

THE TIME WHEN THE EPIS- TLE TO THE ROMANES WAS WRIT- TEN, AND THE ARGUMENT THEROF.

The hiftorie of S. Paul, vntil he came to Rome, S. Luke in the Actes of the Apoftles wrote exactly: and though without any mention of his Epiftles, yet certaine it is, that fome of them he wrote before he came there, to wit, the two vnto the Corinthians, and this to the Romanes: *Gal. 2.* & (as it feemeth) before them al, the Epiftle to the Galatians. Wherein yet becaufe he maketh mention of the foureteenth yeare after his conuerfion, it appeareth, that he preached fo long without any writing.

And this order may thus briefly be gathered. Firft he preached to the Galatians *Act. 16. and pafing through Phrygia and the countrey of Galatia.* Whereof he maketh mention himfelfe alfo, *Gal. 1. We euangelized to you. Gal. 4. I euangelized to you heretofore.* After which the falfe Apoftles came and perfuaded them to receiue Circumcifion. Whereupon he faith *Gal. 1. I maruel that thus fo foone you are transferred from him that called you to the grace of Chrifft, vnto another Ghofpel:* and wifeth therefore *Gal. 4. faying: And I would I were with you now.* And accordingly he came vnto them afterward, as we read *Act. 18. Walking in order through the countrey of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming al the Difciples.* At which time alfo it feemeth, that he tooke order with them about thofe contributions to help the need of the Chriftians in Hierufalem, whereof he fpeaketh *1. Cor. 16: And concerning the collections that are made for the Saints, as I haue ordeined to the Churches of Galatia, fo doe you alfo.* By which words alfo it is euident, that the Corinthians had not as then made their gathering. But when he wrote the Second to them (where in the *11. chapter* he maketh mention of 14. yeares, not only after his Conuerfion, as to the Galatians, but alfo after his Rapte, which feemeth to

haue been when he was at Hierufalem *Act. 9.* foure yeares after his conuerfion, *in a trance*, as he calleth it, *Act. 22. 17.*) then were they redie. For fo he faith *2. Cor. 8.* *You haue begun from the yeare past;* and *2. Co. 9.* *For the which I doe glorie of you to the Macedonians; that alfo Achaia is ready from the yeare past:* Howbeit it followeth there: *But I haue fent the Brethren, that (as I haue faid) you may be ready: left when the Macedonians come with me, and find you vnready, we be afhamed.* But when he wrote to the Romanes, then was he now come to Corinth for the purpofe, and had receiued their contribution, and was readie to goe with it vnto Hierufalem. For fo he faieth *Rom. 15.* *Now therefore I wil goe vnto Hierufalem to minifter to the Saints. For Macedonia and Achaia haue liked wel to make fome contribution vpon the poore Saints that are in Hierufalem.*

Epiph. Hær.
42. Marcioan. Aug. in
Expof. incho.
Ep. ad Rom.

2. Cor. 5.
Ephes. 2.

So then, the Epiftle to the Romanes was not the firft that he wrote. But yet it is and alwaies was fet firft, becaufe of the primacie of that Church. For which caufe alfo he handleth in it fuch matters as pertained not to them alone, but to the vniuerfal Church, and fpecially to al the Gentils: to wit, the very frame (as it were) of the Church of Chrifft. *Tanquam enim pro ipfo Domino legatione fungens, hoc eft, pro lapide angulari, vtrumque populum tam, ex Iudæis quam ex Gentibus connectit in Chrifto per vinculum gratiæ.* So faith S. Auguftin, giuing vs briefly the argument; in english thus: *As being a Legate for our Lord himfelf, that is, for the corner-ftone, he knitteth together in Chrifft by the band of Grace, both peoples, as wel of the Iewes as of the Gentils.* Shewing, that neither of them had in their Gentilitie or Iudaifme any workes to brag of, or to challenge to themfelues iuftification or faluation thereby, but rather finnes they had to be forie for, and to humble themfelues to the faith of Chrifft, that fo they might haue remiffion of them, and ftrength to doe meritorious workes afterward. In which fort becaufe the Gentils did humble themfelues, therefor had they found mercy though they neuer wift of the Law of Moyfes: but the

The argument
of the Epiftle to
the Romanes.

Iewes, becaufe they ftood vpon their owne workes, which they did by their owne ftrength, with the knowledge of the Law (being therefore alfo called *the workes of the Law*;) & fo would not humble themfelues to beleue in Chrift crucified, they miffed of mercy, and became reprobate, excepting a few *Reliquæ* that God of his goodnes had referued to himfelf. Howbeit in the end, when the fulnes of the Gentils is come into the Church, then fhall the fulnes of the Iewes alfo open their eyes, acknowledge their error, and fubmit themfelues to Chrift and his Church, in like manner. In the meane time, thofe that haue found the grace to be Chriftians, he exhortheth to perfeuerance (as it was fppecially needful in thofe times of perfecutions) and to lead their whole life now after Baptifme in good workes: and to be careful of vnitie, bearing therefore one with another, both Iew and Gentil, al that they may, and giuing no offence to them that are weake. Thus he difputeth, and thus he exhortheth through the whole Epiftle: though, if we wil diuide it by that which is principal in each part, we may fay, that vnto the *12. chapter* is his difputation: and from thence to the end, his exhoration.

The workes of
the Law.

- Now in thefe points of faith, and in al others (as alfo in example of life) the commendation that he giueth to the Church of Rome, is much to be noted. *Rom. 1.* *Your faith is renowned in the whole world; and your obedience is published into euery place. I reioyce therefore in you.*
- Rom. 6.* *And againe: You haue obeied from the hart vnto that forme of doctrine, which had been deliuered to you. And thereupon againe: I defire you, Brethren, to marke them that make diffenfions and fcandals contrarie to the doctrine which you haue learned, and auoid them. For fuch doe not ferue Chrift our Lord, but their owne belly: and by fweet fpeeches and benedictions feduce the harts of innocents.* Therefore to fhun Luther and Caluin, and al their crewes, we haue iuft reafon and good warrant. They make diffenfions and fcandals againft the doctrine of the Romane Church. Let no man therefore be feduced by their fugred wordes.