

**H. C. G. MOULE**



***THE EXPOSITOR'S  
BIBLE: THE EPISTLE  
OF ST. PAUL  
TO THE ROMANS***

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# **The Expositor's Bible: The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans**

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WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

TO MY YOUNGER BRETHERN

VENI CREATOR

LIFE IN CHRIST AND FOR CHRIST.

OUTLINES OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

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# PREFACE

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He who attempts to expound the Epistle to the Romans, when his sacred task is over, is little disposed to speak about his Commentary; he is occupied rather with an ever deeper reverence and wonder over the Text which he has been permitted to handle, a Text so full of a marvellous man, above all so full of GOD.

But it seems needful to say a few words about the style of the running Translation of the Epistle which will be found interwoven with this Exposition.

The writer is aware that the translation is often rough and formless. His apology is that it has been done with a view not to a connected reading but to the explanation of details. A rough piece of rendering, which would be a misrepresentation in a continuous version, because it would be out of scale with the general style, seems to be another matter when it only calls the reader's attention to a particular point presented for study at the moment.

Again, he is aware that his rendering of the Greek article in many passages (for example, where he has ventured to explain it by "*our*," "*true*," etc.) is open to criticism. But he intends no more in such places than a suggestion; and he is conscious, as he has said sometimes at the place, that it is almost impossible to render the article as he has done in these cases without a certain exaggeration, which must be discounted by the reader.

The use of the article in Greek is one of the simplest and most assured things in grammar, as to its main principles.

But as regards some details of the application of principle, there is nothing in grammar which seems so easily to elude the line of law.

It is scarcely necessary to say that on questions of literary criticism which in no respect, or at most remotely, concern exposition, this Commentary says little or nothing. It is well known to literary students of the Epistle that some phenomena in the text, from the close of ch. xiv. onwards, have raised important and complex questions. It has been asked whether the great Doxology (xvi.25-27) always stood where it now stands; whether it should stand at the close of our ch. xiv.; whether its style and wording allow us to regard it as contemporary with the Epistle as a whole, or whether they indicate that it was written later in St Paul's course; whether our fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, while Pauline, are not out of place in an Epistle to Rome; in particular, whether the list of names in ch. xvi. is compatible with a Roman destination.

These questions, with one exception, that which affects the list of names, are not even touched upon in the present Exposition. The expositor, personally convinced that the pages we know as the Epistle to the Romans are not only all genuine but all intimately coherent, has not felt himself called to discuss, in a devotional writing, subjects more proper to the lecture-room and the study; and which certainly would be out of place in the ministry of the pulpit.

Meantime, those who care to read a masterly *debate* on the literary problems in question may consult the recently published volume (1893), *Biblical Studies*, by the late Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham. That volume contains (pp. 287-374)

three critical Essays (1869, 1871), two by Bishop Lightfoot, one by the late Dr Hort, on *The Structure and Destination of the Epistle to the Romans*. The two illustrious friends,—Hort criticizing Lightfoot, Lightfoot replying to Hort,—examine the phenomena of Rom. xv.-xvi. Lightfoot advocates the theory that St Paul, some time after writing the Epistle, issued an abridged edition for wider circulation, omitting the direction to Rome, closing the document with our ch. xiv., and then (not before) writing, as a finale, the great Doxology. Hort holds to the practical entirety of the Epistle as we have it, and reasons at length for the contemporaneousness of xvi.25-27 with the rest.[1]

We may note here that both Hort and Lightfoot contend for *the conciliatory* aim of the Roman Epistle. They regard the great passage about Israel (ix.-xi.) as in some sense the heart of the Epistle, and the doctrinal passages preceding this as all more or less meant to bear on the relations not only of the Law and the Gospel, but of the Jew and the Gentile as members of the one Christian Church. There is great value in this suggestion, explained and illustrated as it is in the Essays in question. But the thought may easily be worked to excess. It seems plain to the present writer that when the Epistle is studied from within its deepest spiritual element, it shews us the Apostle fully mindful of the largest aspects of the life and work of the Church, but also, and yet more, occupied with the problem of the relation of the believing sinner to God. The question of personal salvation was never, by St Paul, forgotten in that of Christian policy.

To return for a moment to this Exposition, or rather to its setting; it may be doubted whether, in imagining the

dictation of the Epistle to be begun and completed by St Paul *within one day* we have not imagined "a hard thing." But at worst it is not an impossible thing, if the Apostle's utterance was as sustained as his thought.

It remains only to express the hope that these pages may serve in some degree to convey to their readers a new *Tolle, Lege* for the divine Text itself; if only by suggesting to them sometimes the words of St Augustine, "*To Paul I appeal from all interpreters of his writings.*"

Ridley Hall, Cambridge,  
All Saints' Day, 1893.

[1] See also Westcott and Hort's *N. T. in the Original Greek*, vol.2, Appendix, pp. 110-114 (ed. 1).

Forasmuch as this Epistle is ... a light and way unto the whole Scripture, I think it meet that every Christian man not only know it, by rote and without the book, but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul. No man verily can read it too oft, or study it too well; for the more it is studied, the easier it is; the more it is chewed, the pleasanter it is; and the more groundly it is searched, the preciouser things are found in it, so great treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein.

W. TYNDALE, after LUTHER.

Towards the close of one of my nights of suffering, at half-past four, I asked my kind watcher ... to read me a chapter of the Word of God. He proposed the eighth of the Epistle to the Romans. I assented, but with the request that, to secure the connexion of ideas, he would go back to the sixth, and even to the fifth. We read in succession the four chapters, v., vi., vii., viii., and I thought no more of sleep....



Then we read the ninth, and the remaining passages, to the end, with an interest always equal and sustained; and then the first four, that nothing might be lost. About two hours had passed.... I cannot tell you how I was struck, in thus reading the Epistle as a whole, with the seal of divinity, of truth, of holiness, of love, and of power, which is impressed on every page, on every word. We felt, my young friend and I, ... that we were listening to a voice from heaven.

A. MONOD, *Adieux*, § V., *Quelques Mots sur la Lecture de la Bible*.

# CHAPTER I

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### TIME, PLACE, AND OCCASION

IT is the month of February, in the year of Christ 58.[2] In a room in the house of Gaius, a wealthy Corinthian Christian, Paul the Apostle, having at his side his amanuensis Tertius, addresses himself to write to the converts of the mission at Rome.

The great world meanwhile is rolling on its way. It is the fourth year of Nero; he is Consul the third time, with Valerius Messala for his colleague; Poppæa has lately caught the unworthy Prince in the net of her bad influence. Domitius Corbulo has just resumed the war with Parthia, and prepares to penetrate the highlands of Armenia. Within a few weeks, in the full spring, an Egyptian impostor is about to inflame Jerusalem with his Messianic claim, to lead four thousand fanatics into the desert, and to return to the city with a host of thirty thousand men, only to be totally routed by the legionaries of Felix. For himself, the Apostle is about to close his three months' stay at Corinth; he has heard of plots against his life, and will in prudence decline the more direct route from Cenchrea by sea, striking northward for Philippi, and thence over the Ægæan to Troas. Jerusalem he must visit, if possible before May is over, for he has by him the Greek collections to deliver to the poor converts of Jerusalem. Then, in the vista of his further movements, he sees Rome, and thinks with a certain apprehension yet with longing hope about life and witness there.

A Greek Christian woman is about to visit the City, Phœbe, a ministrant of the mission at Cenchrea. He must commend her to the Roman brethren; and a deliberate Letter to them is suggested by this personal need.

His thoughts have long gravitated to the City of the World. Not many months before, at Ephesus, when he had "purposed in the Spirit" to visit Jerusalem, he had said, with an emphasis which his biographer remembered, "I must also see Rome" (Acts xix.21); "*I must*," in the sense of a divine decree, which had written this journey down in the plan of his life. He was assured too, by circumstantial and perhaps by supernatural signs, that he had "now no more place in these parts" (Rom. xv.23)—that is, in the Eastern Roman world where hitherto all his labour had been spent. The Lord who in former days had shut Paul up to a track which led him through Asia Minor to the Ægæan, and across the Ægæan to Europe (Acts xvi.), now prepared to guide him, though by paths which His servant knew not, from Eastern Europe to Western, and before all things to the City. Amongst these providential preparations was a growing occupation of the Apostle's thought with persons and interests in the Christian circle there. Here, as we have seen, was Phœbe, about to take ship for Italy. Yonder, in the great Capital, were now resident again the beloved and faithful Aquila and Prisca, no longer excluded by the Claudian edict, and proving already, we may fairly conclude, the central influence in the mission, whose first days perhaps dated from the Pentecost itself, when Roman "strangers" (Acts ii.10) saw and heard the wonders and the message of that hour. At Rome also lived other believers

personally known to Paul, drawn by unrecorded circumstances to the Centre of the world. "His well-beloved" Epænetus was there; Mary, who had sometimes tried hard to help him; Andronicus, and Junias, and Herodion, his relatives; Amplias and Stachys, men very dear to him; Urbanus, who had worked for Christ at his side; Rufus, no common Christian in his esteem, and Rufus' mother, who had once watched over Paul with a mother's love. All these rise before him as he thinks of Phœbe, and her arrival, and the faces and the hands which at his appeal would welcome her in the Lord, under the holy freemasonry of primeval Christian fellowship.

Besides, he has been hearing about the actual state of that all-important mission. As "all roads led to Rome," so all roads led from Rome, and there were Christian travellers everywhere (i.8) who could tell him how the Gospel fared among the metropolitan brethren. As he heard of them, so he prayed for them, "without ceasing" (i.9), and made request too for himself, now definitely and urgently, that his way might be opened to visit them at last.

To pray for others, if the prayer is prayer indeed, and based to some extent on knowledge, is a sure way to deepen our interest in them, and our sympathetic insight into their hearts and conditions. From the human side, nothing more than these tidings and these prayers was needed to draw from St Paul a written message to be placed in Phœbe's care. From this same human side again, when he once addressed himself to write, there were circumstances of thought and action which would naturally give direction to his message.

He stood amidst circumstances most significant and suggestive in matters of Christian *truth*. Quite recently his Judaist rivals had invaded the congregations of Galatia, and had led the impulsive converts there to quit what seemed their firm grasp on the truth of Justification by Faith only. To St Paul this was no mere battle of abstract definitions, nor again was it a matter of merely local importance. The success of the alien teachers in Galatia shewed him that the same specious mischiefs might win their way, more or less quickly, anywhere. And what would such success mean? It would mean the loss of the joy of the Lord, and the strength of that joy, in the misguided Churches. Justification by Faith meant nothing less than *Christ all in all*, literally all in all, for sinful man's pardon and acceptance. It meant a profound simplicity of personal reliance altogether upon Him before the fiery holiness of eternal Law. It meant a look out and up, at once intense and unanxious, from alike the virtues and the guilt of man, to the mighty merits of the Saviour. It was precisely the foundation-fact of salvation, which secured that the process should be, from its beginning, not humanitarian but divine. To discredit *that* was not merely to disturb the order of a missionary community; it was to hurt the vitals of the Christian soul, tinging with impure elements the mountain springs of the peace of God. Fresh as he was now from combating this evil in Galatia, St Paul would be sure to have it in his thoughts when he turned to Rome; for there it was only too certain that his active adversaries would do their worst; probably they were at work already.

Then, he had been just engaged also with the problems of Christian *life*, in the mission at Corinth. There the main

trouble was less of creed than of conduct. In the Corinthian Epistles we find no great traces of an energetic heretical propaganda, but rather a bias in the converts towards a strange licence of temper and life. Perhaps this was even accentuated by a popular logical assent to the truth of Justification *taken alone*, isolated from other concurrent truths, tempting the Corinthian to dream that he might "continue in sin that grace might abound." If such were his state of spiritual thought, he would encounter (by his own fault) a positive moral danger in the supernatural "Gifts" which at Corinth about that time seem to have appeared with quite abnormal power. An antinomian theory, in the presence of such exaltations, would lead the man easily to the conception that he was too free and too rich in the supernatural order to be the servant of common duties, and even of common morals. Thus the Apostle's soul would be full of the need of expounding to its depths the vital harmony of the Lord's work *for* the believer and the Lord's work *in* him; the co-ordination of a free acceptance with both the precept and the possibility of holiness. He must shew once for all how the justified are bound to be pure and humble, and how they can so be, and what forms of practical dutifulness their life must take. He must make it clear for ever that the Ransom which releases also purchases; that the Lord's freeman is the Lord's property; that the Death of the Cross, reckoned as the death of the justified sinner, leads direct to his living union with the Risen One, including a union of will with will; and that thus the Christian life, if true to itself, *must* be a life of loyalty to every obligation, every relation, constituted in God's

providence among men. The Christian who is not attentive to others, even where their mere prejudices and mistakes are in question, is a Christian out of character. So is the Christian who is not a scrupulously loyal citizen, recognizing civil order as the will of God. So is the Christian who in any respect claims to live as he pleases, instead of as the bondservant of his Redeemer should live.

Another question had been pressing the Apostle's mind, and that for years, but recently with a special weight. It was the mystery of Jewish unbelief. Who can estimate the pain and greatness of that mystery in the mind of St Paul? His own conversion, while it taught him patience with his old associates, must have filled him also with some eager hopes for them. Every deep and self-evidencing manifestation of God in a man's soul suggests to him naturally the thought of the glorious things possible in the souls of others. Why should not the leading Pharisee, now converted, be the signal, and the means, of the conversion of the Sanhedrin, and of the people? But the hard mystery of sin crossed such paths of expectation, and more and more so as the years went on. Judaism outside the Church was stubborn, and energetically hostile. And within the Church, sad and ominous fact, it crept in underground, and sprung up in an embittered opposition to the central truths. What did all this mean? Where would it end? Had Israel sinned, collectively, beyond pardon and repentance? Had God cast off His people? These troublers of Galatia, these fiery rioters before the tribunal of Gallio at Corinth, did their conduct mean that all was over for the race of Abraham? The question was agony to Paul; and he sought his Lord's answer to it as a

thing without which he could not live. That answer was full in his soul when he meditated his Letter to Rome, and thought of the Judaists there, and also of the loving Jewish friends of his heart there who would read his message when it came.

Thus we venture to describe the possible outward and inward conditions under which the Epistle to the Romans was conceived and written. Well do we recollect that our account is conjectural. But the Epistle in its wonderful fulness, both of outline and of detail, gives to such conjectures more than a shadow for basis. We do not forget again that the Epistle, whatever the Writer saw around him or felt within him, was, when produced, infinitely more than the resultant of Paul's mind and life; it was, and is, an oracle of God, a Scripture, a revelation of eternal facts and principles by which to live and die. As such we approach it in this book; not to analyse only or explain, but to submit and to believe; taking it as not only Pauline but Divine. But then, it is not the less therefore Pauline. And this means that both the thought and the circumstances of St Paul are to be traced and felt in it as truly, and as naturally, as if we had before us the letter of an Augustine, or a Luther, or a Pascal. He who chose the writers of the Holy Scriptures, many men scattered over many ages, used them each in his surroundings and in his character, yet so as to harmonize them all in the Book which, while many, is one. He used them with the sovereign skill of Deity. And that skilful use meant that He used their whole being, which He had made, and their whole circumstances, which He had ordered. They were indeed His amanuenses; nay, I fear not to say they



were His pens. But HE is such that He can manipulate as His facile implement no mere piece of mechanism, which, however subtle and powerful, is mechanism still, and can never truly cause anything; HE can take a human personality, made in His own image, pregnant, formative, causative, in all its living thought, sensibility, and will, and can throw it freely upon its task of thinking and expression—and behold, the product will be His; His matter, His thought, His exposition, His Word, "living and abiding for ever."

Thus we enter in spirit the Corinthian citizen's house, in the sunshine of the early Greek spring, and find our way invisible and unheard to where Tertius sits with his reed-pen and strips of papyrus, and where Paul is prepared to give him, word by word, sentence by sentence, this immortal message. Perhaps the corner of the room is heaped with hair-cloth from Cilicia, and the implements of the tent-maker. But the Apostle is now the guest of Gaius, a man whose means enable him to be "the host of the whole Church"; so we may rather think that for the time this manual toil is intermitted. Do we seem to see the form and face of him who is about to dictate? The mist of time is in our eyes; but we may credibly report that we find a small and much emaciated frame, and a face remarkable for its arched brows and wide forehead, and for the expressive mobility of the lips.<sup>[3]</sup> We trace in looks, in manner and tone of utterance, and even in unconscious attitude and action, tokens of a mind rich in every faculty, a nature equally strong in energy and in sympathy, made both to govern and to win, to will and to love. The man is great and wonderful, a master soul, subtle, wise, and strong. Yet he draws us with

pathetic force to his heart, as one who asks and will repay affection.

As we look on his face we think, with awe and gladness, that with those same thought-tired eyes (and are they not also troubled with disease?) he has literally seen, only twenty years ago, so he will quietly assure us, the risen and glorified JESUS. His work during those twenty years, his innumerable sufferings, above all, his spirit of perfect mental and moral sanity, yet of supernatural peace and love,—all make his assurance absolutely trustworthy. He is a transfigured man since that sight of Jesus Christ, who now "dwells in his heart by faith," and uses him as the vehicle of His will and work. And now listen. The Lord is speaking through His servant. The scribe is busy with his pen, as the message of Christ is uttered through the soul and from the lips of Paul.

[2] See Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, § 1854, etc.

[3] See Lewin, *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, ii.411, for an engraving of a fine medallion, shewing the heads of St Paul and St Peter. "The medal is referred to the close of the first century or the beginning of the second."

# CHAPTER II

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### THE WRITER AND HIS READERS

#### ROMANS i.1-7

**Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ.** *Ver. 1.*

So the man opens his Lord's message with his own name. We may, if we please, leave it and pass on, for to the letter-writer of that day it was as much a matter of course to prefix the personal name to the letter as it is to us to append it. But then, as now, the name was not a mere word of routine; certainly not in the communications of a religious leader. It avowed responsibility; it put in evidence a person. In a letter of public destination it set the man in the light and glare of publicity, as truly as when he spoke in the Christian assembly, or on the Areopagus, or from the steps of the castle at Jerusalem. It tells us here, on the threshold, that the messages we are about to read are given to us as "truth through personality"; they come through the mental and spiritual being of this wonderful and most real man. If we read his character aright in his letters, we see in him a fineness and dignity of thought which would not make the publication of himself a light and easy thing. But his sensibilities, with all else he has, have been given to Christ (who never either slights or spoils such gifts, while He accepts them); and if it will the better win attention to the Lord that the servant should stand out conspicuously, to point to Him, it shall be done.

For he is indeed "*Jesus Christ's bondservant*"; not His ally merely, or His subject, or His friend. Recently, writing to the Galatian converts, he has been vindicating the glorious liberty of the Christian, set free at once from "the curse of the law" and from the mastery of self. But there too, at the close (vi.17), he has dwelt on his own sacred bondage; "the brand of his Master, Jesus." The liberty of the Gospel is the silver side of the same shield whose side of gold is an unconditional vassalage to the liberating Lord. Our freedom is "in the Lord" alone; and to be "in the Lord" is to belong to Him, as wholly as a healthy hand belongs, in its freedom, to the physical centre of life and will. To be a bondservant is terrible in the abstract. To be "Jesus Christ's bondservant" is Paradise, in the concrete. Self-surrender, taken alone, is a plunge into a cold void. When it is surrender to "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii.20), it is the bright home-coming of the soul to the seat and sphere of life and power.

This bondservant of His now before us, dictating, is **called to be an Apostle**. Such is his particular department of servitude in the "great house." It is a rare commission—to be a chosen witness of the Resurrection, a divinely authorized "bearer" of the holy Name, a first founder and guide of the universal Church, a *legatus a latere* of the Lord Himself. Yet the apostleship, to St Paul, is but a species of the one genus, bondservice. "To every man is his work," given by the one sovereign will. In a Roman household one slave would water the garden, another keep accounts, another in the library would do skilled literary work; yet all equally would be "not their own, but bought with a price."

So in the Gospel, then, and now. All functions of Christians are alike expressions of the one will of Him who has purchased, and who "calls."

Meanwhile, this bondservant-apostle, because "under authority," carries authority. His MASTER has spoken to him, that he may speak. He writes to the Romans as man, as friend, but also as the "vessel of choice, to bear the Name" (Acts ix.15) of Jesus Christ.

Such is the sole essential work and purpose of his life. He is **separated to the Gospel of God**; isolated from all other ruling aims to this. In some respects he is the least isolated of men; he is in contact all round with human life. Yet he is "*separated*." In Christ, and for Christ, he lives apart from even the worthiest personal ambitions. Richer than ever, since he "was in Christ" (xvi.7), in all that makes man's nature wealthy, in power to know, to will, to love, he uses all his riches always for "this one thing," to make men understand "*the Gospel of God*." Such isolation, behind a thousand contacts, is the Lord's call for His true followers still.

"*The Gospel*": word almost too familiar now, till the thing is too little understood. What is it? In its native meaning, its eternally proper meaning, it is the divine "Good Tidings." It is the announcement of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of men, in whom God and man meet with joy. That announcement stands in living relation to a bright chain of precepts, and also to the sacred darkness of convictions and warnings; we shall see this amply illustrated in this Epistle. But neither precepts nor threatenings are properly *the Gospel*. The Gospel saves from sin, and enables for holy

conduct. But in itself it is the pure, mere message of redeeming Love.

It is "*the Gospel of God*"; that is, as the neighbouring sentences shew it, the Gospel of the blessed FATHER. Its origin is in the Father's love, the eternal hill whence runs the eternal stream of the work of the Son and the power of the Spirit. "God loved the world"; "The Father sent the Son." The stream leads us up to the mount. "Hereby perceive we the love of God." In the Gospel, and in it alone, we have that certainty, "God *is* Love."

Now he dilates a little in passing on this *Ver. 2.* dear theme, the Gospel of God. He whom it reveals as eternal Love was true to Himself in the preparation as in the event; He **promised** His Gospel **beforehand through His prophets in (the) holy Scriptures.** The sunrise of Christ was no abrupt, insulated phenomenon, unintelligible because out of relation. "Since the world began" (Luke i.70), from the dawn of human history, predictive word and manifold preparing work had gone before. To think now only of the prediction, more or less articulate, and not of the preparation through general divine dealings with man—such had the prophecy been that, as the pagan histories tell us,<sup>[4]</sup> "the whole East" heaved with expectations of a Judæan world-rule about the time when, as a fact, Jesus came. He came, alike to disappoint every merely popular hope and to satisfy at once the concrete details and the spiritual significance of the long forecast. And He sent His messengers out to the world carrying as their text and their voucher that old and multifold literature which is yet one Book; those "holy

writings," (our own Old Testament, from end to end,) which were to them nothing less than the voice of the Holy Spirit. They always put the Lord, in their preaching, in contact with that prediction.

In this, as in other things, His glorious Figure is unique. There is no other personage in human history, himself a moral miracle, heralded by a verifiable foreshadowing in a complex literature of previous centuries.

"The hope of Israel" was, and is, a thing *sui generis*. Other preparations for the Coming were, as it were, sidelong and altogether by means of nature. In the Holy Scriptures the supernatural led directly and in its own way to the supreme supernatural Event; the Sacred Way to the Sanctuary.

What was the burthen of the vast *Ver. 3.* prophecy, with its converging elements? It was **concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.** Whatever the prophets themselves knew, or did not know, of the inmost import of their records and utterances, the import was this. The Lord and the Apostles do not commit us to believe that the old seers ever had a *full* conscious foresight, or even that in all they "wrote of Him" they knew that it was of Him they wrote; though they *had* insights above nature, and knew it, as when David "in the Spirit called Him Lord," and Abraham "saw His day." But they do amply commit us to believe, if we are indeed their disciples, that the whole revelation through Israel did, in a way quite of its own kind, "concern the Son of God." See this in such leading places as Luke xxiv.25-27; John v.39, 46; Acts iii.21-25, x.43, xxviii.23.

A Mahometan in Southern India, not long ago, was first drawn to faith in Jesus Christ by reading the genealogy with which St Matthew begins his narrative. Such a procession, he thought, must lead up a mighty name; and he approached with reverence the story of the Nativity. That genealogy is, in a certain sense, the prophecies in compendium. Its avenue is the miniature of theirs. Let us sometimes go back, as it were, and approach the Lord again through the ranks of His holy foretellers, to get a new impression of His majesty.

"*Concerning His Son.*" Around that radiant word, full of light and heat, the cold mists of many speculations have rolled themselves, as man has tried to analyse a divine and boundless fact. For St Paul, and for us, the fact is



everything, for peace and life. This Jesus Christ is true Man; that is certain. He is also, if we trust His life and word, true Son of God. He is on the one hand personally distinct from Him whom He calls Father, and whom He loves, and who loves Him with infinite love. On the other hand He is so related to Him that He fully possesses His Nature, while He has that Nature wholly from Him. This is the teaching of Gospels and Epistles; this is the Catholic Faith. Jesus Christ is God, is Divine, truly and fully. He is implicitly called by the incommunicable Name (compare John xii.41 with Isa. vi.7). He is openly called God in His own presence on earth (John xx.28). But what is, if possible, even mere significant, because deeper below the surface—He is regarded as the eternally satisfying Object of man's trust and love (e.g. Phil. iii.21, Eph. iii.19). Yet Jesus Christ is always preached as related Son-wise to Another, so truly that the mutual love of the Two is freely adduced as type and motive for our love.

We can hardly make too much, in thought and teaching, of this Divine Sonship, this Filial Godhead. It is the very "Secret of God" (Col. ii.2), both as a light to guide our reason to the foot of the Throne, and as a power upon the heart. "He that hath the Son hath the Father"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "He hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love."

**Who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh.** So the New Testament begins (Matt. i.1); so it almost closes (Rev. xxii.6). St Paul, in later years, recalls the Lord's human pedigree again (2Tim. ii.8): "Remember that Jesus Christ, *of the seed of David*, is risen from the dead." The old Apostle in that last passage, has entered the

shadow of death; he feels with one hand for the rock of history, with the other for the pulse of eternal love. Here was the rock; the Lord of life was the Child of history, Son and Heir of a historical king, and then, as such, the Child of prophecy too. And this, against all surface appearances beforehand. The Davidic "ground" (Isa. liii.2) had seemed to be dry as dust for generations, when the Root of endless life sprang up in it.

"*He was born*" of David's seed. Literally, the Greek may be rendered, "*He became, He came to be.*" Under either rendering we have the wonderful fact that He who in His higher Nature eternally *is*, above time and including it, did in His other Nature, by the door of *becoming*, enter time, and thus indeed "fill all things." This He did, and thus He is, "*according to the flesh.*" "Flesh" is, indeed, but a part of Manhood. But a part can represent the whole; and "flesh" is the part most antithetical to the Divine Nature, with which here Manhood is collocated and in a sense contrasted. So it is again below, ix.5.

And now, of this blessed Son of David, *Ver. 4.* we hear further:—**who was designated to be Son of God;** literally, "*defined as Son of God*" betokened to be such by "infallible proof." Never for an hour had he ceased to be, in fact, Son of God. To the man healed of birth-blindness He had said (John ix.35), "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" But there was an hour when He became openly and so to speak officially what He always is naturally; somewhat as a born king is "made" king by coronation. Historical act then affirmed independent fact, and as it were gathered it into a point for use. This

affirmation took place **in power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, as a result of resurrection from the dead.** "Sown in weakness," Jesus was indeed "raised in" majestic, tranquil "power." Without an effort He stepped from out of the depth of death, from under the load of sin. It was no flickering life, crucified but not quite killed, creeping back in a convalescence mis-called resurrection; it was the rising of the sun. That it was indeed day-light, and not day-dream, was shown not only in His mastery of matter, but in the transfiguration of His followers. No moral change was ever at once more complete and more perfectly healthful than what His return wrought in that large and various group, when they learnt to say, "We have seen the Lord." The man who wrote this Epistle had "seen Him last of all" (1Cor. xv.8). That was indeed a sight "in power," and working a transfiguration.

So was the Son of the Father affirmed to be what He is; so was He "made" to be, for us His Church, the Son, in whom we are sons. And all this was, "*according to the Spirit of holiness*"; answerably to the foreshadowing and foretelling of that Holy Spirit who, in the prophets, "testified of the sufferings destined for the Christ, and of the glories that should follow" (1Pet. i.11).

Now lastly, in the Greek of the sentence, as if pausing for a solemn entrance, comes in the whole blessed Name; **even Jesus Christ our Lord.** Word by word the Apostle dictates, and the scribe obeys. JESUS, the human Name; CHRIST, the mystic Title; OUR LORD, the term of royalty and loyalty which binds us to Him, and Him to us. Let those four words be ours for ever. If everything else falls in ruins from the memory,

let this remain, "the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever."

**Through whom,** the Apostle's voice *Ver. 5.* goes on, **we received grace and apostleship.** The Son was the Channel "through" which the Father's choice and call took effect. He "grasped" Paul (Phil. iii.12), and, joined him to Himself, and in Himself to the Father; and now through that Union the motions of the Eternal will move Paul. They move him, to give him "*grace and apostleship*"; that is, in effect, grace for apostleship, and apostleship as grace; the boon of the Lord's presence in him for the work, and the Lord's work as a spiritual boon. He often thus links the word "*grace*" with his great mission; for example, in Gal. ii.9, Eph. iii.2, 8, and perhaps Phil. i.7. Alike the enabling peace and power for service, and then the service itself, are to the Christian a free, loving, beatifying gift.

**Unto obedience of faith among all the Nations.** This "*obedience of faith*" is in fact faith in its aspect as submission. What is faith? It is personal trust, personal self-entrustment to a person. It "gives up the case" to the Lord, as the one only possible Giver of pardon and of purity. It is "*submission* to the righteousness of God" (ch. x.3). Blessed the man who so obeys, stretching out arms empty and submissive to receive, in the void between them, Jesus Christ.

"*Among all the Nations,*" "all the Gentiles." The words read easy to us, and pass perhaps half unnoticed, as a phrase of routine. Not so to the ex-Pharisee who dictated them here. A few years before he would have held it highly

"unlawful to keep company with, or come unto, one of another nation" (Acts x.28). Now, in Christ, it is as if he had almost forgotten that it had been so. His whole heart, in Christ, is blent in personal love with hearts belonging to many nations; in spiritual affection he is ready for contact with all hearts. And now he, of all the Apostles, is the teacher who by life and word is to bring this glorious catholicity home for ever to all believing souls, our own included. It is St Paul pre-eminently who has taught man, as man, in Christ, to love man; who has made Hebrew, European, Hindoo, Chinese, Caffre, Esquimaux, actually one in the conscious brotherhood of eternal life.

**For His Name's sake;** for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed. The Name is the self-unfolded Person, known and understood. Paul had indeed come to know that Name, and to pass it on was now his very life. He existed only to win for it more insight, more adoration, more love. "The Name" deserved that great soul's entire devotion. Does it not deserve our equally entire devotion now? Our lives shall be transfigured, in their measure, by taking for their motto also, "For His Name's sake."

Now he speaks direct of his Roman *Ver. 6.* friends. **Among whom,** among these multifarious "Nations," **you too are Jesus Christ's called ones;** men who belong to Him, because "*called*" by Him. And what is "*called*"? Compare the places where the word is used—or where its kindred words are used—in the Epistles, and you will find a certain holy speciality of meaning. "Invited" is no adequate paraphrase. The "called" man is the man who has been invited *and has come*; who has obeyed

the eternal welcome; to whom the voice of the Lord has been effectual. See the word in the opening paragraphs of 1Corinthians. There the Gospel is heard, externally, by a host of indifferent or hostile hearts, who think it "folly," or "a stumbling block." But among them are those who hear, and understand, and believe indeed. To them "Christ is God's power, and God's wisdom." And they are "the called."

In the Gospels, the words "chosen" and "called" are in antithesis; the called are many, the chosen few; the external hearers are many, the hearers inwardly are few. In the Epistles a developed use shews the change indicated here, and it is consistently maintained.

**To all who in Rome are God's** *Ver. 7.*  
**beloved ones.** Wonderful collocation, wonderful possibility! "*Beloved ones of God,*" as close to the eternal heart as it is possible to be, because "in the Beloved"; that is one side. "*In Rome,*" in the capital of universal paganism, material power, iron empire, immeasurable worldliness, flagrant and indescribable sin; that is the other side. "I know where thou dwellest," said the glorified Saviour to much tried disciples at a later day; "even where Satan has his throne" (Rev. ii.13). That throne was conspicuously present in the Rome of Nero. Yet faith, hope, and love could breathe there, when the Lord "called." They could much more than breathe. This whole Epistle shows that a deep and developed faith, a glorious hope, and the mighty love of a holy life were matters of fact in men and women who every day of the year saw the world as it went by in forum and basilica, in Suburra and Velabrum, in slave-chambers and in the halls of pleasure where they had to