

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle  
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke  
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# **Philippian Studies Lessons in Faith and Love from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians**

H. C. G. (Handley Carr Glyn) Moule

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# PHILIPPIAN STUDIES

Lessons in Faith and Love from  
St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

by

H. C. G. MOULE, D.D.

Principal of Ridley Hall and Formerly Fellow of Trinity College  
Cambridge

*"Let us pray to God, that we may speak, think, believe, live,  
and depart hence, according to the wholesome doctrine and verities  
of His Word."*

THE HOMILIES, i, 1.

Third Edition

London Hodder and Stoughton 27, Paternoster Row 1900

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**TO THE**

**REV. G. A. SCHNEIDER, M.A.,**

**VICE-PRINCIPAL OF RIDLEY HALL, CAMBRIDGE,**

**THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED**

**IM TOKEN OF WARM FRIENDSHIP**

**AND WITH A GRATEFUL SENSE OF THE BENEFIT**

**OF HIS INVALUABLE CO-OPERATION**

"Thou the Way art, Thou the Prize  
That beyond the journey lies;  
Thou the Truth art, Thou the Guide,  
Gone before, yet at our side;  
Everlasting life below  
It is truly Thee to know:  
Such to Thy Saints wast Thou of yore;  
Unchangeable Thou art, and shall be evermore."  
MONSELL.

## **PREFACE**

The plan and purpose of the following pages will be soon evident to the reader. The whole aim is towards edification. What is said in the way of historical introduction, what is done in the course of the chapters in the way of rendering and grammatical explanation, all has this aim in view. The Epistle is handled throughout with the firm belief that it is an Oracle of God, while that Oracle is conveyed through the mind and heart of one of the greatest of the sons of men; and the Expositor's aim accordingly is always, and above all things, to expound. To put it otherwise, his highest ambition is to call attention to the sacred text, and let it speak.

May the Lord of the Apostle, of the Philippians, of ourselves, only grant that His mercy may rest upon this poor contribution to the exegesis of His inexhaustible Word. May it be permitted to throw a quiet light upon some of the treasures of this apostolic casket, to the help, in any measures, of the disciples of our day. Then will the Expositor indeed give thanks to the Master at whose feet he lays his work.

**RIDLEY HALL, CAMBRIDGE.**

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"Holy Scripture is the Letter of God Almighty to His creatures; learn God's heart in God's Words."

GREGORY THE GREAT, *Epist.*, iv. 31.

## *INTRODUCTORY*

O Gracious GOD and most mercifull Father, which hast vouchsafed us the rich and precious iewell of thy holy worde, assist us with thy Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts to our euerlasting comfort, to reforme us, to renew us according to thine owne image, to build us up, and edifie us into the perfect building of thy Christ, sanctifying and increasing in us all heauenly vertues. Graunt this O heauenly Father, for Iesus Christes sake. Amen.

*From the GENEVA BIBLE, 1557.*



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

Characteristics of the Epistle—The Bible is ever young—*Littera Scripta Manet*—"This Same Jesus"—Philippi—How the mission church had grown—Where was the Epistle written?—When was the Epistle written?—"The word endureth"

The Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians is, to careful and loving Bible-students, one of the fairest and dearest regions of the Book of God. It is true that the Christian who genuinely believes that "every Scripture is God-inspired" (2 Tim. iii. 16), and who realizes that the "*Divine Library*" is nevertheless, and from a higher point of view, *One Book* all through, will be always on the guard against a mistaken favouritism in his Scripture studies. He will strive to make himself in some sense familiar with the whole Book, *as a whole*, and to recognize in all its parts the true Author's hand and purpose. Yet it is inevitable that in this supreme Book, as in other books, though all parts are "co-operant to an end," all parts are not equally important for the deepest needs of the reader. The reader therefore will have to be more familiar with some parts than with others. Acquaintance with the whole will indeed deepen insight into the part. But it will not supersede our study, loving and special, of the part which, in a degree and manner peculiar to itself, "is able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The present simple Studies in the Philippian Epistle will accordingly be pursued with the desire to remember as we go the whole scriptural revelation of God and salvation. But we shall also approach the Epistle as a peculiarly precious Scripture in itself, containing in its few short pages a rare fulness of messages and teachings, meeting the inmost wants of the heart and the life.

Amongst the Epistles of St Paul Philippians shines out with singular light and beauty. In such a comparison we scarcely need con-

sider the great Epistles to Rome and Corinth; their large scale and wide variety of topics set them apart. Nor need we consider Hebrews, with its difficult problem of authorship. Looking at the other Epistles, each with its own divine and also deeply human characteristics, we find Philippians more peaceful than Galatians, more personal and affectionate than Ephesians, less anxiously controversial than Colossians, more deliberate and symmetrical than Thessalonians, and of course larger in its applications than the personal messages to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Meanwhile it is as comprehensive almost as it is brief. It presents more than one important passage of doctrine, some of these passages being revelations of the first order. It is full of pregnant precepts for Christian character and conduct, whether seen in the individual or in the community. It discloses in a way of the utmost interest and significance the circumstances and experiences of the writer, and also, in a measure, of the readers. And the whole is suffused with a singularly sweet light of "joy and peace in believing." It is written by one who was, as he wrote, at once resting and moving in the peace of God which passes understanding, and in the love of Christ which passes knowledge; and what is felt in his soul comes out inevitably on his page. The letter, written in a prison, and addressed to a mission-church always exposed to insult and assault, yet seems in a wonderful way to call us "apart, to rest awhile." "A glory gilds the sacred page," the glory of the presence of the Lord in all His majesty of Godhead and nearness of Manhood; in His finished work, and living power, and wonderful coming again. A peculiar sort of joy, which is impossible without at least the experience, if not the presence, of sorrow, rests and shines over the whole. It is the joy of the heart which has found at length "the secret of the Lord," His hiding-place from the tyranny of circumstances and time; the way how always to be of good cheer, naturally yet also supernaturally, not by a hard-won indifference to life, but by living, amidst everything external, "hidden with Christ in God."

Let us approach the beloved pages once again. They can never wear out; there will always prove to be "more to follow." Perhaps we have loved and pondered them for long years ourselves. Perhaps we have heard them expounded by voices silent now, "in days that never come again," in chambers or in churches which we seem

still to see, but which in fact have passed from us very far away. The heart is full and the eyes are wet as we look back. But the melancholy of the past has no permanent place in Bible-study. The Book is divine, immortal, and ever young. He who was in it for our fathers is in it for us. And since He is in it, as He is in no other literature in the world, (because no other literature is His Word Written,) therefore it springs up to us ever new; it is always contemporary with every generation of believers. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, and let us meet Thee in Thy Scripture now again.

A very simple "Introduction" will suffice for our present purposes. These chapters make no pretension to be, in the technical sense, critical. I say next to nothing, for example, about the Authenticity and Genuineness of the Epistle. Let me only remind the reader that from the early dawn of the literature of the Church we have unmistakable testimonies to its existence as an apostolic Scripture. Ignatius and Polycarp, quite early in the second century, shew us that they have read it. A little later, in the "Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne" (A.D. 177),<sup>[1]</sup> it is quoted. Clement of Alexandria, and Irenaeus, and Tertullian, all in the second century, use it as "the sword of the Spirit" to assert truth and confute error. So it floats down into the broad stream of the patristic literature at large. Not till the rise of an ultra-sceptical criticism in quite modern times was Philippians ever seriously questioned as the work, in its integrity, of St Paul. And Baur's objections, all due to an *à priori* theory, not to an impartial literary enquiry, have been repudiated even by critics even less orthodox than himself: Renan, for example. It is quite as certain, in a literary sense, that in Philippians we have the very words and heart of St Paul as that we have Addison in the papers signed C. in the *Spectator*, or Erasmus in the correspondence with Colet.

And what a thought of strength and joy this is to the believer of our latter day! *Littera scripta manet*. How impressive is the permanence of every written reflexion of the mind, and of the life! Who has not felt it, even in the reading of a private letter to himself, written years and years ago? We have St Paul speaking to us in this indelible page as really as if we were seated with him in "his own

hired house," and were *listening* as he dictates to the friend beside him. And as we recollect this, we reflect that all he is saying, all he has thus left written, is just so much testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, contemporary, direct, inspired. When the words we are about to read were written, scarcely thirty years had passed away since the Son of Man died outside the gate of Jerusalem, and rose again. Perhaps my reader cannot look back over thirty years, perhaps not over twenty, with conscious memory. But I can; and beyond the thirty I can see a long vista of the still earlier past. Thirty years ago[2];—at that time the great conflict between Austria and Prussia was preparing, the issue of which was so long a step towards the unification of Germany. I was then a master in a public school. The discussions of the impending war in our common-room, and the men who joined in them, are very present still to my mind; certainly not the faintest haze of mythical change or disproportion has had time to gather over those scenes in the interval. With some differences, no doubt, the world of this day is yet essentially the same as the world of that day; I certainly still, in my whole personal consciousness, am the man of that day, only somewhat developed in experience. Well, what the date of the battle of Sadowa (Königgratz) is to me, such was the date of the Crucifixion to St Paul, when he wrote from Rome to his dear converts at Philippi. And I venture to say that, while St Paul's tone about the Lord of Calvary is of course immeasurably different in the highest respects from what mine might be had I to speak of the makers of European history of 1866, it is in one respect just the same. It is as completely free from the tone of legend unreality, uncertainty. With the same entire consciousness of matter of fact with which I might write of the statesmen or generals of my early manhood, he writes of One who, in *his* early manhood, overcame death by death, and "shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs."

Only, there is this wonderful difference; that for St Paul the Jesus Christ of recent history is absolutely One with the Jesus Christ of his present spiritual experience. The Man of the Cross is also, for him, the Lord who is exalted to the throne of heaven, and is also so related to the writer that Paul is "in Christ Jesus," with a proximity and union which enters into everything. "In Him" are included the very actions of the disciple's mind and the experiences of his heart. He is

the Lord who lives in the inmost being of His servant, and who yet is also expected to return from the heavens, to transfigure the servant's very body into glory. The Christ of history, the Christ of the soul—it was "this same Jesus" then; it is "this same Jesus" now.

"Can length of years on God Himself exact,  
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?  
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years  
The pillar of the eternal plan appears;  
The raging storm and dashing wave defies,  
Built by that Architect who built the skies." [3]

For me and for my reader may the two aspects of "this same Jesus," the historical and the spiritual, ever combine in one mighty harmony of certainty; faith's resting-place to the end, "the rock of our heart, and our portion for ever"; at once our peace and our power, in life and in death, and through the eternal day also, in which we shall need Him still in the experiences of heaven.

What shall we say of the place to which the Epistle was sent, and of that from which it was written; and of the writer, the bearer, the readers; and of the occasion and the time?

Philippi now, so travellers tell us, is a scene of beautiful and silent ruin. Near the head of the fair Archipelago, amidst scenery of exquisite beauty, near the range of Pangaeus, now Pirnari, on the banks of the quiet Gangas, lie the relics of the once busy city, visited only by the herdsman and the explorer. By it or through it ran a great road from West to East, called by the Romans the Egnatian Way. The double battle of Philippi, B.C. 42, when the Oligarchy fell finally before the rising Empire, made the plain famous. Augustus planted a *colonia* in the town. It thus became a miniature Rome, as every "colony" was. It had its pair of petty consuls (*duumviri*; the *strategoï* of Acts xvi. 20) and their lictors (A.V. "serjeants," *rhabdouchoi*). And it faithfully reproduced Roman pride in the spirit of its military settlers. It had its Jewish element, as almost every place then had; but the Jews must have been few and despised; their place

of worship was but a "prayer-house" (*proseuchê*), outside the walls, on the river's bank (Acts xvi. 13). We need not recount in detail the history of the first evangelization (A.D. 52) of the difficult place. We recollect sufficiently the address to the pious Jewesses and proselyte-women in the "prayer-house"; the conversion and baptism of Lydia; the rescue of the poor girl possessed with the "spirit of Pytho"; the tumult, and the trial before the duumvirs; the scourge, the inner prison, the hymn at midnight, the earthquake, and the salvation of the jailor's life and soul; the message sent through the lictors in the morning, then the respectful approach of the magistrates themselves, and the retirement of the Missionaries "to another city," along the Egnatian road. It is enough now to remember, what the very existence of the Epistle reveals to us, the growth and life of the little mission-church planted amidst such storms, and in a climate, so to speak, full of possible tempests at any hour. In the Epistle, we arrive at a date some nine years later than the first visit of St Paul. Twice during that period, and perhaps only twice, we find him at Philippi again; late in A.D. 57 (Acts xx. 1) and early (it was the sweet spring, the Passover time) in A.D. 58; this last may have been a visit arranged on purpose (in Lightfoot's words: *Philippians*, p. 60) "that he might keep the Paschal feast with his beloved converts." No doubt, besides these personal visits, Philippi was kept in contact with its Missionary between A.D. 52 and A.D. 61 by messages and by the occasional visits of the Apostle's faithful helpers. But on the whole the Church would seem in a very large degree to have been left to its own charge. And what do we find as the issue when we come to the Epistle? A community large enough to need a *staff* of Christian ministers, "bishops and deacons," "overseers and working-helpers" (*episkopoi kai diakonoi*); full of love and good works; affectionately mindful of St Paul in the way of practical assistance; and apparently shewing, as their almost only visible defect or danger, a tendency to separate somewhat into sections or cliques—a trouble which in itself indicates a considerable society. If we may (as we may, looking at the ordinary facts of human nature) at all estimate the calibre of Philippian Christianity by the tone in which the Apostle addresses the Philippians, we gather that on the whole it was a high tone, at once decided and tender, affectionate and mature. The converts were capable of responding to a deep doctrinal teaching, and also to the simplest appeals of love. Such was the triumph of