CORROBORATION.

I. The Census of Quirinius.

The theory that the census during which Jesus was born in Bethlehem was the first periodic census of the fourteen years cycle (fourteen years after the accession of Augustus to the fully developed Imperial power), has to face the difficulty that the proper year of the census was 8–7 B.C.,[1] while the birth of Jesus can hardly be carried back earlier than the year 6 B.C. Accordingly, in my essay on the subject, it was necessary to account for the delay ; and an explanation was found in the rather troubled and difficult situation of affairs in Palestine at the time, together with the natural difficulty in carrying out punctually and exactly the first introduction of this gigantic (as we may fairly call it with reference to the means then existing) operation throughout Syria and Egypt.[2]

A fair analogy is presented by a much simpler operation which was carried out two or three years later in Asia Minor. When the last king of Paphlagonia, Deiotarus Philadelphus, died or was deposed, his kingdom was incorporated in the Roman province Galatia, and an era was established in that region according to which the cities of that kingdom reckoned from the year in which the incor-

[1] Including all persons born during the cyclic year 9–8 B.C.

[2] That it was intended to be universal, and that such was the formal expression of Augustus's decree, as Luke says, seems to me to be a matter of that reasonable probability which is possible in such a case. That it was universally carried out is not said by Luke, and is not probable. That it was carried out over Egypt and Syria seems established with high probability.

poration took place as the year 1. The year of the incorporation and the first of the era was that which ended in autumn 5 B.C.[1]

It was necessary that the people of the newly incorporated district should take the oath of allegiance to their new sovereign, Augustus. The change in their national position was equivalent to a change of sovereign: Augustus succeeded Deiotarus, and the people took the oath of allegiance to him, as they did afterwards to each new emperor on his succession. This has been stated with convincing arguments by Prof. F. Cumont, when he published last year the important inscription, which has revealed the whole series of events.[2]

Now the taking of the oath of allegiance was a very simple ceremony, requiring little preparation and no combination of work by a staff of officials, such as is needed for a census. Yet in this Paphlagonian kingdom, prepared for accepting the full provincial status by a long period of government by dependent kings, it took nearly, or perhaps over, two years before the oath of allegiance was administered. The exact day in the year 1 (i.e. Sept. 6–Sept. 5 B.C.) when Deiotarus ceased to reign is unknown; it may have been early in the year, or it may have been late. The reign of Augustus, i.e. the incorporation of Paphlagonia in Galatia, was of course reckoned to begin immediately thereafter. The rest of the year 1, all the year 2,

[1] The new year began at or near the autumn equinox in Pontus and Paphlagonia.

[2] See his article in the *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 1901, p. 26. The date of the incorporation of Paphlagonia in Galatia (formerly wrongly stated) was established on fair probability in an article by the present writer (*Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 1894, p. 251 f.), raised to reasonable assurance by Mr. Geo. Macdonald in Svoronos's *Journal Internat. d. Num.*, 1899, p. 17, and now confirmed by M. Cumont. It is fixed with that strong probability beyond which we can rarely attain in ancient history; but, as soon as it begins to be brought into even the remotest connexion with the New Testament, it will probably be disputed. For our present purpose, however, the exact incidence of the era is immaterial.

and about six months of the year 3, elapsed. Then at last the oath was administered on the sixth of March, the anniversary festival of the occasion when Augustus became Pontifex Maximus.

In view of this analogy there is no reason to wonder that a census which ought theoretically to have been taken during the twelve months after the conclusion of the cyclic year 9–8 was not carried out in Palestine (a country still very far from ready for incorporation in the Roman Empire) until about two years had elapsed. Such an interval may be quite reasonably admitted, even by those who are not prepared to accept every detail of the sketch which is given in my book of the probable sequence of events between the end of the cyclic year and the day fixed for the census in Palestine.[1] A new measure, requiring the co-operation of many officials all over the country, necessitating considerable organization and instruction of officials, may very well have needed that lapse of time before it came into actual operation. It is now known that even in the third census, A.D. 20, proceedings did not go on with the same regularity in Egypt as in the second and third century.

It seems, therefore, a fair, moderate and reasonable statement that a numbering of the people in Palestine in B.C. 6 is to be accepted as part of the census connected with the cyclic year 9–8, and properly falling in the year 8–7. That a cyclic census ought to have been in process in that year is now established on purely non-Biblical evidence with such reasonable certainty as ancient history is susceptible of. If a person believes that the battle of Salamis is falsely dated, no one can demonstrate to his satisfaction that he is mistaken. So with the cycle-years under Augustus.

[1] That sketch was given as the most probable and natural combination of the few known facts, and not as established on a basis of reasonable assurance, much less as certain. There is not sufficient evidence about that exceedingly obscure period.

II. The Census Lists of Augustus.

In the same book it is argued that the records of the census were preserved and could be consulted by persons authorized, and that the purpose of the census was to a considerable degree to obtain statistics on which to base the practice of Roman government.

The first of these two points is confirmed by an interesting document published in the last month in the *Amherst Papyri*, ii. p. 90 f., by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt. This is "an application from a woman called Demetria, about 168 A.D., asking that her son Tereus be admitted to the list of privileged persons who were exempt from polltax." The basis of the claim is that the boy's ancestors on both sides were exempt, and this is proved by a genealogy carried back for five generations. "The evidence is extracted in most cases from the census lists." In certain cases, however, that is not so: an authority dated in Nero's eleventh year is twice quoted, which cannot be a census list.

The true bearing of evidence is sometimes distorted through inadequate knowledge. This document is now found to be a confirmation of my theory; but, had it been known five years ago, the reader would have been afflicted with one book the less, for it would at that time have seemed fatal to the theory. The theory on which the book is founded is that those census lists began with the year 9–8 B.C. When the book was written, no census papers were known earlier than 76 B.C.; and the Amherst document, which quotes census lists from that time onwards and quotes a different authority for the period of Nero, would naturally suggest that the census had not come into operation so early as Nero's time. This would be an excellent example of the negative argument. The reasoning would then have seemed almost certain: this document quotes census lists during the period when their existence

is established by other evidence, and it ignores them during the earlier period; therefore no census were made in that earlier period.

But the course of discovery has proved that this negative argument, which would have seemed at that time so strong, is as weak as negative arguments must always be, and quite erroneous. Quickly the progress of discovery revealed evidence that the periodic census were made as early as A.D. 20, and that the census list of A.D. 62 is quoted as an authority in A.D. 72.[1] Hence if Demetria preferred to use different authorities in the earlier and the later periods, her reason was not that census were made only in the later period.

Further, my argument that the census lists in Italy were consulted as evidence about the lives even of obscure individuals is entirely confirmed by the example of Demetria in the Amherst Papyrus.

In the second place, the argument was used in my book that the collection of statistics was regarded by Augustus as an important part of practical administration, and that this was one main purpose in his project of universal census. The intentions of Augustus are, of course, a matter of opinion and inference, and must always remain so. There is no objective evidence of what was in his mind. We simply see what he did, and infer from the facts what was his deep-lying intention.

But, in this case, it is reasonable to find a confirmation of our inferences in the independent opinion of high authorities as to the meaning and intention of Augustus. Now, the reason why Augustus divided Italy into eleven districts has always been obscure. But two such high authorities as

[1] After the book was in proof, but not yet paged, evidence had been found by Mr. Kenyon that the periodic census were as old as 48 A.D. Still later Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt carried them back to 20 A.D., as was mentioned in a postscript to the preface.

Mommsen and Liebenam[1] have come to the conclusion that that division, which was never used for purposes of administration, cannot be satisfactorily explained except as serving for the collection and classification of the results of the census.

"Augustus's division of Italy into XI. Regions had merely statistical importance, and was intended to serve no administrative purposes apart from the census," says the latter scholar, and he quotes in a footnote the sharp emphasizing of this view by Mommsen.

A word or two may be added on the purpose of my book. Several unfounded assumptions have been made about this by writers who have criticised it, both favourably and unfavourably. The book does not demonstrate, or seek to demonstrate, that Christ was born at Bethlehem. It only seeks to prove that there was no strength in the arguments by which many writers believed that the falsity of Luke's account of the census and the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem had been demonstrated. The confident and even boastful assumption of many writers was that this part of Luke's narrative has been conclusively demonstrated to be false to Roman methods, and therefore impossible. On the contrary, I have argued (and, as I hope, successfully proved) that Luke's account of the census is entirely possible, and in perfect harmony with Roman procedure as applied in client states such as Judea.

It cannot be proved from other authorities that Luke's account is correct, because no other authorities mention the facts; but nothing that is recorded by other ancient authorities conflicts with Luke. Many facts of ancient history, however, rest on one authority alone.

But those who regard the third Gospel as a second century compilation will not be affected by my results,

[1] Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im röm. Kaiserreiche*, p. 453; Mommsen in *Festschrift. H. Kiepert*, p. 102.

because they consider that it has no historical weight in itself, and is not to be believed except where it is confirmed by other and better evidence. In this case there is no other evidence; for it cannot be said that even Matthew confirms Luke. In fact, the question has been seriously raised whether Matthew and Luke are consistent with one another.

Further, in my book no opinion is anywhere stated or intended about the miraculous nature of the birth of Jesus. The subject is not one which falls within my province. Mr. F. C. Conybeare, in a series of controversial letters in the *Academy*, once argued very ingeniously and plausibly that there was nothing supernatural in that event, and that nothing miraculous is implied in Luke's first chapter. He may be right or not: though his view is certainly not complete, and leaves much to be said in very diverse directions. But there is not a word in my book, so far as I am aware, which might not be accepted logically and unreservedly by him.[1]

It seems to be a perfectly logical position, and perfectly consistent with the resolution to walk according to one's reason, to believe that the Divine nature may come into closer relations with some human beings than with others, even though one confesses entire inability to understand in what manner and by what exact steps those closer relations are produced. When very young, I felt quite resolute to believe nothing that I could not fully understand; but it was gradually brought home to me in life that one must every day of one's life act on the belief in things and processes which one cannot understand. The standard of education and knowledge has probably risen so much in our modern universities, that hardly even the youngest student would be

[1] Except that once, in setting aside that subject as outside the scope of the book, a phrase was used, which I should have put differently, if I had had his view in my consciousness at the moment.

ignorant enough to feel the confidence which I once did in the ability of human intellect to understand everything. That some persons are far more sensitive to, and far more able to commune with, the Divine nature than others are, seems as obvious and as reasonable as that some are far more sensitive to climate and atmospheric conditions than others; and it is certain that those who are less sensitive will never be able in any possible way to understand how and by what steps the sensitiveness of the others comes to be affected. What precisely is meant in Luke's first chapter I am unable to specify in detail; and I neither accept nor reject the very able and bold theory stated by Mr. Conybeare. I do not think that something miraculous or supernatural must necessarily be implied: on the contrary, the phrase "superhuman but not supernatural" seems to be a very reasonable distinction to make.

But such high speculations are wholly outside of my humble subject, which has always been simply historical.

III. The Family and Rank of St. Paul.

It has always lain at the foundation of the present writer's published views about St. Paul that he was a man of good birth and family: "the *civitas* may be taken as a proof that his family was one of distinction and at least moderate wealth." [1]

This has been flatly denied recently, and is opposed to the general opinion of the theological and popular writers on St. Paul. The fact that he worked at a handicraft to which he had been trained has been commonly reckoned as sufficient proof that he was of a humble and poor family.

Prof. Gilbert, of Chicago, in his *Student's Life of Paul* (1899), p. 9, partly agrees and partly disagrees with my view. He states clearly and rightly that "the fact that Paul learned a trade is not evidence that his family was

[1] *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 31.

poor"; but, on the other hand, he declares, "we cannot infer from the fact of citizenship that he [Paul's father] had at least moderate wealth," [1] for "manumitted slaves were frequently presented with citizenship."

Amid these pointedly contradictory statements which is the ordinary reader to follow? No direct proof can here be given. Each statement is an inference from the general conception of Roman society and economic conditions which the respective writers have formed. In such circumstances the independently expressed opinion of acknowledged authorities on Roman social conditions may fairly be quoted in corroboration.

Prof. Gilbert can quote many corroborations from his predecessors. The same statements that he makes on this subject have appeared by a sort of hereditary right in book after book. Yet they are not in accordance with modern studies on society in the earlier Roman Empire. This would not be the place to formally discuss such a subject and quote proofs; but fortunately the opinion of the highest authority can be cited. At the special request of the editor of the *Zeitschrift für die neutest. Wissenschaft*, Prof. Mommsen has written an article for the last number of that journal on the legal position and relations of the Apostle Paul.[2]

Prof. Mommsen begins by remarking that he has not much to say special or novel on the subject. "The jurist will, I hope, find the following discussion for the most part self-evident. But for the theologian an exposition of the kind may not be superfluous."

The present writer has been reproached for expecting that writers theological should be acquainted with the minutiæ of Roman antiquities. But this is hardly a just reproach.

[1] The echo here implies probably that Prof. Gilbert is referring to and contradicting the statement quoted above from *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 31.

[2] *Die Rechtsverhältnisse des Apostels Paulus*, 1901, pp. 81–96.

No one expects scholars to be familiar with the minutiæ of subjects outside of their own special department; and the writer is conscious of his own shortcomings in every subject. But what one is bound to criticize and blame is (1) the habit of making strong and dogmatic statements about what is possible or impossible as regards the social and political surroundings of early Christian history without sufficient study of the general life and society of that period; and (2) the too hasty drawing of inferences therefrom either unfavourable or favourable to the accuracy of ancient writers sacred or profane.

It was of course impossible for Prof. Mommsen to leave this special point unmentioned. He says: "That Paul, though a trained handicraftsman, belonged to a civilian family of good position, appears from the fact that he possessed the Roman citizenship from childhood; for only the prominent townsmen of the provinces were distinguished in this way." [1] In truth, "Roman citizens" everywhere formed a sort of local aristocracy in the cities of the East; and in the time of Augustus (when Paul was born) they were still few, and their distinction was all the more conspicuous. No one knew better than Augustus that this aristocratic position could not be maintained without money; and we may be sure that none were admitted to Roman citizenship except those who could support the rank. The fact that Paul's father was a Roman is absolute proof, to those at least who familiarize themselves with the facts of life in the eastern provinces before they make statements about the subject, that he was a man of conspicuous position in the great city in which he was so honoured.

It must be noticed that the Greek term for the Roman citizens who lived among them was never "Roman citizens," but simply "Romans" (*Ρωμαῖοι*). Luke and Paul, as usual, are correct in this point: *Acts* xvi. 37, xxii. 26, 27. But

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 82.

the Greek abstract term for the Roman citizenship was "citizenship" (πολιτεία: the context indicating that the rights of the Greek city were not meant). Here again *Acts* is correct, xxii. 28. In many inscriptions of Greek cities, the Romans in the city are mentioned as a body distinct from the "citizens": most of them were, it is true, "citizens" of the Greek city where they lived, but the Roman rights were more honourable than the Greek and took precedence of them. One observes with some astonishment that often the citizens of the Greek city, in their own decrees, mention "the Romans" first and "the people" (i.e. the body of Greek citizens) second. Among a race so jealous and tenacious of their own rights, this fact alone speaks volumes for the dignity and rank of the Romans resident in a Greek city.

It is on the whole probable, and it seems to be generally assumed, that it was Paul's father, and not his grandfather, who had attained to the citizenship of Rome. That is, however, far from certain. It would be quite within the limits of reasonable and natural possibility that the citizenship came to the family through Julius Cæsar, who was at Tarsus in 47 B.C., or even through Pompey still earlier; both are known to have been favourably disposed towards the nation of the Jews, and Cæsar especially was very popular with them. If that were so, the distinction would have been bestowed in somewhat exceptional circumstances on a person who was eminent enough to have attracted the notice of those great Romans. Some governor of Cilicia might have given the honour for similar reasons.

The possibility must also be taken into consideration that the honour had been bought from some venal Republican governor. Antony, who resided in Tarsus for a time, was notoriously ready to sell anything to any one. If the citizenship was bought, the purchaser need not have been a very distinguished Tarsian; but he must at least have been

wealthy, able to pay a high price for a coveted honour, which would give him in time better opportunities and facilities for acquiring more money. Such a person must have had a clear conception of the worldly advantages conferred by the Roman citizenship, and been ready to pay the high price for something that he valued highly.

In any such case the person who acquired the citizenship would more probably be the grandfather than the father of Paul; and if that were so, any one who takes into consideration the facts of the situation will recognize how much influence this possession, for so long a period of the Roman franchise with its privileges and its duties, must have exercised on the family, and thus finally on Paul himself.

But it is, perhaps, more probable that the citizenship was bestowed in the ordinary course under the reign of Augustus on Paul's father; and that would be a sufficient proof that the father was a Tarsian citizen, not merely of very considerable wealth and importance, but also one who took an active part in the life of the city, and thus attained to the very highest position open to an energetic Tarsian.

The natural and reasonable inference from these circumstances, if fairly weighed, is that Paul was brought up in a family where the splendid opportunities that lay before a Roman Tarsian citizen were properly valued, and where therefore the children must have grown up familiar with those opportunities, and been educated accordingly.

Of course such general presumptions would have to give way, if clear proof were found in the recorded history that Paul had been brought up in the narrowest Jewish style, devoid of any acquaintance with Greek ways and unsuited for Greek society; and it has been maintained by many theologians that he was brought up in that ignorant, narrow, uncultured style, barely able to speak decent Greek. But, on the contrary, it is clear both from the *Acts* and from Paul's own letters that he could mix with ease in every kind

of Greek society, that metaphors and illustrations from the ordinary surroundings of Greek social life rose naturally to his lips and flowed from his pen, that he handled the language with the ease of a master, moulding it to express a new system of philosophy and morality with remarkable skill.

It is only through ignorance that some writers accuse Paul of inability to use the Greek language properly: he did not and could not write the language of Plato and Aristotle, but it shows deliberate blindness to restrict the circle of good Greek to the language of that older period. Paul used the Greek of the Tarsian schools and the Tarsian philosophers, and he employs it with perfect freedom and power. On the Greek spirit in Paul one need not do more than refer once again to the masterly essays of the two scholars who have made themselves authorities on the spirit of Greek society in the later period, Curtius, in his *Paulus in Athen*, and Canon Hicks, in his *St. Paul and Hellenism*.

The importance of this subject will be apparent when one remembers that Paul in his autobiography (*Gal.* i. 13, ii. 14) lays stress on his prenatal preparation for the work to which he was called: he speaks of God having chosen him out and set him apart even from his mother's womb.

Such is the naïve concrete way in which the ancient philosophy stated what we should express in more abstract terms, such as "that heredity and environment had determined his bent of mind, and that his family and early surroundings had been so arranged by an overruling power that he was made to be the person that should preach to the Gentiles."[1]

Again, Prof. Gilbert's remark quoted above about manumitted slaves assumes as self evident that, if Paul's father were a freedman, he would probably and almost necessarily be poor. The learned Chicago professor is evidently thinking

[1] *Contemporary Review*, March, 1901, p. 381.

of the destitute condition of slaves set free in the nineteeth century, and assumes that Roman freedmen were in a similar condition.

On this subject nothing could be more apposite than to read the charming essay "Städtewesen in Italien im Ersten Jahrhundert," which forms a preface to Prof. L. Friedländer's translation of the *Supper of Trimalchio*, together with his whole commentary on the text. The learned author, whose life has been spent in studying specially the social condition of the early Roman Empire, is there writing about a novel written during St. Paul's lifetime, whose subject lies in the contemporary society of Roman country towns. One who reads the essay will learn—what every scholar who is familiar with Roman imperial life knows—that the freedmen formed one of the richest classes in the state. Slaves, as a rule, were manumitted because they were persons of such ability and character that they were more useful to their master as free than as slaves. Commonly they were clever, rising men, good traders, or men of distinction in some line by which they had attracted the attention of their master. Every scholar who lives much amid the literature of the Roman Empire is familiar with that stock subject, the contrast between the rich upstart freedman and the poor freeborn citizen of impoverished but self-respecting family—between the influence and standing of the former and the insignificance and humble position of the latter. Hence, even if Paul's father had been a freedman, that would be far from constituting any proof that he was poor.

But, further, it must be observed that St. Paul's father was not a freedman: he was a Tarsian citizen. Now, although Roman law granted Roman citizenship to a slave manumitted with the full and proper legal formalities by a master who was a Roman citizen, yet Greek law was never so generous and enlightened in that respect. A manumitted

slave in a Greek city did not acquire the citizenship, even though his master were a citizen.[1] He and his children and descendants remained always outside the citizenship, as one of a special class of resident non-citizens.

Probably we shall after a short time find that those who at present attempt to prove Paul's poverty by the supposition that his father was only a freedman will soon turn round and begin to argue that Paul was poor because he belonged to one of those impoverished old Roman families, whom the satirists of that period contrast with the rich freedmen's children!

W. M. RAMSAY.

CYRUS, THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

I.

HIS WIDER MISSION.

FEW things are more impressive, even in sacred literature, than the gradual unfolding in prophecy both of the wrath and of the lovingkindness of Jehovah. At first the doom or the salvation of Israel is described with vague grandeur in imagery borrowed from the phenomena of nature. The day of the Lord is "a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains" (Joel ii. 2; comp. Zeph. i. 15, Amos v. 20). The restoration is prefigured by the similitude of the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose (Isa. xxxv. 1), or as light shining in darkness (Isa. ix. 2; comp. Zech. xiv. 6). Gradually the picture grows clearer and the prophet's eye discovers the wrath and forgiveness of God taking definite effect in the conquest and captivity

[1] An expression in footnote 4, pp. 82, 83, of Prof. Mommsen's paper above quoted might easily be misunderstood as implying the contrary. But in writing to him I mentioned this point, and am able to state on his authority that it would be a misunderstanding of his intention. It is only by accident that a sentence intended as a disclaimer is capable of being misunderstood in that way.