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an extra reason, and providing an opportunity which people at Rome would themselves recognize, of carrying out his long-cherished project of visiting them.

For evidently in proposing to pay them an Apostolic visit, or even in writing them an Apostolic letter, he feels that he is broaching a delicate matter and must step warily. He must make it clear that there, as in other places, it was not his aim to preach the gospel where Christ was already named (Ro 15²⁰), still less to build upon another man's foundation. Indeed, the fear that he might be thought to be doing this seems to have been one of the things that had hindered him from coming (Ro 15²²). His visit would not be for the purpose of asserting authority. Perhaps it would not even be Apostolic, or pastoral, as other visits were. It would rather be for mutual edification and comfort, profitable to himself as well as, he hopes, to them.

Why should he need to be so tactful, almost apologetic, in approaching the Romans in person or by letter? It looks as if, to use a homely phrase, he was afraid of treading on some one's toes. Whose? Some one of importance, some one with whom it was not always easy to keep on good terms, some one with whom there might be difficulties, either on his own account or through the action of his followers. He had had difficulties about this time with 'those pre-eminent apostles' (2 Co 12¹¹, R.V. margin), who are most probably Peter, James, and John. He does not in Romans make a cryptic reference to them, as he does more than once in 2 Co. But they were probably still in his mind. If so, Peter is the most likely of the three. If he was the founder of the Church at Rome, either personally or by deputy, that would certainly account for the need of tact on Paul's part. It would not be necessary to suppose that Peter had evangelized Rome. Probably the seed was carried there, as elsewhere, by travelling disciples, and sprung up and bore fruit, like the seed growing secretly. But when it was time to organize and establish the Christian society, they would require the presence, or, at least, the advice, of an apostle. If the Roman Church was at first largely Jewish, as is quite likely, they would send to the Apostle of the Circumcision. He would not be slow to see the importance of the occasion, and would naturally go himself, if possible. Conse-

quently, if Peter's work had preceded, Paul would be almost in the position of a bishop intruding into another bishop's diocese. He was always careful to keep to his own province (2 Co 10¹³, R.V.), but the importance of the Church in the capital of the world, the danger lest it might be subject to Jewish prejudices (Ro 14 and 15), the certainty that the Gentile element in it would increase, made him decide to take a risk, and approach it first by a letter, the most deliberate and carefully planned of all his letters—indeed, Romans has with some show of truth been called an essay—and then, as he meant to do, in person. The way in which this intention was frustrated, but overruled for good, is of course one of the most wonderful things in Apostolic history.

It is not suggested that St. Peter was at Rome when St. Paul wrote his letter. But he might have been there before, or after, or both. As to the puzzling sentence in Ac 28²¹, if it is not made any plainer, neither is the difficulty increased by the hypothesis of a connexion between Rome and St. Paul's chief colleague and chief difficulty in the Apostolic band.

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Isaiah xiv. 19.

וַאֲמַחַהּ הַשְּׁלֵכֶתָּ מִקְבְּרָךְ כִּנְצֹר נִחְעַב לְבַשׁ הָרָגִים

'But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain' (R.V.). The phrase 'abominable branch' is very harsh. Why call a branch abominable? And the phrase 'clothed with the slain' can only mean that this particular corpse has, as its garment, the slain men on the battlefield. But a very simple expedient restores the sense. Transfer the **נ** of נִחְעַב to the next word, and read נַחַע בְּלִבְשׁ, and translate, 'But thou hast been cast forth away from thy sepulchre like a *broken* branch (from נַחַע: the Niph. occurs Job 4¹⁰), *in* slain men's weeds.'

Whether this simple emendation has occurred to any one else I do not know. It is not noticed in Kittel.

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