

THE TIME WHEN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANES WAS WRITTEN, 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: & (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 Chrift, vnto another Ghofpel: and wisheth 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 countrie 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 Mace-
 donians; that also Achaia is ready from the yeare past:
 Howbeit it followeth there: *But I haue sent the Brethren,*
that (as I haue said) you may be ready: left when the
Macedonians come with me, and find you vnready, we
be ashamed. But when he wrote to the Romanes, then
 was he now come to Corinth for the purpose, and had
 receiued their contribution, and was readie to goe with
 it vnto Hierusalem. For so he saith *Rom. 15.* Now
therefore I wil goe vnto Hierusalem to minister to the
Saints. For Macedonia and Achaia haue liked wel to
make some contribution vpon the poore Saints that are
in Hierusalem.

Epiph. Hær.
42. Mar-
cioan. Aug. in
Expof. incho.
Ep. ad Rom.

2. Cor. 5.
Ephes. 2.

So then, the Epistle to the Romanes was not the
 first that he wrote. But yet it is and alwaies was set
 first, because of the primacie of that Church. For which
 cause also he handleth in it such matters as pertained
 not to them alone, but to the vniuersal Church, and
 specially to al the Gentils: to wit, the very frame (as
 it were) of the Church of Christ. *Tanquam enim pro*
ipso Domino legatione fungens, hoc est, pro lapide an-
gulari, vtrumque populum tam, ex Iudæis quam ex Gen-
tibus connectit in Christo per vinculum gratiæ. So saith
 S. Augustin, giuing vs briefly the argument; in english
 thus: *As being a Legate for our Lord himself, that is,*
for the corner-stone, he knitteth together in Christ 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 Iudaisme any workes to brag of, or to
 challenge to themselves iustification or saluation thereby,
 but rather finnes they had to be forie for, and to hum-
 ble themselves to the faith of Christ, that so they might
 haue remission of them, and strength to doe meritori-
 ous workes afterward. In which fort because the Gentils
 did humble themselves, therefor had they found mercy
 though they neuer wist of the Law of Moyfes: but the
 Iewes, because they stood vpon their owne workes, which
 they did by their owne strength, with the knowledge of
 the Law (being therefore also called *the workes of the*

The argument
 of the Epistle to
 the Romanes.

The workes of
 the Law.

Law;) & so would not humble themselves to believe in Christ crucified, they missed of mercy, and became reprobate, excepting a few *Reliquæ* that God of his goodness had referred to himself. Howbeit in the end, when the fulnes of the Gentils is come into the Church, then shall the fulnes of the Iewes also open their eyes, acknowledge their error, and submit themselves to Christ and his Church, in like manner. In the meane time, those that haue found the grace to be Christians, he exhorteth to perseverance (as it was specially needful in those times of persecutions) and to lead their whole life now after Baptisme 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 disputeth, and thus he exhorteth through the whole Epistle: though, if we wil diuide it by that which is principal in each part, we may say, that vnto the 12. *chapter* is his disputation: and from thence to the end, his exhortation.

- Now in these points of faith, and in al others (as also in example of life) the commendation that he giueth to the Church of Rome, is much to be noted. *Your faith is renowned in the whole world; and your obedience is published into euery place. I reioyce therefore in you.*
- Rom. 1.* And againe: *You haue obeyed from the hart vnto that forme of doctrine, which had been deliuered to you.* And
- Rom. 6.* thereupon againe: *I desire you, Brethren, to marke them that make diffensions and scandals contrarie to the doctrine which you haue learned, and auoid them. For such doe not serue Christ our Lord, but their owne belly: and by sweet speeches and benedictions seduce the harts of innocents.* Therefore to shun Luther and Caluin, and al their crewes, we haue iust reason and good warrant. They make diffensions and scandals against the doctrine of the Romane Church. Let no man therefore be seduced by their fugred wordes.
- Rom. 16.*