

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

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Horæ Paulinæ: Or, The Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul Evinced by a Comparison of the Epistles Which Bear His Name, with the Acts of the Apostles, and with One Another by William Paley

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**WILLIAM PALEY**

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THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURE HISTORY OF  
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WITH ONE ANOTHER.

BY

WILLIAM PALEY, M.A., 1743-1805.  
ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

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A NEW EDITION, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND QUESTIONS,

By WILLIAM BINNIE, D.D.



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1879.

## INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR.

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THE design of the *HORÆ PAULINÆ* is to establish the authenticity of the Epistles of Paul, and of the narrative in the Acts, so far as it relates to the ministry of that great Apostle. That is to say, our author's object is to prove (1) that the thirteen Epistles which bear Paul's name, in the New Testament—the Epistle to the Hebrews is, for the present, left out of view—are what they purport to be, Letters written by the Apostle Paul to Churches and individual Christians in the course of his public ministry; and (2) that the relative portion of the Acts is, in like manner, what it purports to be, a *bona fide* narrative of the travels and labours of the same Apostle in founding and building up the first Churches.

The subject possesses great interest and importance, especially for the present time. In point of importance it is second only to the question regarding the trustworthiness of the Evangelical Narrative itself, and the testimony there delivered regarding our blessed Lord, his person, his birth and public ministry, his death and resurrection. Indeed, as we shall see immediately, the argument of the "*Horæ Paulinæ*" has something to say about that supreme question also. The thirteen Letters whose authenticity is here considered would have been of great interest if they had been letters on Church business and Christian truth,

from the pen of some trusted elder of the Church at Ephesus, or Corinth, or Rome; even if he had been a man otherwise unknown to us, and who excited no appreciable influence in moulding the beliefs and institutions of the Church. Even in that case they would have been prized, as affording authentic information regarding the state of sentiment and manners in the midst of which the author lived. But the writer of the Epistles before us is much more than a witness to the facts regarding the first Churches. It was he who, more than any other man, gathered these Churches and made them what they were. More particularly, he was the Apostle of the Gentiles. He was the leader in that evangelic mission which made the tour of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, and the islands of the eastern Mediterranean, prior to the death of Nero and the destruction of Jerusalem, and which had for its memorable result the planting of Christian Churches along the whole line of its progress. The greater number of those Gentile Churches which were of chief note in the first century were gathered and organized by this Apostle in person. He is therefore the principal representative of the first age of the Church. To understand Paul is to understand infant Christianity.

Hence the importance of the question respecting the existence of genuine Letters from the pen of the Apostle Paul. If the Pauline Epistles and the relative history in the Acts are authentic, then early Christianity is lifted at once out of the region of myth and vague conjecture. We can learn with certainty what it was. We can ascertain exactly, and at first hand, what was the doctrine which the first Christian preachers delivered, which the first converts received, and by the belief of which they were knit together in Church fellowship. What, for example, could be more conclusive regarding the articles of truth preached by the Apostles, and the fundamental im-

portance attached to those articles in the first age of the Church, than the following ~~verses~~, in which the Corinthians are reminded of "the beginning of the gospel" amongst them?—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 1-6.) Nor is it only on the beliefs of the first Christians that these Letters shed a clear and authentic light. They are full of vivid details regarding the whole life of the Church, and transport us into the scenes amidst which our Apostle moved. The reader is able to visit the early Christian societies, to interrogate the members regarding their experiences and hopes, to behold their worship, and to scrutinize their manner of life. In truth, the Pauline Epistles have this in common with all genuine letters of public men, written in the course of their public life, that they not only furnish the reader with memorials of the affairs to which they relate, but are themselves a part of those affairs. In the perusal of the Epistle to the Galatians we are not merely reading a faithful account of Paul's contest against the Judaizing teachers; we are ourselves spectators of the contest.

The Pauline Epistles, besides thus illuminating the period to which they belong, which was the period of the Apostolic Ministry, are valuable also for the light they throw back on the preceding period, and more particularly on the facts relating to our Lord himself,—the central and vital facts of Christianity. For it is to be carefully noted that the writer of these Letters, although not one of the



original eye-witnesses of Christ's life, and death, and resurrection, had been brought into close proximity with the facts respecting Him; and that from the first they constituted the principal burden of his preaching, and must, therefore, have been to him objects of supreme interest. Whatever else may be doubtful about the Apostle's early life, it is certain that his conversion took place within two years or thereby of the death of Christ; that he had resided in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood for some time previously to his conversion; and that his mind had been much exercised about the reports regarding Christ and the Christian society. It is certain, moreover, that the most important of the Epistles, including those to the Corinthians and the Romans, were written within twenty-five years of the crucifixion. The witness which these Epistles bear to the ministry, and death, and resurrection of Christ, is therefore contemporary witness. It is objected, no doubt, that the early date of the testimony delivered in the Epistles is neutralized by the circumstance that they were written at a great distance from Jerusalem. How could men at Corinth or in Rome know whether the facts regarding Christ were as Paul reported? How could they be sure that he was not deceived? But the objection is of no force. The nucleus of the Churches in Corinth and Rome consisted of a company of Jews, who had been members of the local synagogues, and were still in constant communication with their Jewish kinsmen. These "Jews of the Dispersion," who filled whole streets in the great commercial cities of the East and West, were, in their turn, in such constant communication with Jerusalem, that the Jewish quarters in Ephesus, and Corinth, and Rome, were a kind of suburbs of the Holy City. If the declarations which the Apostle makes to the Romans and Corinthians regarding Christ—which formed, indeed, the principal articles in his teaching everywhere--had been

notoriously untrue, there were, in those cities, men and women in a condition to confront them with a denial, and who had a powerful inducement to do so.

There is no need to dwell longer on a point so plain. The Pauline Epistles are, without doubt, of a value quite inestimable, if only their authenticity can be established. Can this be done? and how?

The proper way to answer these questions is first to remind the questioner that antiquity has bequeathed to us other letters and narratives besides those of the New Testament, and that some of these are accepted, as indubitably authentic, by all sane men who are acquainted with them. Thereafter, the questioner is to be directed to observe that the multifarious evidence by which the authenticity of the other writings is established is at hand to establish the authenticity of these Sacred Writings also; with this difference, that the evidence available in this case is incomparably more abundant and cogent than that on which, in the other case, men rest with so much confidence. The leading points in this direct Historical Proof are briefly indicated by Paley in chapter XVI. of the present work, a chapter which was afterwards expanded in detail by the author, and published under the title of the "Evidences of Christianity." The "Horse Paulinæ" was published in 1790; the "Evidences" in 1794.

The most serious drawback to the value of the Historical Proof is, that by the great majority of Bible readers it must be taken on trust. Only men of deep learning can master it perfectly. Paley himself is obliged to borrow largely from Dr. Lardner. It is quite otherwise with the argument unfolded in the "Horse Paulinæ." Here no cumbrous apparatus of learning is required. The argument is so compact and handy that it can be mastered, and its force thoroughly appreciated, by the reader who has no other

book at hand except the writings in question—the thirteen Epistles of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. For a statement of the argument, the reader is referred to Chapter I, where it is unfolded with all the author's clearness and force. But it may not be out of place to observe that the method employed is familiar to the practice of our law courts. It frequently happens that no witnesses are present when a crime is committed, so that conviction can only be secured by means of circumstantial evidence. Every one knows how much the force of that evidence, in a given case, depends on "undesigned coincidences," between the separate items of which it is made up, making them all dove-tail into each other and unite in confirming the charge. Still more common are cases in which fraud is detected by covert and unconscious *discrepancies*. Thus, in an action tried some years ago by the late Baron Anderson at Liverpool, the question was whether certain entries in a ledger produced in evidence were, or were not, *bona fide* entries, made at the time. The plaintiff positively swore that they were made at the time, and made by himself. He was subjected to a long cross-examination without breaking down. At length the judge, who had been examining the ledger closely, handed it to him, and said, "You swear that that entry under date January 3, 1838, was made by you on that day?" "Yes, my lord." "That other entry, under date March 7, 1839, was it also made by you on that day?" "Yes, my lord." "Now then, sir, will you be good enough to hold up those two pages to the light, and tell me how you account for the water-mark of the paper being 1843?" The result does not need to be told. Now, it so happens that there are no documents in existence which afford so many means of detection—or confirmation—corresponding to the water-mark in the Liverpool ledger, as are available to the critic in the Pauline Epistles. A remark or two may be of use,