

THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY

A

CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL
COMMENTARY

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

BY THE

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on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and
New Testaments

UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF

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The International Critical Commentary

on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and

New Testaments.

EDITORS' PREFACE.

THERE are now before the public many Commentaries, written by British and American divines, of a popular or homiletical character. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools*, the *Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students*, *The Speaker's Commentary*, *The Popular Commentary* (Schaff), *The Expositor's Bible*, and other similar series, have their special place and importance. But they do not enter into the field of Critical Biblical scholarship occupied by such series of Commentaries as the *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum A. T.*; De Wette's *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum N. T.*; Meyer's *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar*; Keil and Delitzsch's *Biblicher Kommentar über das A. T.*; Lange's *Theologisch-homiletisches Bibelwerk*; Nowack's *Handkommentar zum A. T.*; Holtzmann's *Handkommentar zum N. T.* Several of these have been translated, edited, and in some cases enlarged and adapted, for the English-speaking public; others are in process of translation. But no corresponding series by British or American divines has hitherto been produced. The way has been prepared by special Commentaries by Cheyne, Ellicott, Kalisch, Lightfoot, Perowne, Westcott, and others; and the time has come, in the judgment of the projectors of this enterprise, when it is practicable to combine British and American scholars in the production of a critical, comprehensive

EDITORS' PREFACE

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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., LL.D.

AND

REV. A. C. HEADLAM, B. D.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

WE are indebted to the keen sight and disinterested care of friends for many small corrections. We desire to thank especially Professor Lock, Mr. C. H. Turner, the Revs. F. E. Brightman, and R. B. Rackham. We have also, where necessary, inserted references to the edition of 4 Ezra, by the late Mr. Bensly, published in *Texts and Studies*, iii. 2. No more extensive recasting of the Commentary has been attempted.

W. S.
A. C. H.

OXFORD, *Lent*, 1896.

PREFACE

THE commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans which already exist in English, unlike those on some other Books of the New Testament, are so good and so varied that to add to their number may well seem superfluous. Fortunately for the present editors the responsibility for attempting this does not rest with them. In a series of commentaries on the New Testament it was impossible that the Epistle to the Romans should not be included and should not hold a prominent place. There are few books which it is more difficult to exhaust and few in regard to which there is more to be gained from renewed interpretation by different minds working under different conditions. If it is a historical fact that the spiritual revivals of Christendom have been usually associated with closer study of the Bible, this would be true in an eminent degree of the Epistle to the Romans. The editors are under no illusion as to the value of their own special contribution, and they will be well content that it should find its proper level and be assimilated or left behind as it deserves.

Perhaps the nearest approach to anything at all distinctive in the present edition would be (1) the distribution of the subject-matter of the commentary, (2) the attempt to furnish an interpretation of the Epistle which might be described as historical.

Some experience in teaching has shown that if a difficult

Epistle like the Romans is really to be understood and grasped at once as a whole and in its parts, the argument should be presented in several different ways and on several different scales at the same time. And it is an advantage when the matter of a commentary can be so broken up that by means of headlines, headings to sections, summaries, paraphrases, and large and small print notes, the reader may not either lose the main thread of the argument in the crowd of details, or slur over details in seeking to obtain a general idea. While we are upon this subject, we may explain that the principle which has guided the choice of large and small print for the notes and longer discussions is not exactly that of greater or less importance, but rather that of greater or less directness of bearing upon the exegesis of the text. This principle may not be carried out with perfect uniformity: it was an experiment the effect of which could not always be judged until the commentary was in print; but when once the type was set the possibility of improvement was hardly worth the trouble and expense of resetting.

The other main object at which we have aimed is that of making our exposition of the Epistle historical, that is of assigning to it its true position in place and time—on the one hand in relation to contemporary Jewish thought, and on the other hand in relation to the growing body of Christian teaching. We have endeavoured always to bear in mind not only the Jewish education and training of the writer, which must clearly have given him the framework of thought and language in which his ideas are cast, but also the position of the Epistle in Christian literature. It was written when a large part of the phraseology of the newly created body was still fluid, when a number of words had not yet come to have a fixed meaning, when their origin and associations—to us obscure—were still fresh and vivid. The problem which a commentator ought to propose to himself in the first instance is not what answer

does the Epistle give to questions which are occupying men's minds now, or which have occupied them in any past period of Church history, but what were the questions of the time at which the Epistle was written and what meaning did his words and thoughts convey to the writer himself.

It is in the pursuit of this original meaning that we have drawn illustrations somewhat freely from Jewish writings, both from the Apocryphal literature which is mainly the product of the period between 100 B.C. and 100 A.D., and (although less fully) from later Jewish literature. In the former direction we have been much assisted by the attention which has been bestowed in recent years on these writings, particularly by the excellent editions of the Psalms of Solomon and of the Book of Enoch. It is by a continuous and careful study of such works that any advance in the exegesis of the New Testament will be possible. For the later Jewish literature and the teaching of the Rabbis we have found ourselves in a position of greater difficulty. A first-hand acquaintance with this literature we do not possess, nor would it be easy for most students of the New Testament to acquire it. Moreover complete agreement among the specialists on the subject does not as yet exist, and a perfectly trustworthy standard of criticism seems to be wanting. We cannot therefore feel altogether confident of our ground. At the same time we have used such material as was at our disposal, and certainly to ourselves it has been of great assistance, partly as suggesting the common origin of systems of thought which have developed very differently, partly by the striking contrasts which it has afforded to Christian teaching.

Our object is historical and not dogmatic. Dogmatics are indeed excluded by the plan of this series of commentaries, but they are excluded also by the conception which we have formed for ourselves of our duty as commentators. We have sought before all things to understand St. Paul,

and to understand him not only in relation to his surroundings but also to those permanent facts of human nature on which his system is based. It is possible that in so far as we may succeed in doing this, data may be supplied which at other times and in other hands may be utilized for purposes of dogmatics; but the final adjustments of Christian doctrine have not been in our thoughts.

To this general aim all other features of the commentary are subordinate. It is no part of our design to be in the least degree exhaustive. If we touch upon the history of exegesis it is less for the sake of that history in itself than as helping to throw into clearer relief that interpretation which we believe to be the right one. And in like manner we have not made use of the Epistle as a means for illustrating New Testament grammar or New Testament diction, but we deal with questions of grammar and diction just so far as they contribute to the exegesis of the text before us. No doubt there will be omissions which are not to be excused in this way. The literature on the Epistle to the Romans is so vast that we cannot pretend to have really mastered it. We have tried to take account of monographs and commentaries of the most recent date, but here again when we have reached what seemed to us a satisfactory explanation we have held our hand. In regard to one book in particular, Dr. Bruce's *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, which came out as our own work was far advanced, we thought it best to be quite independent. On the other hand we have been glad to have access to the sheets relating to Romans in Dr. Hort's forthcoming *Introductions to Romans and Ephesians*, which, through the kindness of the editors, have been in our possession since December last.

The Commentary and the Introduction have been about equally divided between the two editors; but they have each been carefully over the work of the other, and they desire to accept a joint responsibility for the whole. The

editors themselves are conscious of having gained much by this co-operation, and they hope that this gain may be set off against a certain amount of unevenness which was inevitable.

It only remains for them to express their obligations and thanks to those many friends who have helped them directly or indirectly in various parts of the work, and more especially to Dr. Plummer and the Rev. F. E. Brightman of the Pusey House. Dr. Plummer, as editor of the series, has read through the whole of the Commentary more than once, and to his courteous and careful criticism they owe much. To Mr. Brightman they are indebted for spending upon the proof-sheets of one half of the Commentary greater care and attention than many men have the patience to bestow on work of their own.

The reader is requested to note the table of abbreviations on p. cx ff., and the explanation there given as to the Greek text made use of in the Commentary. Some additional references are given in the Index (p. 444 ff).

W. SANDAY.

A. C. HEADLAM.

OXFORD, *Whitsuntide*, 1895.

INTRODUCTION

§ I. ROME IN A. D. 58.

IT was during the winter 57-58, or early in the spring of the year 58, according to almost all calculations, that St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, and that we thus obtain the first trustworthy information about the Roman Church. Even if there be some slight error in the calculations, it is in any case impossible that this date can be far wrong, and the Epistle must certainly have been written during the early years of Nero's reign. It would be unwise to attempt a full account either of the city or the empire at this date, but for the illustration of the Epistle and for the comprehension of St. Paul's own mind, a brief reference to a few leading features in the history of each is necessary¹.

For certainly St. Paul was influenced by the name of Rome. In Rome, great as it is, and to Romans, he wishes to preach the Gospel: he prays for a prosperous journey that by the will of God he may come unto them: he longs to see them: the universality of the Gospel makes him desire to preach it in the universal city². And the impression which we gain from the Epistle to the Romans is supported by our other sources of information. The desire to visit Rome dominates the close of the Acts of the Apostles: 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome.' 'As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome³.' The imagery of citizenship has impressed itself upon his language⁴. And this was the result both of his experience and of his birth. Wherever Christianity had been preached the Roman authorities had appeared as the power which restrained

¹ The main authorities used for this section are Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*, vol. ii, and Schiller, *Geschichte des Römischen Kaiserreichs unter der Regierung des Nero*.

² Rom. i. 8-13.

³ Acts xix. 21; xxiii. 11.

⁴ Phil. i. 27; iii. 20; Eph. ii. 19; Acts xxiii. 1.

the forces of evil opposed to it¹. The worst persecution of the Christians had been while Judaea was under the rule of a native prince. Everywhere the Jews had stirred up persecutions, and the imperial officials had interfered and protected the Apostle. And so both in this Epistle and throughout his life St. Paul emphasizes the duty of obedience to the civil government, and the necessity of fulfilling our obligations to it. But also St. Paul was himself a Roman citizen. This privilege, not then so common as it became later, would naturally broaden the view and impress the imagination of a provincial; and it is significant that the first clear conception of the universal character inherent in Christianity, the first bold step to carry it out, and the capacity to realize the importance of the Roman Church should come from an Apostle who was not a Galilean peasant but a citizen of a universal empire. 'We cannot fail to be struck with the strong hold that Roman ideas had on the mind of St. Paul,' writes Mr. Ramsay, 'we feel compelled to suppose that St. Paul had conceived the great idea of Christianity as the religion of the Roman world; and that he thought of the various districts and countries in which he had preached as parts of the grand unity. He had the mind of an organizer; and to him the Christians of his earliest travels were not men of Iconium and of Antioch—they were a part of the Roman world, and were addressed by him as such².'

It was during the early years of Nero's reign that St. Paul first came into contact with the Roman Church. And the period is significant. It was what later times called the *Quinquennium* of Nero, and remembered as the happiest period of the Empire since the death of Augustus³. Nor was the judgement unfounded. It is

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 7 ὁ κατέχων, 6 τὸ κατέχων. It is well known that the commonest interpretation of these words among the Fathers was the Roman Empire (see the *Catena* of passages in Alford, iii. p. 56 ff.), and this accords most suitably with the time when the Epistle was written (c. 53 A.D.). The only argument of any value for a later date and the unauthentic character of the whole Epistle or of the eschatological sections (ii. 1–12) is the attempt to explain this passage of the return of Nero, but such an interpretation is quite unnecessary, and does not particularly suit the words. St. Paul's experience had taught him that there were lying restrained and checked great forces of evil which might at any time burst out, and this he calls the 'mystery of iniquity,' and describes in the language of the O. T. prophets. But everywhere the power of the civil government, as embodied in the Roman Empire (τὸ κατέχων) and visibly personified in the Emperor (ὁ κατέχων), restrained these forces. Such an interpretation, either of the eschatological passages of the Epistle or of the Apocalypse, does not destroy their deeper spiritual meaning; for the writers of the New Testament, as the prophets of the Old, reveal to us and generalize the spiritual forces of good and evil which underlie the surface of society.

² Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 147, 148; cf. also pp. 60, 70, 158 n. See also Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, pp. 202–205.

³ Aur. Victor, *Caes.* 5, *Epit.* 12, *Unde quidam prodidere, Traianum solitum dicere, procul distare cunctos principes a Neronis quinquennio.* The expression

probable that even the worst excesses of Nero, like the worst cruelty of Tiberius, did little harm to the mass of the people even in Rome; and many even of the faults of the Emperors assisted in working out the new ideas which the Empire was creating. But at present we have not to do with faults. Members of court circles might have unpleasant and exaggerated stories to tell about the death of Britannicus; tales might have been circulated of hardly pardonable excesses committed by the Emperor and a noisy band of companions wandering at night in the streets; the more respectable of the Roman aristocracy would consider an illicit union with a freedwoman and a taste for music, literature, and the drama, signs of degradation, but neither in Rome nor in the provinces would the populace be offended; more far-seeing observers might be able to detect worse signs, but if any ordinary citizen, or if any one acquainted with the provinces had been questioned, he would certainly have answered that the government of the Empire was good. This was due mainly to the gradual development of the ideas on which the Empire had been founded. The structure which had been sketched by the genius of Caesar, and built up by the art of Augustus, if allowed to develop freely, guaranteed naturally certain conditions of progress and good fortune. It was due also to the wise administration of Seneca and of Burrus. It was due apparently also to flashes of genius and love of popularity on the part of the Emperor himself.

The provinces were well governed. Judaea was at this time preparing for insurrection under the rule of Felix, but he was a legacy from the reign of Claudius. The difficulties in Armenia were met at once and vigorously by the appointment of Corbulo; the rebellion in Britain was wisely dealt with; even at the end of Nero's reign the appointment of Vespasian to Judaea, as soon as the serious character of the revolt was known, shows that the Emperor still had the wisdom to select and the courage to appoint able men. During the early years a long list is given of trials for *repetundae*; and the number of convictions, while it shows that provincial government was not free from corruption, proves that it was becoming more and more possible to obtain justice. It was the corruption of the last reign that was condemned by the justice of the present. In the year 56, Vipsanius Laenas, governor of Sardinia, was condemned for extortion; in 57, Capito, the 'Cilician pirate,' was struck down by the senate 'with a righteous thunderbolt.' Amongst the accusations against

quinguennum may have been suggested by the *certamen quinquennale* which Nero founded in Rome, as Dio tells us, *ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς τε διαμονῆς τοῦ ἀρχαίου αὐτοῦ*, Dio, *Epit.* lxi. 21; Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 20; Suet. *Nero* 12; cf. the coins described, Eckhel, vi. 264; Cohen, i. p. 282, 47-65. CER. QUINQ. ROM. CO.

Suillius in 58 was the misgovernment of Asia. And not only were the favourites of Claudius condemned, better men were appointed *in their place*. *It is recorded that freedmen were never made procurators of imperial provinces.* And the Emperor was able in many cases, in that of Lyons, of Cyrene, and probably of Ephesus, to assist and pacify the provincials by acts of generosity and benevolence¹.

We may easily, perhaps, lay too much stress on some of the measures attributed to Nero; but many of them show, if not the policy of his reign, at any rate the tendency of the Empire. The police regulations of the city were strict and well executed². An attack was made on the exactions of publicans, and on the excessive power of freedmen. Law was growing in exactness owing to the influence of Jurists, and was justly administered except where the Emperor's personal wishes intervened³. Once the Emperor—was it a mere freak or was it an act of far-seeing political insight?—proposed a measure of free trade for the whole Empire. Governors of provinces were forbidden to obtain condonation for exactions by the exhibition of games. The proclamation of freedom to Greece may have been an act of dramatic folly, but the extension of Latin rights meant that the provincials were being gradually put more and more on a level with Roman citizens. And the provinces flourished for the most part under this rule. It seemed almost as if the future career of a Roman noble might depend upon the goodwill of his provincial subjects⁴. And wherever trade could flourish there wealth accumulated. Laodicea was so rich that the inhabitants could rebuild the city without aid from Rome, and Lyons could contribute 4,000,000 sesterces at the time of the great fire⁵.

When, then, St. Paul speaks of the 'powers that be' as being 'ordained by God'; when he says that the ruler is a minister of God for good; when he is giving directions to pay 'tribute' and 'custom'; he is thinking of a great and beneficent power which has made travel for him possible, which had often interfered to protect him against an angry mob of his own countrymen, under which he had seen the towns through which he passed enjoying peace, prosperity and civilization.

¹ For the provincial administration of Nero see Furneaux, *op. cit.* pp. 56, 57; W. T. Arnold, *The Roman System of Provincial Administration*, pp. 135, 137; Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 30, 31, 33, 50, 51, 53-57.

² Suetonius, *Nero* 16. Schiller, p. 420.

³ Schiller, pp. 381, 382: 'In dem Mechanismus des gerichtlichen Verfahrens, im Privatrecht, in der Ausbildung und Förderung der Rechtswissenschaft, selbst auf dem Gebiete der Appellation können gegründete Vorwürfe kaum erhoben werden. Die kaiserliche Regierung liess die Verhältnisse hier ruhig den Gang gehen, welchen ihnen frühere Regierungen angewiesen hatten.'

⁴ Tac. *Ann.* xv. 20, 21.

⁵ Arnold, p. 137.