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## Andronicus.

BY PROFESSOR B. W. BACON, D.D., YALE.

PAUL'S Epistle to the Romans has a curious attachment at the close. Chapter 16 is generally recognized as an 'epistle of commendation' written on behalf of 'Phœbe our sister,' a deaconess of the church in Cenchreæ, whence Paul is writing, port of Corinth for those embarking for the Asian coast. To moderns the chapter has deep historic interest as an example of this type of early Church correspondence. In antiquity it had so little, that some early copies of Romans dispensed with it altogether, while Marcion, compiler of the earliest known *corpus Paulinum*, cut off both chapter 15 and chapter 16.

Additional interest attaches to this letter of commendation in modern times because of a conjecture which ranks among the earliest of nineteenth-century higher criticism, and has continued to gain in favour in spite of strong and able opposition down to the present day. Schulz in 1829 propounded the theory that chapter 16, which follows the ending 'The God of peace be with you all. Amen,' and is printed in modern editions after a vacant space, is indeed a separate letter, perhaps dictated by Paul to Tertius at the same sitting as the preceding material addressed to Rome, but intended not for Rome but for *Ephesus*, whither Phœbe was betaking herself.

As an authentic letter of Paul to the church in *Ephesus*, this brief fragment (for its original extent is by no means certain) possesses for critics a still more specific interest. Ephesus was indeed made by Paul the headquarters of his mission work in the Greek-speaking world, and became after Paul's death the great battleground of his type of teaching against Gnostic and allied heresies. But we have nothing else from Paul's own hand addressed to this church, and very meagre references elsewhere to elucidate its history, though Ephesus was one of the most important seats of primitive Christianity.

The Epistle which now bears the name 'To the Ephesians' was nameless, or bore the superscription 'To the Laodiceans' for a large part of the second-century church. To moderns it is the most dubious of the Pauline Epistles save those to Timothy and Titus; and while there are still many of the ablest critics who defend its authenticity, scarcely one of these considers the address authentic, chiefly because of the entirely general and non-

specific nature of the contents. What we should expect in a letter of Paul to the Ephesian church is just that superabundance of personal greetings and specific reference which we find in Phœbe's letter of commendation, whereas the Epistle which since the second century has borne the name of Ephesians has none at all. Ephesians, if authentic, certainly bears a wrong address.

### I.

Manifestly it would be a matter of great interest if new evidence could be adduced beyond that urged by the present writer thirty years ago<sup>1</sup> to prove that the Pauline letter of commendation of Ro 16 really was intended for the church in Ephesus. For, little as it contains beyond a long list of greetings to individuals otherwise unknown, these very names are of far-reaching significance, because they are in many cases accompanied by references to Paul's toils and sufferings, as well as to conditions in the church. If Phœbe's letter of commendation was meant for Ephesus, just that obscure period in the history of this centre of Greek Christianity which we most long to penetrate will be illumined by shafts of light emanating from no other than Paul himself.

A hundred years after the conjecture of Schulz comes another quite as revolutionary for the history of the church in Ephesus, a conjecture whose growing impetus is due largely to Deissmann. It ascribes the group of Epistles of the Imprisonment, namely, Philippians, Colossians (Ephesians?), Philemon, to an imprisonment of Paul not mentioned in Acts, an imprisonment at *Ephesus*. The discovery of the so-called Marcionite, or Monarchian, Prologues, which speak of Colossians as written from Ephesus, where Paul was 'already a prisoner,' gave new significance to other references such as that of Clement of Rome (A.D. 93) and some of Paul's own (2 Co 1<sup>8-10</sup> 11<sup>23</sup>) to prove Acts incomplete in its account of Paul's imprisonments. The most recent advocate of this view is Professor George S. Duncan, in his volume entitled *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry*, 1929. Quite naturally he is also an advocate of the theory of Schulz on the Ephesian destination of Ro 16, where Paul speaks

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, *Introduction to New Testament Literature*, 1900, pp. 102-105.

of Prisca and Aquila (resident at Ephesus both before and after this date) as 'laying down their necks' for his sake, and shortly after of 'Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen (compatriots), and my fellow-prisoners.'

But we must leave the advocates of the Ephesian imprisonment theory to plead their own case, as they are abundantly able to do. We are concerned only with Ro 16 as a certainly authentic letter of Paul probably intended for Ephesus, noting only how these two conjectures, a century apart in date, tend to supplement one another by mutual approach, while the link appears to be still wanting which should cement them in reciprocal support.

The question we have now to raise is whether this 'missing link' may not be found in Andronicus, Paul's 'kinsman and fellow-prisoner,' whom Paul further describes (to our great astonishment) as 'notable among the apostles' and a convert of even earlier date than himself!

The careful studies of Lightfoot in his article on 'Cæsar's Household' (*Philippians*, p. 169) have been added to by Sanday and Headlam in their *International Critical Commentary* on Romans to prove that the list of names in our Epistle are just such as might be expected among the slaves and freedmen of one of the great imperial establishments to be found in the larger cities of the Empire. As against the contention for Cæsarea Palestinensis as place of origin for the Imprisonment Epistles the argument has force. It appears to be decisive for Sanday and Headlam in their rejection of Schulz's theory. A comparison of the list with those known from Asiatic inscriptions suggests to their mind 'that such a combination of names—Greek, Jewish, and Latin—could as a matter of fact be found only in the mixed population which formed the lower and middle classes of Rome.' It remains to be seen whether just such a combination could not also be found in the guild of freedmen of the imperial household at Ephesus of which we have inscriptional evidence.

It is hardly fair to allege against the Ephesian address of the Epistle that 'it rests on three names only out of twenty-six.' The three names referred to are 'Prisca and Aquila' (still in Ephesus in 1 Co 16<sup>19</sup>, and again there in 2 Ti 4<sup>19</sup>), and 'Epænetus, the first-fruits of Asia.'

It is necessary to assume two changes of residence in the case of Prisca and Aquila to make possible the Roman address of the letter, and one for Epænetus. But the real point of Schulz's argument is that out of the group of twenty-six no less than *ten* should be persons intimately connected

with Paul's work in the East. For the Apostle to be able to scrape together the names of twenty-six persons in a remote, thus far unvisited, church, persons with whom Paul had had relations sufficiently close to send a greeting, is remarkable enough. Still it is admitted that he could thus 'lay special stress on all those with whom he was acquainted or of whom he had heard.' But the extraordinary, if not incredible, thing is that among those twenty-six there should be no less than nine with whom Paul's relations should have been so prolonged and intimate that he can call them his fellow-workers, his fellow-prisoners, members not only of his kindred after the flesh (Jews), but of his adoptive home. Paul is saluting not 'those with whom he was acquainted or of whom he had heard,' but the closest and dearest to him of some household of the faith. It is the character of this group as related to Paul's activities, not the mere combination of names of various type, which carries us unerringly to Ephesus.

In the group two of the foremost names are 'Andronicus and Junias.' We shall not pause to inquire whether the pair are man and wife, like Aquila and Prisca, or whether Junias is to be taken as masculine. Our interest is with Andronicus, whose name, so far as our inquiries have extended, is unknown elsewhere to early Christian literature—with one exception. In the Gnostic *Acts of John*, a romance of about A.D. 150 whose scene is laid at *Ephesus*, an early convert of the Apostle, in whose house John finds an abiding-place, and who figures as a leader among the disciples, is called *Andronicus*. The author of the work is not unacquainted with Ephesus, and is surely making the most of his knowledge of the traditions of that church. Shall we call it mere coincidence that he should select this name for one of its patrons in apostolic days? Was the romancer's mind unconsciously influenced by the reading of Romans; or was the name traditional at *Ephesus*?

## II.

But if Ro 16 be a letter of Paul's addressed to Ephesus, and the only one, what the Apostle has to say of Andronicus carries us far back into the pre-Pauline mission field. The gleam of light which it sheds into those obscure years of Hellenistic propaganda, carried on by 'those who were scattered abroad in the persecution that arose about Stephen,' men who preached to Jews and Gentiles alike 'as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch,' will be of all the more value that Acts

reveals them only unwillingly. For Luke takes no interest in such unauthorized missions. His report concerns the Divinely sanctioned extension of the gospel message by Peter and Paul. Andronicus was 'a notable character among the apostles,' his conversion had been even earlier than Paul's. Can we place him otherwise in Acts than among these first disseminators of the gospel in the Greek-speaking world? For the work of Stephen's adherents was carried on while the Twelve and their following remained unmolested in Jerusalem (Ac 8<sup>1</sup>, Gal 1<sup>17</sup>), esteeming themselves called only to an 'apostleship of the circumcision' (Gal 2<sup>7</sup>). Not until the martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee, and the imprisonment of Peter 'after twelve years' from the Crucifixion had given notice from 'the Pharisees and Herod' of final rejection of the gospel on Israel's part did they cease to look upon Gentile conversions as a mere salvage from 'the remnant of mankind.' Their first duty was to restore the 'ruined tabernacle of David.'

Paul worked for 'fourteen years' in the region of Damascus, 'Syria and Cilicia' without contact with 'the churches of Judæa which were in Christ.' But the Hellenistic Christians who were 'scattered abroad in the persecution that arose about Stephen' were in advance even of Paul, and in addition they had the enormous advantage of the sea routes opening from Cæsarea, the natural recourse of every Greek; whereas Paul's slow progress was overland.

The only one of these early, Greek-speaking, evangelists of whom Acts has a word to tell is Philip, first at Samaria, later at Cæsarea; but what is imputed to Philip alone rivals the achievements of Paul. For it is not the Apostle Philip, still undisturbed in Jerusalem (Ac 8<sup>1</sup>), of whom Luke reports the evangelization of the whole plain of Philistia, his convert extending the gospel to Ethiopia itself. It is the same 'Philip the evangelist' to whom Luke had previously attributed the conversion of Samaria; only in 8<sup>26-40</sup> he has taken up another, greatly exaggerated, version of the spread of the gospel through Stephen's successor.

In the north also, at Antioch, there were 'men of Cyprus and Cyrene,' perhaps 'Lucius of Cyrene' and 'Symeon that was called Niger' among them, whose coming thither antedated Paul's. Our notion of Paul as *beginning* mission-work among the Gentiles is an illusion which Luke himself, to whom we owe it, leaves abundant evidence to dispel. Paul's own conception is that he came to the work 'as one born out of due time,' after the number of appointed apostles had seemed complete.

What, then, of Ephesus? Was Ephesus the only

great port accessible from Cæsarea and Antioch to remain untouched by the gospel? That would have been strange indeed. In reality Acts gives us evidence in two ways that such was not the case.

*First*, it is hard to find other reason for Paul's sudden turning aside at Antioch in Pisidia from what would seem to have been the goal of his second journey through Asia Minor, than information reaching him there from the west that 'Christ was already named' in the valleys leading downward to the coast of the Ægean and in Ephesus itself. From Ro 15<sup>20</sup> we know that with Paul it was a fixed principle to avoid every appearance of 'building on another man's foundation.' In Ac 16<sup>6</sup> we read that Paul and Silas, after having passed through the scenes of Paul's earlier labours in 'the Phrygo-Galatic region,' were planning 'to speak the word in Asia.' This, however, was 'forbidden by the Holy Ghost,' an expression which in the light of Ac 20<sup>23</sup> 21<sup>10-14</sup> can only mean that 'prophets' in the Christian assembly at Antioch gave utterance 'in the Spirit' to revelations which Paul felt to be fatal to the plan. In the case of Agabus, who came down from Judea to Cæsarea to warn Paul of the dangers awaiting him at Jerusalem, the Apostle refused to be dissuaded. Mere dangers would not have dissuaded him at Antioch of Pisidia. We know of only one thing that would have turned him aside from the strategic point of missionary work in Asia, the same which long prevented his coming to Rome also (Ro 15<sup>23</sup>). Paul would proclaim his message only on virgin soil, where 'the name of Christ had not been named.'

*Second*, the fact that Ephesus at least (how much more of the Province of Asia we know not) had already been evangelized when Paul at last came thither after a complete circuit of the Ægean, is explicitly stated in Ac 18<sup>18-19</sup>, although this pre-Pauline mission work is so minimized by Luke that the reader is apt to gain the impression that it was not of long standing and was indeed so inferior in character as to be practically negligible. In reality the situation resembles that of Philip's coming to Samaria, where he found himself preceded by Simon of Gitta, whom the church fathers regard as one of the 'disciples of John.' However more favourably viewed, the group which has Apollos as its centre at Ephesus, and which knew only the baptism of John, a baptism not gifted with the miraculous endowments of the Spirit, presents a certain analogy with the adherents of Simon in Samaria. This group came, indeed, into more friendly relations with the Pauline church than Simon and his followers with the church in Samaria,

but we may perhaps allow for a more accommodating spirit in Prisca and Aquila than in Peter and John.

Whatever the peculiarities of this pre-Pauline body in Ephesus, the very fact that it 'knew only the baptism of John' is clear evidence of its very early date. We must go back many years, back to a time when Paul himself was a neophyte, to find circles where 'the things concerning Jesus' were spoken and taught 'accurately' without knowledge of any other baptism than that of John. How long this Christian brotherhood had maintained its seat at Ephesus, and how far it had extended its evangelizing conquests up the valley of the Meander and toward the Hinterland of Phrygia we can only surmise. The abrupt turning away of Paul and Silas from their contemplated 'speaking the word in Asia' is one of several indications that a non-Pauline type of gospel was already known in the province of Asia when Paul revisited the churches of Galatia shortly after the breach with Peter at Antioch.

### III.

If now we return to the group of friends and fellow-workers to whom Paul sends greetings in Ro 16, we shall see at once that he does not confine himself to recent acquisitions. The first of all the list after Prisca and Aquila, 'who for my life laid down their own necks,' is 'Epænetus my beloved, who is the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ.' Is Paul excluding from the harvest of Christ those converted before his own coming to Ephesus? Is he reckoning in none of those who had been taught accurately the things concerning Jesus by Apollos before they knew of the baptism of the Spirit? If not, Epænetus must be reckoned among these early converts. 'Mary,' whose name follows next in order, is to us totally unknown. She too may belong to this group. She had 'bestowed much labour' on the church. Andronicus and Junias were fellow-countrymen of Paul's. Andronicus bore the name of that ardent Jew of Alexandria of whom Josephus (*Ant.* XIII. iii. 4) relates that he successfully championed the cause of the Temple at Jerusalem before Ptolemy, against advocates of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, the debaters staking their lives on the issue. But mere coincidence of name is of little service. What Paul tells us of this pair is the only element of value to our inquiry.

Andronicus and Junias had been Paul's 'fellow-prisoners.' What this imprisonment can have been we know not. Certainly not that at Philippi

(Ac 16<sup>20</sup>). The New Testament affords no clue save the mention of frequent imprisonments in 2 Co 11<sup>23</sup>, and the intimations of 1 Co 15<sup>32</sup> and 2 Co 1<sup>8</sup> of certain extreme perils in Ephesus, to us unknown, which could have been undergone only at the hands of the civil authorities. Clement of Rome (*ad Cor.* v. 6) speaks of *seven* imprisonments of Paul, but gives no authority for his statement. We know no more of the circumstances in this case than of the laying down of their own necks for Paul's life by Prisca and Aquila, mentioned just before. But perhaps it is not unnatural to associate the two occasions.

The pair were also 'of note among the apostles,' 'apostles' meaning those missionaries in the wider sense commissioned by the churches as Paul and Barnabas had been by the church in Antioch (Ac 13<sup>2</sup> 14<sup>4</sup>). In 1 Co 15<sup>7</sup> and Ph 2<sup>25</sup> the title seems again to be used in this wider sense. But, strangest of all, Paul also notes that the conversion of Andronicus and Junias had antedated his own: 'They were also in Christ before me.'

The preoccupation of Luke with his two pre-eminent heroes of world-evangelization, Peter and Paul, results for the uncritical reader of Acts in a very disproportioned view of the actual spread of the gospel. One could never guess from the story of Peter's mission to Cæsarea and conversion there of Cornelius and his household that years before Philip had already made Cæsarea the headquarters for his richly successful work of evangelization (Ac 10<sup>1</sup>-11<sup>18</sup>; cf. 8<sup>40</sup> and 21<sup>8</sup>). Almost equally difficult is it to draw from Ac 18<sup>18</sup>-19<sup>21</sup> the true story of the gospel in Asia. At every one of the great centres of Gentile Christianity Peter and Paul were only shapers of another's undertaking. At Samaria Peter and John take over the work begun by Philip. Peter, as we have seen, usurps entirely Philip's place as founder of the church in Cæsarea. At Antioch the real founders of the church are lost from sight after Barnabas has brought Paul to his aid there from Cilicia (Ac 11<sup>19-26</sup>). Even Paul disappears from Antiochian tradition after the advent of Peter. The latter figures alone as church founder in the succession lists of the second century. And Paul himself, for all his noble ambition to avoid 'building on another's foundation,' found himself obliged, first at Antioch, then at Ephesus, and finally at Rome, to supervene upon others' beginnings, if he were not to exclude himself from all the strategic centres.

The very nature of the Ephesian canon (five writings transmitted under the name of 'John,' four of which are anonymous and stand doctrinally

and otherwise at the opposite pole of catholic doctrine from the earliest of the group) should be a warning to us not to attempt so easy an analysis of the development of Christian life and thought in Ephesus as the two names Paul and John at first suggest. The real history of Christianity at this chief centre of the Ægean world includes the story of an Apollos before Paul and a Philip of Cæsarea before even the 'John' of Revelation, to say nothing of the dubious 'other Johns' of unexpected character and uncertain attestation. Ephesus was a very maelstrom of conflicting currents of religious thought both before and after Paul's coming. His three years of disconnected work there are characterized both by Acts and in his own report as years of conflict with 'many adversaries'; his parting message is a warning against 'many grievous wolves' soon to break in, 'not sparing the flock': a warning not only against these but against 'men speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them' who would arise out of the midst of the flock itself. If we think of Christianity in Asia as principally determined by the preaching of Paul we must forget the chief significance of Colossians, written to a church not of Paul's foundation. We must forget even that of the Fourth Gospel, which, however unmistakably Pauline in some of its coloration, is far less Pauline than would be inevitable if its only background were such as Acts depicts. One traces in it the influence of Apollos, the 'learned Jew of Alexandria,' almost as readily as the influence of Paul, were not our knowledge of Apollos so restricted. On the other hand, the Fourth Evangelist neither mentions Paul, nor quotes him, nor traces to him the elements of his teaching. This applies not only to the Gospel, which might be expected to carry its authority back beyond Paul, as is in fact the case, but also to the three Epistles, where there was surely room for some allusion to the great Apostle.

If, then, we fall back on the only probable writing addressed by Paul himself to Ephesus, we find, first of all, abundant trace of the 'many adversaries' (Ro 16<sup>17-20</sup>). Also among the 'fellow-prisoners' and 'fellow-workers' of the Apostle we find not a few whose names may well belong to the larger history of 'the churches of Asia.' Epaphras is not among them, doubtless because when Phœbe's letter of commendation was written he was at Philippi, or standing at Paul's side. Unless we distinguish unnecessarily between

Epaphras and Epaphroditus, this is the 'apostle' of the Philippians soon to accompany Paul on the last fateful journey to Jerusalem. Nay, it has been conjectured that this beloved 'fellow-worker,' of whose well-nigh fatal illness Paul writes so feelingly to the Philippians, is the unnamed companion whose Diary serves Luke as the basis for his entire story of Paul's last journeys, from Philippi to Jerusalem and Rome. Conceive him, then, as founder of the three churches of the Lycus valley, Colossæ, Hierapolis and Laodicea, for whose welfare he is so deeply concerned in Col 4<sup>12f.</sup> It need not be assumed, it is not even probable, that these churches were of so recent date as to have been founded after Paul's second missionary journey. Let it, then, be assumed (to give rein to fancy) that the cause of the fateful encounter at Troas, after which Paul, together with his new-found ally, proceeds to Philippi of Macedonia, lodging there with Lydia, a purple-seller *from Thyatira* (Ac 16<sup>8-15</sup>), was the disappointment of Epaphras when Paul turned away from Asia toward Mysia, and that he overtook the Apostle at Troas and became, from Troas on, his 'brother, and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier' (Ph 2<sup>25</sup>). Such fancies are indeed serviceable only as controlled by criticism in all its severity. But without such dreams and imaginings historical research has no creative power. Whether Epaphras lies concealed under the tantalizing 'we' of Luke's 'travel-document' or no, we have at least a glimpse at things that lie behind our first acquaintance with 'the churches of Asia.'

And side by side with Prisca and Aquila who 'laid down their own necks' for Paul's life, stands Epænetus, 'the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ.' Andronicus and Junias are also there, Paul's fellow-countrymen and fellow-prisoners. There is much reason to locate the unknown imprisonment at Ephesus, but who are these old-time Christians who shared it with Paul? They were 'of note among the apostles.' Their Christian career had begun even before Paul's. They must also have been 'of note' with the Ephesian authorities, else they would not have suffered with Paul. Let Andronicus stand, then, as type of the things we do *not* know concerning the history of pre-Pauline missions to the Gentiles, a vast range of activity emanating from the movement which the New Testament itself dates back not merely to Jesus but to 'the baptism of John.' It is a realm of which Luke affords only passing glimpses soon eclipsed by the brighter rays of idealized apostleship.