

**HORÆ PAULINÆ; OR, THE TRUTH OF THE
SCRIPTURE HISTORY OF ST. PAUL
EVINCED: EVINCED BY A COMPARISON
OF THE EPISTLES WHICH BEAR HIS NAME,
WITH THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, AND
WITH ONE ANOTHER. LONDON. 1855**

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WILLIAM PALEY

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By WILLIAM PALEY, M.A.

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C O N T E N T S .

	PAGE
Exposition of the Argument - - - - -	1
The Epistle to the Romans - - - - -	12
The First Epistle to the Corinthians - - - - -	40
The Second Epistle to the Corinthians - - - - -	61
The Epistle to the Galatians - - - - -	95
The Epistle to the Ephesians - - - - -	129
The Epistle to the Philippians - - - - -	159
The Epistle to the Colossians - - - - -	173
The First Epistle to the Thessalonians - - - - -	181
The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians - - - - -	192
The First Epistle to Timothy - - - - -	199
The Second Epistle to Timothy - - - - -	209
The Epistle to Titus - - - - -	220
The Epistle to Philemon - - - - -	227
The Subscriptions of the Epistles - - - - -	233
The Conclusion - - - - -	237

THE TRUTH
OF THE
SCRIPTURE HISTORY OF ST. PAUL
EVINCED.

CHAPTER I.

Exposition of the Argument.

THE volume of Christian Scriptures contains thirteen letters purporting to be written by St. Paul; it contains also a book, which, amongst other things, professes to deliver the history, or rather memoirs of the history, of this same person. By assuming the genuineness of the letters, we may prove the substantial truth of the history; or, by assuming the truth of the history, we may argue strongly in support of the genuineness of the letters. But I assume neither one nor the other. The reader is at liberty to suppose these writings to have been lately discovered in the library of the Escorial, and to come to our hands destitute of any extrinsic or collateral evidence whatever; and the argument I am about to offer is calculated to show, that a comparison of the different writings would, even under these circumstances, afford good reason to believe the persons and trans-

actions to have been real, the letters authentic, and the narration in the main to be true.

Agreement or conformity between letters bearing the name of an ancient author, and a received history of that author's life, does not necessarily establish the credit of either: because,

1. The history may, like Middleton's Life of Cicero, or Jortin's Life of Erasmus, have been wholly, or in part, compiled from the letters; in which case it is manifest that the history adds nothing to the evidence already afforded by the letters: or,

2. The letters may have been fabricated out of the history: a species of imposture which is certainly practicable; and which, without any accession of proof or authority, would necessarily produce the appearance of consistency and agreement: or,

3. The history and letters may have been founded upon some authority common to both; as upon reports and traditions which prevailed in the age in which they were composed, or upon some ancient record now lost, which both writers consulted: in which case also, the letters, without being genuine, may exhibit marks of conformity with the history; and the history, without being true, may agree with the letters.

Agreement, therefore, or conformity, is only to be relied upon so far as we can exclude these several suppositions. Now the point to be noticed is, that, in the three cases above enumerated, conformity must be the effect of *design*. Where the history is compiled from the letters, which is the first case, the design and composition of the work are in general so confessed, or made so evident by comparison, as to leave us in no danger of confounding the pro-

duction with original history, or of mistaking it for independent authority. The agreement, it is probable, will be close and uniform, and will easily be perceived to result from the intention of the author, and from the plan and conduct of his work.—Where the letters are fabricated from the history, which is the second case, it is always for the purpose of imposing a forgery upon the public; and, in order to give colour and probability to the fraud, names, places, and circumstances, found in the history, may be studiously introduced into the letters, as well as a general consistency be endeavoured to be maintained. But here it is manifest, that whatever congruity appears, is the consequence of meditation, artifice, and design.—The third case is that wherein the history and the letters, without any direct privity or communication with each other, derive their materials from the same source; and, by reason of their common original, furnish instances of accordance and correspondence. This is a situation in which we must allow it to be possible for ancient writings to be placed; and it is a situation in which it is more difficult to distinguish spurious from genuine writings, than in either of the cases described in the preceding suppositions; inasmuch as the congruities observable are so far accidental, as that they are not produced by the immediate transplanting of names and circumstances out of one writing into the other. But although, with respect to each other, the agreement in these writings be mediate and secondary, yet is it not properly or absolutely undesigned; because, with respect to the common original from which the information of the writers proceeds, it is studied and factitious. The case of which we treat