

PAUL'S GOSPEL TO THE ROMANS.

WHEREVER St. Paul founded a Church, he was careful to give the spiritual edifice as solid a foundation of Christian teaching as the circumstances permitted. We are told that at Ephesus, where he made a long sojourn, he held religious discussions every day for two years in the school of one Tyrannus, "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts xix. 9, 10). We may be quite certain that what Paul thus gave was not a discursive, but a consecutive course of religious instruction. His mind was so logical that it could not fail to set its impress on his teaching.

The instructions which the Apostle thus gave in the Churches which he founded, extended over a very wide area, embracing even points which are often neglected by pastors in the preparation of their catechumens. Thus Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he had spoken to them, during his stay with them, of the coming of Antichrist, which was to precede the return of the Lord; or rather of the existence of a power, the fall of which was to prepare the way for the manifestation of Antichrist. "Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" (2 Thess. ii. 5).

Elsewhere he reminds them in detail of the practical duties which he had enjoined upon them. "Ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 2). At the commencement of chap. v. of the same Epistle he writes to them, that they do not need to be taught about the time of the return of Christ; for they

know themselves that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." He had, therefore, quoted to them the Lord's words on this subject, and had made these the text of his teachings.

In 1 Cor. vi., he says, as speaking to them of something of which they cannot be ignorant, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" This teaching which he had given them, he repeats in chap. xv. 24, 25, where he speaks of a time coming when Christ shall reign, and all enemies shall be put under His feet.

These indications show how thorough and minute was the instruction given by the Apostle to these young Churches.

How was it then with the Church at Rome, the capital of [the Gentile world? The Gospel had reached there before the coming of the Apostle to the Gentiles. The message had gone before the messenger. Other lips had brought it from Asia and from Greece, where it had already made its way. Little groups of believers had been gathered by the preaching of the Gospel, elementary as it no doubt was, and these believing companies were scattered about in different quarters of the great city. One of these little flocks met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla; another in that of Asyncritus and Phlegon; a third in that of Philologus and Julia (Rom. xvi. 4, 14, 15). These simple hearts had received with joy the good news of salvation, but they still needed such a solid course of instruction as the Apostle was able to give them. This, if I mistake not, was the real motive which led him to address to them this letter, which is altogether different in character from the rest of his Epistles, except perhaps, in some respects, the Epistle to the Ephesians. He was anxious, if possible, to settle the young Church upon stronger and deeper foundations than those yet laid. He gives the Romans by letter

the Gospel which he had not been able (and let us thank God that it was so) to give them by word of mouth. After the death of a father or mother, the children are thankful for the occasional separations that had come between them and those beloved parents, for to this circumstance they owe the letters from them which are such treasured memorials. In the same way we rejoice that the Apostle was prevented from coming sooner to Rome, for to this delay we owe the Epistle to the Romans.

This motive which seems to me to have prompted the writing of this Epistle, is far from being generally recognised. From a very remote period, and still more since the time of Baur, this Epistle has been regarded as a piece of ecclesiastical strategy. Paul (we are told) was desirous to free this Church from the Judaising spirit, more or less pronounced, which characterised it. Those who hold this view, suppose that Christianity had been brought to Rome by some Jewish pilgrims returning from Palestine, or by messengers from the Church at Jerusalem. We know that the Roman Catholic Church speaks of St. Peter as having come to Rome in very early times, to set up there the standard of the cross. According to the Tübingen school, Paul endeavoured to make himself master of this alien, or hostile position, in order to secure in the West, whither he meant to carry the Gospel, a standpoint corresponding to that which he found in the Church at Antioch for his work in the East. But more recent investigation has brought out so distinctly the pagano-Christian composition of the Church of Rome, that this idea of the Epistle to the Romans is no longer tenable, and is now supported by very few writers.¹ The idea now is rather that the Apostle's object was to resist a Judaising invasion from the East, which seriously threatened the Church of Rome. The same troublesome party which had

¹ Mangold, for example.

followed Paul into Galatia and Achaia, trying to bring these Churches into the bondage of legalism, had come to Rome also, and had stirred up some to oppose the spiritual teaching of Paul. The Apostle writes this Epistle in order to meet this difficulty. This is Weizsäcker's opinion. But it appears to me that a comparison of the Epistle to the Galatians with this Epistle to the Romans, suffices to make us distrust it. The polemical tone of the Epistle to the Galatians, written, as it is supposed by Weizsäcker, under circumstances analogous to those which prompted the Epistle to the Romans, is in such strong contrast with the calm didactic strain of the latter, that it is difficult to suppose the two were composed under similar conditions, or for the same ends. We may observe again, that in arguing with the Galatians, Paul takes as his starting point the person of Abraham and the patriarchal origin of the Jewish covenant; while in the Epistle to the Romans, he goes back to the very beginning of the race, to Adam and his fall, as the occasion of the universal reign of sin and death. These two lines of argument bear the same relation to each other as the two genealogies of Matthew and Luke. So little is it the object of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Romans to emphasise the contrast between Judæo-Christian legalism and his Gospel, that he begins with a description of the corruption of the pagan world, which would be altogether irrelevant on such a supposition. It is not, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, the powerlessness of the law to save man, which is the prevailing thought in the Epistle to the Romans, though that comes in incidentally. It is the powerlessness of man, as such, to save himself, whether with or without the law, and the necessity of salvation by Christ, which is the great theme of the Epistle to the Romans.

But why then, we hear some one ask, are there so many passages dwelling emphatically on the incompetence of the

law either to justify or sanctify? We reply: It must be borne in mind that even in treating of mankind at large, the Apostle could not omit the Jewish nation, and that in dealing with the question of salvation, he was under the necessity of paying particular attention to this people. Was it not the only nation with which the Lord had entered into covenant, and to which He had given the means of grace? the only nation, therefore, which had anything that could be added to or contrasted with the salvation which Paul preached? the only nation which could urge its peculiar claims in face of, and even in the midst of, the Church? It is none the less true that this antithesis holds only a secondary place in the Epistle. It is the *man*, whether Jew or Gentile, and not the *Jew*, whom Paul has in view. Hence he begins with a picture of the corruption of the Gentile world on the one hand, and of the Jewish nation on the other, that he may justify the sentence of universal condemnation which he then pronounces as the verdict of Scripture. And hence it is that in opposition to this universal condemnation, he lays such stress (chap. iii. 22) on the universality of the salvation offered in Christ. Therefore also, in concluding the history of salvation, he uses these words: "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all" (chap. xi. 32).

This then is no controversy between Judaising and Pauline Christians. Paul is contrasting Christianity itself with the old pagan and Jewish religions, that he may show forth in Christ the one true and perfect salvation for the human race, lost as it was in its father Adam. The antithesis here is not, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, between Christ and Moses, but between Christ and Adam. As de Wette observes, it was fitting that the Church of the world's metropolis should receive the Apostle's teaching upon so great a subject.

It seems to us probable that this grand conception of

the Gospel formed the theme of the Apostle in his two years' course of religious instruction given at Ephesus, and that the Epistle to the Romans presents to us a summary of that teaching. The date at which this Epistle was written agrees with this supposition. It is evident from the Epistle itself, that the third mission of the Apostle to the East, his ministry in Asia Minor, was finished. He says so distinctly (chap. xv. 19-24): "So that from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. . . . Now having no more place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go into Spain, I hope to see you on my journey." Only before going thither he has to go again to Jerusalem, to take leave of the Church, and to hand over to it the collection which he had made on its behalf among the Gentile Churches. This definitely fixes the date of the letter. It was written at the close of his stay in Ephesus, and after the conclusion of the conflict with the Church of Corinth. Now at length Paul could make that stay in Achaia which he had so long planned (*see* 1st and 2nd Epistles to Corinthians), and enjoy three months' rest at Corinth (Acts xx. 3). This resting-time was fruitful of great results. It produced the greatest master-piece which the human mind had ever conceived and realised, the first reasonable exposition of the work of God in Christ for the salvation of the world.

It has often been asked, how it is that if this is the true character of the Epistle to the Romans, it contains absolutely no reference to Christology and Christian eschatology? We reply, in the first place, that this is not exactly the case. The humanity and divinity of the Saviour, though they are not treated directly, are evidently implied; the former in chap. v. 15, as well as in the whole parallel with Adam; the latter in chap. viii. 3, 32, and ix. 5. As to the eschatology, it is sufficiently and appropriately

referred to in chap. xiii. 11, 12. But the main reason is this. Neither the doctrine of the personality of Christ nor of His second advent, formed the subject of the special revelation granted to Paul on his conversion. Jesus Christ "taught him by revelation" (Gal. i. 11, 12) that which he twice calls in this Epistle *his Gospel*,¹ and that which he describes (Eph. iii. 2, 3) as his *part* in the general apostolic revelation. Now it is this personal part, this Gospel entrusted specially to him, that Paul hands down in this Epistle. The work is worthy of the occasion which called it forth. The situation was a solemn one. The evangelisation of the West was about to follow that of the East. This Epistle, addressed from Greece to Italy, was like a bridge connecting the two parts of the ancient world, the link between the two great works of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The general plan of the Epistle to the Romans may be traced in various ways. Not indeed that it is wanting in clearness. The ideas follow each other in close logical sequence, each one the legitimate offspring of its antecedent and parent of what follows. The great divisions of the Epistle are clearly marked. It is rather the grouping of the parts which is somewhat doubtful. Let us notice first, the series of well marked divisions.

(1) We have the epistolary preamble (chap. i. 1-15), in which Paul reminds the Christians of Rome that as the Apostle of the Gentiles, he is also their apostle, and that if he has not yet been to see them, it has been simply because he has been prevented by his work in the East.

(2) The second division contains only the description of the subject about to be treated—the Gospel as the true and only way of salvation for mankind, whether Jew or Gentile (v. 16, 17).

(3) The third division comprises the treatment of the

¹ This expression occurs again in 2 Tim. ii. 8.

first part of the subject indicated ; it extends from chap. i. 18, to the end of chap. v. It includes three sections. In the first (chap. i. 18-iii. 28) Paul shows the lost condition of man without the Gospel ; 1st, of the Gentiles (chap. i. 18-32) ; 2nd, of the Jews (chap. ii. 1-iii. 8) ; 3rd, of *all*, on the testimony of the Old Testament itself (chap iii. 9-20).

The second forms the antithesis of the first. In the midst of this darkness of fallen humanity a ray of light suddenly breaks forth. This is free pardon, justification by faith, offered to all as a means of salvation, based upon the work of Christ (iii. 21-v. 11). First of all, the work of Christ is set forth as consisting in a manifestation of the Divine righteousness, so that he who consents to appropriate it by faith, thus becomes righteous before God, and this grace, being completely free, is placed within the reach of Gentiles as well as Jews (iii. 23-31). 2nd, This method of God's dealing in the Gospel is altogether in harmony with the great example of justification in the Old Testament—the example of Abraham ; for that patriarch obtained everything by faith—justification, his inheritance, posterity (chap. iv.). 3rd, This justification which the Christian obtains by faith is assured to him not only for the time present, but for the day of judgment, and consequently for ever. For it is accompanied by another grace which renders it permanent, the grace of sanctification (chap. v. 1-11).

Before describing this new gift however, which makes the first immutably secure, the Apostle asks in a third section, if the work of One like Jesus Christ can really extend its influence over many to such an extent as to justify all mankind. By a bold line of argument, he adduces in proof of this power, the fatal influence which the one sin of Adam has exerted. If this sin of Adam's has been powerful enough in its effects to bring death upon all men, how much more shall the far mightier work of Christ bring in eternal life. This concludes the first division of

the subject, that which deals with the fundamental fact of salvation, justification by faith. This part resembles the first day of creation, in the first chapter of Genesis. "*There was evening,*" the long night of condemnation on Jew and Gentile; and "*there was morning,*" the manifestation of Christ and of salvation. This was *the first day*. This first act is to be followed by many others, designed to complete the salvation of God.

The fourth division is not less clearly defined than the foregoing. It extends from chaps. vi.-viii. In this the Apostle works out the theme indicated in ver. 9, 10 of chap. v., when, after having spoken of reconciliation by the death of Christ, he adds the further gift of participation in His life. Having become by faith in the atoning sacrifice, one with Jesus Christ, the believer shares at once in His death and in His risen life. The believer dies to the sin for which Christ died, and he lives to God for whom alone Jesus lives in His resurrection life (chap. vi. 1-13). This effect of faith is produced in him by a moral necessity such that if he sought to evade it, he could only do so by denying the faith, and falling back under the old power of death under the law (chap. vi. 14-23). Being thus legitimately delivered by the death of Christ from the bondage of the law under which he was incessantly sinning, he is henceforward free to live in the new union with the risen Christ, a union in which he brings forth fruit unto God (vii. 1-6). Paul is here giving his own actual experience. He had himself lived under the law, and he knew that when the law came in contact with his moral life, it condemned it, and thus gave a sense of separation from God, and of spiritual death. In this state he was constantly striving to satisfy the requirements of the law, and to regain the favour of God. He did not succeed, and the result of all this fruitless struggle was an agonised cry: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the

body of this death!" . . . "With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." By his manner of expressing himself here, the Apostle gives the impression that it would still be so with him at the very moment when he is speaking, if he were left to himself and separated from the salvation he had received (chap. vii. 14-25). But this state of condemnation and powerlessness is no longer his. The spirit of Christ by the imparting to him the holy life of the Lord, has delivered him from spiritual death, and made him capable of fulfilling the law spiritually, as Christ Himself fulfilled it; and this new life is to him the pledge of future victory even over the death of the body (chap. viii. 1-11). For just as eternal death is certain for those who live after the flesh, so the Divine heritage of eternal life is assured to the children of God who live after the spirit (ver. 12-17). The Apostle sets forth here the final issues of salvation—glory manifesting itself even in the outward, corporeal and material domain. A threefold sigh goes up after this universal renovation; the sighing of nature itself, of the redeemed, and of the Holy Spirit; and this sighing will be heard, for it is in harmony with the will of God, according to which those whom God has foreknown as believers are predestinated to bear the glorious likeness of His Son (ver. 17-30). Having reached this culminating point, the Apostle strikes the keynote of the grand song of salvation. God is for us, therefore nothing which is against us can break the bond formed between Him and us by faith in Christ (ver. 31-39). This fourth division sets before us, therefore, the destruction of sin and the restoration of holiness, thus completing the work of justification, and preparing the way for our glorification. This is the *second day* in the Divine work of salvation, *Christ in us* carrying on and consummating the work of *Christ for us*.

Here the fifth division begins, as it appears at first, some-

what abruptly. This division takes in chaps. ix.-xi. The Apostle has just been magnifying the grace enjoyed by the Church; but Israel, the chosen people, remains without, and shares in none of these high privileges. Is this possible? is it just? What end can be answered by it? If the salvation proclaimed by the Gospel is of God, ought it not to be, first of all, the portion of the chosen people? The Gospel which sets this great problem, must surely, if true, furnish its solution. This solution the Apostle gives us in these chapters (ix.-xi.).

And first of all, however real the prerogative of Israel as the chosen people, it cannot be of force to bind God against His will, or to make void His word. Now Scripture shows, by the example of Ishmael and Esau, both true sons of Abraham, and yet rejected, that to be descended from that patriarch, which is Israel's boast, is not in itself an assurance of salvation. There are spiritual conditions of salvation, failing which a man, even though an Israelite, is rejected and condignly visited with that punishment of having his heart hardened, which fell upon Pharaoh. But if these conditions are fulfilled, even by a Gentile, they qualify the man to become the subject of the infinite mercy of God, like Moses himself. It belongs to God only to try the heart. Consequently He has the right to exercise His Almighty power freely and without human control; to harden whom He would punish, to bless whom He is pleased to save, for what seems good to such a Being must be good. Just so the potter, discerning the nature of the clay he has to fashion, sets apart some for honourable and the rest for vile uses. That which was then taking place, the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, had been so clearly foretold by the prophets, that none should be stumbled at it (chap. ix. 1-29). Not only then was the rejection of Israel possible, but it ought to have been expected according to

the Scriptures. But is it just? Were there sufficient reasons for so severe a measure? Yes, assuredly; for notwithstanding its zeal for God, Israel had persisted in resisting the Divine plan. With the coming of Christ, the reign of the Law, and consequently the monopoly of Israel, was to cease. Israel was obstinately bent on perpetuating both. The work of Christ inaugurated the era of a free salvation, by which the Gentiles were placed on the same level as Israel. Moses himself had clearly foreshadowed this revolution, when he represented salvation as the gift of God, and not as the reward of human effort. But Israel was unwilling to give up its position of privilege, and was bent upon maintaining it at all costs against the whole world. It everywhere set itself against the proclamation of salvation to the Gentiles. It never grasped the meaning of the warnings of the prophets, of Moses, and particularly of Isaiah, who all foretold the coming rejection of Israel and the calling in of the Gentiles to take its place (chap. ix. 30-x. 21). Was then that glorious vision of a kingdom of Messiah of which Israel should be the centre, to vanish away for ever? Were the promises of God to this people to be entirely and for ever annulled? Nay, this could not be. In the first place, there were believers in Israel, as the example of Paul himself proves; and if the mass of the people was visited by a judgment of hardening for its pride, there was yet a faithful "remnant according to the election of grace" (xi. 1-10).

Nay, more; the great body of the nation was itself one day to return and be reinstated in that kingdom of God from which for the moment it was shut out. Here the Apostle opens before us a long vista in the purposes of God. Israel, with its Pharisaic tendencies, could not have accepted Messiah without endeavouring to introduce into the new dispensation a strong leaven of legalism. Now salvation preached to the Gentiles under this Judaised

form would infallibly have been rejected by them. It was necessary then that Israel, since it was incorrigible in these forms of error, should be blinded so as not to recognise Jesus as the Messiah at all, that so the Gospel, freed from all alloy of legalism, might make its way throughout the whole world. But what is the depth of the mercies of God! This salvation, once realised among the Gentiles, will one day stir the rejected Jews to holy emulation, so that they will covet a share in the rich blessings enjoyed by the Gentiles, and will in the end receive the Christ by whom the Gentiles have been so blessed. And not only so, but this entering of believing Israel into the Church will be the signal for a spiritual revival and new fruitfulness throughout Christendom. Thus, as the casting away of the Jews led to the conversion of the Gentiles, so the conversion of the Gentiles will in its turn lead to that of the Jews. And this restoration of Israel will not be so hard of accomplishment as it might seem; for there is still holy sap in that rejected vine, so that it will be grafted in again upon the tree of the Divine covenant more readily than the Gentiles themselves were grafted in. Nay, it might even happen that if the Gentiles indulge in proud boasting against the Jews, they may be for a time rejected as were the Jews.

As the final issue, we see all humbled, each in his turn by a term of disobedience, but all at last gathered in by the all-embracing arms of the Father's love. And as at the close of chap. viii. the Apostle burst into a jubilant hymn of praise over the assurance of salvation, so now he magnifies, in one adoring exclamation, the depth of the wisdom of God's ways with man.

With chap. xii. a new division begins. The opening words, "*I beseech you then,*" fitly introduce its contents, which are the practical consequences which ought to follow in the lives of believers from the Divine works, the mercies of God

just set forth. These consequences bear on their conduct, first, as members of the Christian community (chap. xii.), then as belonging to the great human family (chap. xiii.). Beside these two general applications of Christian principles, the Apostle makes one particular application to a difficulty existing in the Church at the time when he was writing (chap. xiv. 1-xv. 13). The section of the Epistle which we are now considering, extends therefore from chap. xii. 1 to xv. 13. Paul begins by laying down in the first two verses of chap. xii. the basis of Christian activity. This he represents to be the complete sacrifice of self made by virtue of a renewed mind which has become quick to discern, in every case, the will of God. He next shows the twofold form in which this sacrifice is to be presented—first, as a member of the Church, by the faithful administration of the gift received, whatever it may be, with no ambition beyond its simple and conscientious use in all humility (ver. 3-8); next, by loving service of the brethren in all the relations of life, whether with the faithful or with the enemies and persecutors of the faith, so that all evil shall be overcome of good, that is, of love (ver. 9-21). To this sacrifice of self in all humility and charity the believer is to add, as a member of the state, respect for the rights of others in all civil relations, whether by submission to authority of every kind, or by just dealing towards all fellow-citizens; and this duty of fair dealing with all men the Apostle sums up as naturally implied in the bond of love (chap. xiii. 1-10). The Apostle concludes this exposition of the duties of the believer as a Christian and a citizen, by reminding him of the supreme motive by which he is ever to be sustained in his daily walk—the looking for the Saviour who is coming again, and for whose appearing the believer ought to be ever arrayed in pure garments, “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” Himself (ver. 11-14). What follows relates to the relations of the Church with one

particular group of believers who thought it their duty to abstain from meat and from wine. The Apostle urges the obligation of mutual forbearance. Those who abstain ought not to judge those who believe they have a right to use the things which others deny themselves; and those who use them ought not to look with contempt on those who abstain, since in such matters every one is to be guided by his own conscience (chap. xiv.). That the strong should support the weak is a sacred duty laid upon them by the example of Christ Himself, and is it not the only means of realising the union in one spiritual body of believing Jews and Gentiles—those believing Jews to whom God has so amply vindicated His faithfulness to His promises, and those believing Gentiles whom He has freely loaded with His benefits (xv. 1-13)? The Apostle closes his summary of Christian duty with this thought of the spiritual union between the two great families of mankind in the Church, The close of his teaching is thus fully in accord with its commencement (chap. i. 16, 17), in which Paul dwelt on the salvation offered by faith alike to Jew and Gentile. The Apostle anticipates in prayerful desire the harmonious hymn of praise which is to rise from the whole Christian community to the glory of the redeeming work he has been describing.

The seventh and last division consists of concluding words corresponding to the preamble (chap. i. 1-15). After excusing himself for offering such teaching to this community which possesses within itself so many means of Christian instruction, but which nevertheless comes within his sphere as Apostle to the Gentiles, he tells the Christians of Rome how he is placed at the moment. His work in the East is finished; he is purposing to go shortly into Spain, and hopes to take this opportunity of visiting Rome. Lastly, he tells them of his approaching visit to Jerusalem, to hand over to the Churches the collection made for them

among the Gentile Christians, and thus to seal the bond of friendship between them and the mother-Church (chap. xv. 24-33). He commends the deaconess Phœbe, the bearer of the letter, to the kindly care of the Church; he sends greetings to the various Christian workers whom he knew personally, having met them in the East, and who were now labouring for the spread of the Gospel in the capital of the world. Then he warns the various groups of Christians against the Judaising agitators who have been so busy troubling one after another the Churches founded by him, and who will be sure to come to Rome as soon as they hear that there are Christian communities there. He concludes with greetings from the workers who are with him, and with a solemn prayer to God for this important Church, that it may be established in the truth of the Gospel "now made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith."

Such is the Epistle to the Romans—this sublime effort of the human intellect to apprehend the thought of God in the salvation of mankind, and to give to the world its first clear exposition. How shall we distinguish, in this deep meditation on the things of God, the element of direct revelation given by Christ Himself, of which Paul speaks (Gal. i. 11, 12), from the natural workings of that rare intellect to which the Lord had been pleased to commit such a treasure? May we say that the substance was given by revelation, the form produced by reflection? It would be difficult to separate the two in this way. It would be better to say that Paul placed his intellect wholly at the service of Christ, to grasp and reproduce the Divine revelation. However this may be, we fail to find one gap in this great work, one break in its continuity. Everything is worked out in perfect order in this exposition of the Divine idea, as though by a law of inward necessity. But we note at the same time, very distinct divisions in it. We have enumerated seven, the first and the last

being of an epistolary character which marks them off from the rest ; so that they are like the envelope which contains the letter itself. The interesting question with regard to these five intermediate sections is, how to group them ; that is to say, what is really the plan of the Epistle, as conceived in the mind of the Apostle. Various answers may be given to this question. We may divide the body of the letter, as I have done in the first edition of my Commentary, into a doctrinal part (chap. i. 16-xi.) and a practical part (xii. 1-xv. 13) ; subdividing the first part into three sections—the one fundamental (i. 16-v.), explaining justification by faith ; the two others supplementary, intended, the one (vi.-viii.) to set forth the holiness of the justified believer ; the other (ix.-xi.) to explain the history of salvation from this standpoint. Or, as I have tried to do in my second edition, we may, while maintaining this great division into doctrinal and practical, subdivide the former into two sections, the one comprising chap. i. 16-viii., that is to say the whole exposition of salvation in its three essential phases—justification (i.-v.), sanctification (vi.-viii. 17), and the future and certain glorification of believers (viii. 18-39) ; the second setting forth the historical progress of salvation among mankind (chap. ix.-xi.). There is, however, a third mode of division, perhaps preferable, and which I think I should adopt if I were required to bring out a third edition. This would be to divide the whole matter contained in the five middle sections into three parts : first, chap. i.-viii., salvation ; second, chap. ix.-xi., the history of salvation ; third, xii.-xv. 13, the salvation-life. These three parts would be like the central block of a grand building, the two epistolary sections forming the two wings. Of course the only interest of such a question arises out of the desire to understand what was the idea present to the mind of the Apostle when he wrote the Epistle.

And now let us pause for a moment before this great structure, and try to count up some of the treasures it contains. I do not speak here of the light which flashes from it into the dark places of the heart of man, showing his corruption, his powerlessness for all that is good, and revealing at the same time the one way of salvation set before him, by which he may climb again the heavenly heights. I am speaking now of the intellectual treasures contained in these sixteen chapters, and which enrich with added treasure those who have already found the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In chap. i. we have a philosophy of paganism which searches to the very depths that great historical phenomenon, unveiling its hidden cause, and explaining its fearful consequences. In chap. iii. we have an explanation of the mystery of the cross which, better understood, would have prevented many misconceptions and removed many intellectual stumbling-blocks. In chap. v. we have a rapid survey of the history of humanity based upon the two opposite principles of life which regulate the whole development of the race. In chap. vi. we have the outlines of a moral philosophy which admirably combines the two elements of liberty and necessity. In chap. vii. we have an inimitable psychological analysis of the condition of unregenerate man, both as to what remains of good in him and as to his inability to realise his good intentions. In chap. viii. we have a philosophy of nature, which recognises the abnormal and transitory character of creation as it is, and which in this painful phase of its existence, corresponding to the fallen estate of man, discerns the pledge of a future renewal of all nature corresponding to man's glorious restoration. In chaps. ix.-xi. we have a philosophy of history which sets forth the great contrast between Israel and the Gentile nations as the key which can alone explain the strange vicissitudes of national life, and unlock the mystery of their final issues. In chap. xiii.

we have a system of political philosophy, which assigns to the State a basis no less Divine than that of the Church, "the powers that be being ordained of God" but, at the same time marks most distinctly the difference between the two societies, by the difference between the *love* which is the soul of the one (chap. xii.), and the justice which is the mainspring of the other. What we admire here is not so much this clear distinction between the State and the Church, since the Apostle would be naturally led to this by the hostility of the State to the Christian community at that time; but rather his recognition of the possibility of a moral union between the two resulting from this very distinction. For what opposition could there possibly be between the two equally Divine principles of justice and charity? or between two communities based the one on one of these principles, the other on the other. As to an administrative union between Church and State, Paul never dreamed of it, because of this very distinction. Justice is something due. The State may exact it by coercion. But with love it is not so. It is the free surrender of oneself under the constraining power of faith. The State cannot claim it. The Church alone can call it forth. Each of these two institutions has its proper sphere, and its special methods adapted for the work it has to do. This relation which even the nineteenth century so signally fails to comprehend, Paul places on its true basis.

Was not Coleridge right when he called the Epistle to the Romans, "the most profound writing extant"? It is a mine which the Church has been working for more than eighteen centuries, and from which it will go on drawing ever fresh treasures till it is raised at length from faith to perfect knowledge.

FREDERIC GODET.
