons as soon as a time has been fixed for the hearing of his case. No wonder the hearts of his

¹ See Geib, *Geschichte des röm. Criminal-processes*, p. 689 ff.

loyal Philippian converts are filled with dark forebodings.

How, then, in so critical a situation, can the apostle write with such exuberant joy, what reason has he for such high spirits? No doubt he has learnt, as he tells the Philippians (4¹¹), to be content in any circumstances. But plainly, from 1¹², his affairs have taken a favourable turn. Will not this be closely connected with the hearing of his case? Must it not be that his judges are already discovering that the accusation brought against him is a sham: that he is not a leader of sedition, dangerous to society, but simply a religious enthusiast who has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds? He is recognized, he says, to be a prisoner for Christ's sake (1¹³: τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι: 'My bonds have become manifest in Christ'). This recognition takes place ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ. These words are usually taken to mean either 'among the whole prætorian guard' (so, e.g. Lightfoot, Hofmann, Haupt), or 'throughout the barracks of the guard' (so, e.g. Alford, Lipsius, Klöpper, von Soden). And good arguments can be used to support these interpretations, more especially the first mentioned. But a new and most suggestive explanation has been proposed by Professor Mommsen, the greatest living authority on Roman history. In the *Sitz-Berichte* of the Berlin Academy, 30th May 1895 (p. 498 ff.), he observes that by this time the emperor's delegates for hearing such appeals as that of Paul were the *præfecti prætorio*. Accordingly he takes the words before us to mean the judicial authorities as a whole, the *præfecti prætorio*, with their numerous assistants and subordinates. The sympathy which Paul found in these official circles is corroborated, he believes, by the greetings sent (4²²) from those ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας. This striking explanation, it may be said, has been warmly advocated by Professor W. M. Ramsay (*St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 357).

One cannot help feeling that these various facts, grouped together, shed a clear light on the whole situation. Paul may well feel hopeful, for already his Christian brethren have become emboldened by the turn which affairs have taken (1¹⁴). We need not wonder that in 1¹⁹ he declares his conviction that his present situation μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν, 'Will result in my deliverance.' This is the meaning assigned to σωτ. by the great Greek

expositors, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret. The words are a quotation from Job 13¹⁶ (LXX). There it is a judicial process that is in view, and the word means victory in the struggle for right. His contest has begun. He hopes that in nothing will he be put to shame (1²⁰, *αἰσχυνθήσομαι*—probably by denying Christ or failing to set forth His claims in the best light), but that at this very time (*καὶ νῦν*, his trial) Christ may be glorified in his person, whether by life or death (for, of course, he cannot be certain of release). Despotical tribunals were notoriously arbitrary. Still he feels justified in believing that a happy prospect awaits him in this life. It is not going beyond probability to speak (1²⁶) of his *παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς* ('presence again with

you'), or to express his confidence (2²⁴) that he will soon visit them.

There is every reason to believe that Paul's expectation was realized (see Harnack, *Chronologie*, pp. 238–239). If the foregoing brief discussion have any validity, we can the more easily picture the actual facts on which that expectation was based; we are able more clearly to grasp the historical background of the whole situation. Plainly, this favours the hypothesis that 'Philippians' is the latest of the Imprisonment-Epistles.¹

¹ After arriving at the above conclusions, we have been gratified to find that the same general view of the situation, supported by many of the same arguments, has been taken by Zahn, *Einleitung in d. N.T.*, Bd. i. pp. 380–382, 391–392. He rejects, however, Mommsen's explanation of *πραιώριον*.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Sennacherib and Sargon.

DR. LEHMANN'S handsomely printed book,¹ though addressed to the specialist in Assyro-Babylonian history, ought to interest Old Testament scholars as well. The two problems which he sets himself to solve are: (1) the apparent discrepancy between the date given by Sennacherib, at Bavian, for the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. and other chronological records that have come to us; and (2) the vast antiquity assigned by Nabonidos to Sargon of Akkad and his son Naram-Sin. His book deals very exhaustively with these two questions, and brings together all the materials for settling them which were known up to the date of its publication. Among them the so-called Dynastic Tablet naturally occupies a prominent place. This is a tablet discovered by Mr. Pinches, which, though unfortunately mutilated, gives us the names of the Babylonian kings from the 'First Dynasty of Babylon' onward, arranged in dynasties, and with the length of each reign attached. Had the tablet been complete we should have had an exact chronology—at all events, as it was conceived by the native historians—from the foundation of the dynasty to which Khammurabi or Amraphel belonged.

¹ *Zwei Hauptprobleme der altorientalischen Chronologie und ihre Lösung*. By C. F. Lehmann. Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1898.

The tablet is badly written, and, consequently, difficult of decipherment, even where it has not been injured or destroyed. Dr. Lehmann has made a careful examination of the numerical ciphers contained in it, and has thus been able to correct some of those given in the published copies of the text. In certain cases, however, the actual cipher must remain doubtful until a duplicate of the inscription can be found. But there is one point of chronological importance which may be considered as settled; the fourth dynasty (of Isin) lasted 132 years, and not 62 years as was at first supposed.

But before problems can be solved they must first exist; and that Dr. Lehmann's problems have any real existence seems to me more than questionable. Frankly, I do not believe in them, in spite of all the learning and historical acumen displayed in his book. Let us first take his second problem, that of the antiquity of the date (3800 B.C.) assigned to Sargon of Akkad.

Dr. Lehmann's difficulty here does not lie in the remoteness of the date, but in the fact that between the era of Sargon and that of the second dynasty of Ur, a period of a thousand years according to Nabonidos, no dated Babylonian monuments have been discovered. Hence Dr. Lehmann concludes that the interval in question had no existence. But it is dangerous to argue from the imperfection of our knowledge, more