

**ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE: A  
BIBLICAL PORTRAIT  
AND A MIRROR OF THE  
MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD**

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St. Paul the apostle: a Biblical portrait and a mirror of the manifold grace of God by W. F. Besser

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# ST PAUL THE APOSTLE:

A BIBLICAL PORTRAIT

AND

A MIRROR OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD.

BY

W. F. BESSER, D.D.

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE BY

REV. J. S. HOWSON, D.D.

NEW YORK:  
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1864.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

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DURING the last ten or twenty years a very remarkable attention has been given, in many countries, to the study of the Life and Personal Character of St Paul. A large number of books might be mentioned, published during this period, on the whole or on part of this subject, in England and Germany, Holland and France. Among these books, the small volume here presented to the reader deserves to hold a conspicuous place.

My share in the publication of this translation has been limited to making arrangements with the publisher, to correcting the proof-sheets, and giving a more English turn to some of the sentences which seemed to require it. In discharging the last of these tasks, I have confined myself within narrow bounds, and most scrupulously avoided communicating the least shade of difference of meaning to any single expression. Sometimes I have fancied that the translator did not exhibit quite exactly



the author's thought ; but in such cases I have not felt myself at liberty (and, indeed, with my inadequate knowledge of German, it would have been presumptuous) to make any changes in the sense. My difficulty was further increased by the fact that I have had simply the published edition of Dr Besser's " Paulus " before me, whereas Mr Baltmann (as he says in his preface) executed his translation within reach of notes prepared by the author for a second edition : and in some cases I see that the variation is considerable. These explanations will doubtless be thought sufficient, if the whole book is found to wear, as regards its phraseology, a German complexion, if some parts are rather obscure, and others contain expressions and images which seem strange to the English reader. When an author writes somewhat quaintly in his own language, it is difficult to preserve this characteristic in a translation.

My own work and responsibility in this instance having been so light, it seems hardly necessary to say more. I may just add, however, that in certain details I do not agree with the author's views. Thus I think very great objections lie against his opinion that the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus were written during the residence at Ephesus, described in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. All serious difficulties in regard to these epistles vanish if we retain the old opinion, that the Apostle

was liberated from the Roman imprisonment recorded at the end of that book. And Dr Besser himself, in common with a large number of the most recent writers, quite accepts that well-supported view.\* On the other hand, while differing sometimes in circumstantial detail, it is a great pleasure to me to express my hearty concurrence in the general delineation here given of the Apostle's character. Thus (to mention one point, which has not always been very distinctly noticed in connexion with the sequence of the events of St Paul's life) I see that Dr Besser has been struck, as I was† before reading his book, with the peculiarly elastic and joyous tone of the epistles written during that very imprisonment, after a time of much depression, suffering, and trial.

One other subject calls for a single remark. Mr Bultmann has thought it desirable to state that he does not quite accord with Dr Besser's somewhat "High-Church views." It does not appear to me necessary to lay peculiar stress on this point. It may be of service to some Eng-

\* Some English Churchmen would not be satisfied with what is said on Church Order in the last chapter: but the author virtually admits that the germ of Episcopacy was planted in the missions of Timothy and Titus; and the argument hence derived is not touched by the fact that the words "bishop" and "presbyter" are convertible in Acts xx. 17, 28, and Tit. i. 5, 7.

† I may take the liberty of referring here to p. 208 (second edition) of the "Hulsean Lectures for 1862: Five Lectures on the Character of St Paul, by J. S. Howson, D.D."

lish readers to see how a German, who holds the doctrine of Justification by Faith in the purest and strictest sense, yet looks on Baptism as the entrance to great spiritual blessings, believes that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace of the utmost moment, and sets a high value on the external unity of the Church. Our own Ecclesiastical and Sacramental controversies have separated us from one another; and it may be well that those who have been so divided should at last draw more closely together. Worse dangers now surround us than any which are connected with such disputes. As regards the Supernatural character of Christianity, the Redemption wrought for us by Christ, and the reverence due to the Holy Scriptures, Dr Besser will be found unfaltering. His "Paulus" is a popular book as opposed to a mere theological treatise; but it is evidently based on a careful, minute, and prolonged study of all that is said in the New Testament by St Paul, and of St Paul; and I believe it will be found full of useful suggestions to those whose duty it is to teach others, as well as eminently adapted to build up unlearned believers "in their most holy faith."

J. S. H.

LIVERPOOL, Feb. 2, 1864.