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THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY

A CRITICAL AND
EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY
ON THE
SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE CORINTHIANS

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PREFACE

SINCE the volume on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians appeared, circumstances have arisen, some of which have affected the present volume, while others must affect volumes in this series which still remain unpublished.

The increase of episcopal work which had fallen to the lot of the Bishop of Exeter, and the ill-health from which he suffered for a considerable time, convinced the present writer that, in the interests of the Diocese and of the Bishop himself, he ought to offer to free the Bishop from the promise which he had kindly given of sharing with his former colleague the work of producing the present volume. This offer the Bishop, after much consideration, reluctantly accepted, and the commentary has been written without the advantage of his co-operation. The loss is great, but it is not quite total. The writer who has been left to do the work single-handed knows the Bishop's mind about most of the important questions which are raised by this perplexing Epistle, and moreover he has had his article on it in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (i. pp. 491-498) to aid him. Readers who miss in the present volume qualities which they valued in its predecessor may find in the above statement an explanation of the difference.

The changes of circumstances which must affect the remaining volumes of this series are more grave. The deaths of Dr. Briggs in June 1913 and of Dr. Driver in February 1914 are a loss, not only to these commentaries, but to Christendom. Wherever learning, acute criticism,

and sound judgment are appreciated, the loss of two such scholars within less than a year will be deeply deplored; and it is impossible for their surviving colleague among the original editors of the International Critical Commentary adequately to express his own personal loss. Dr. Briggs and he were almost exactly the same age, and a year or two ago Dr. Briggs expressed to him a doubt whether either of them would live to see the series completed. As regards one of the two persons concerned that doubt has been shown to be only too well grounded.

The survivor must leave it to others to decide whether there is room for any such commentary as the present volume, and (if there is) whether the volume in any particulars fills it. He has no new solutions to offer for any of the numerous problems which this Epistle presents. But he has endeavoured to show that in some cases there is one solution which is so reasonable in itself, and so much more probable than any other, that students who have no time to investigate every point for themselves may be allowed, without discussion, to assume this solution as the right one. There must, however, always remain a considerable number of questions to which no certain answer can be given, because certainty requires a knowledge of details respecting the Church of Corinth which we do not possess and are not likely to acquire. It is hoped that no difficulty of importance has been passed over in silence, and that no untenable explanation of a difficulty has been adopted.

Readers will do well to study the paraphrases prefixed to the sections before consulting the notes. No translation, however accurate, can give the full meaning of any Pauline Epistle, and this is specially true of 2 Corinthians. The only adequate method is to paraphrase; and great pains have been taken in both these volumes to make the paraphrases as luminous and exact as possible.

A. PLUMMER.

BIDEFORD, HALLOW-E'EN, 1914.

INTRODUCTION

§ I. AUTHENTICITY.

THE evidence, both external and internal, for the genuineness of 2 Corinthians is so strong that a commentator might be excused for assuming it without discussion. In the present state of criticism there is no need to spend time in examining the captious and speculative objections which have been, during the last sixty years, urged against this and others of the four great Epistles of St Paul by a very small group of eccentric critics,* and various recent commentators not only abstain from doing so, but do not even think it worth while to give so much as a summary of the evidence in favour of the genuineness.

The external evidence does not begin quite so early as that for 1 Corinthians; for we may regard it as certain that the Second Epistle was unknown to Clement of Rome, who was so well acquainted with the First. Much of the Second would have served his purpose much better than the First Epistle; yet, frequently as he quotes the First, he nowhere exhibits any knowledge of the Second, for none of the five or six passages, in which some writers have thought that there may be an echo of something in 2 Corinthians, can be relied upon as showing this. Those who care to verify this statement may compare 2 Cor. i. 5, viii. 9, x. 3, 4, x. 13, 15, 16, x. 17, x. 18 respectively with Clem. ii. 1, xvi. 2, xxxvii. 1, i. 3, xiii. 1, xxx. 6. Clement is writing on behalf of the Church of Rome to rebuke the Corinthians for rebelling against authority, and he tells them to "take up *the* Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle" and see how he rebukes them for *party spirit*. It would have been far more to the point to have referred to the Second Epistle in which St Paul rebukes them far more severely for *rebellion*. "Yet in the sixty-five chapters of Clement's epistle there is not a single sentence which indicates that he had ever heard that the

* Bruno Bauer, Bruins, Havet, Loman, Mayborn, Naber, Pierson, Steck, Van Manen.

Corinthians had before his own time rebelled against those set over them, or that they had ever repented of their rebellion, though he tells the Corinthians that he has handled every argument" (Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles to the Corinthians*, p. 147). The absence of any clear quotation may be regarded as conclusive. "In the whole field of literature it would hardly be possible to adduce a stronger case of proof" (Rendall, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 91). The inference is that 2 Corinthians in A.D. 96 was not known in the Church of Rome; it had not yet been circulated through the Churches.

On the other hand, Polycarp seems to show knowledge of both letters. See on 2 Cor. iii. 2, iv. 14, viii. 21. Irenaeus quotes from chapters ii., iii., iv., v., xiii., sometimes by name; in *epistola secunda ad Corinthios* (iv. xxviii. 3). Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch show knowledge of the Epistle. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian quote it very frequently. It is named in the Muratorian Fragment, and Marcion accepted it.

Nearly all critics regard the internal evidence as conclusive. Even if the outside testimony were defective, the contents of the letter would completely reassure us.* It is so natural and so vivid; it so evidently deals with a number of details, well known to the writer and to the Corinthians, but not well known, and (in some cases) not particularly interesting, to outsiders; and so much of it refers to a temporary crisis, that it is utterly unlike the artificial product of a forger. What motive could there be for constructing such a fiction? And here one of the great obstacles to a clear understanding of the writer's meaning becomes an argument for the genuineness of the letter; a forger would at least have taken pains to make his meaning clear to those whom he wished to have as readers. The obscure allusions and insinuations are natural enough, if they were written by one who knew all the circumstances, and knew that they were equally well known to those to whom he was writing. They are quite out of place in the composition of one who was imagining what the Apostle might have said to his Corinthian converts. The items of autobiography, which are among the most precious details in the Epistle, ring true and are not at all like fiction. Moreover, there are frequent links with the other three great Epistles of St Paul, and it would be beyond the skill of any inventor to forge all these, to say nothing of the general agreement with the characteristic ideas of the Apostle. There is no letter which enables us to see so deeply into the workings of the writer's mind and heart. Thankfulness, affection, anxiety, entreaty, and indignation come to the surface in successive waves, and the last

* Bachmann, p. 6.

of these is expressed with a severity and bitterness which can be best understood when we keep in mind his repeated assertion that the attacks on his character and authority have compelled him to break out in what must look like a hateful indulgence in self-praise and self-assertion (x. 12, xi. 1, 16, xii. 1, 11). It is strange criticism that can see in all this the imagination of an anonymous inventor. See Bishop Robertson, Hastings, *DB.* i. p. 492; Massie, *1 and 2 Corinthians in The Century Bible*, pp. 4, 5; Knowling, *The Witness of the Epistles*, ch. iii., and *The Testimony of St Paul to Christ*, lect. xxiv. and *passim* (see Index). With regard to the four great Epistles and 1 Thessalonians, B. W. Bacon says; "No doubt exists to-day among scientific critics regarding the authenticity of any one of them, for indeed 1 Corinthians is referred to in 96 A.D. as written by Paul to Corinth, and this and others of the group can be traced even further back as employed by Hebrews, 1 Peter, and James. Moreover, the impression of vivid feeling, of intense and close relation to objective fact, produced by the writings themselves is corroborated by the largely contemporary tradition of Acts, which shows just such combination of agreement in essentials and discrepancy in detail as we expect from honest witnesses" (*Introd. to N.T.* p. 56; see also p. 80).

§ II. OCCASION, PROBLEMS, AND PROBABILITIES.

The familiar comparison of the transition from the region of 1 Corinthians to that of 2 Corinthians, to the passage from the somewhat intricate paths of a carefully laid-out park to the obscurity of a pathless forest, gives one a fairly correct idea of the difference between the two Epistles. But it needs to be supplemented, and to some extent corrected. The forest is not only obscure, it is thick with roots which trip one up, and with "wait-a-bit" thorns, which continually arrest one's progress. Moreover, it is not altogether pathless. Three main divisions (i.-vii., viii. and ix., x.-xiii.) are as clear as any divisions in the First Epistle. It is when we endeavour to interpret numerous details in the main divisions, and to get them into an intelligible and consistent relation to one another and to the First Epistle, that we stumble and stick fast. Over and over again the Apostle seems to be alluding to something which his readers can understand; but we are not always certain that there is any allusion, and we can rarely be certain what the allusion is. For instance, he often states that he is not in the habit of doing, or that he has not done, such and such things. In some cases this may be a mere statement of fact; he takes the Corinthians into his con-

fidence and acquaints them with his personal conduct. But in some cases he may be alluding to the fact that, although *he* does *not*, yet his opponents *do*, act in this particular way; *e.g.* i. 12, 19, ii. 17, iii. 3, 5, v. 16, x. 2, 4, 8, 12, 15. In others he may be alluding to the fact that he has been accused of doing these things; *e.g.* i. 17, 24, iv. 5, v. 13, vii. 2, xi. 7, 9, 16, xiii. 6. Or there may be allusion to both these points; *e.g.* iv. 2, x. 15.

The immediate occasion of this perplexing, but most instructive letter is plain enough. Since the writing of 1 Corinthians, St Paul had had to deal with a very serious crisis in the Church of Corinth, in which his Apostolic authority had been opposed, questioned, and by some scornfully denied, and he had sent Titus to Corinth to deal with the difficulty and reduce the rebellious persons to submission (ii. 13, vii. 6, 7, 13-15). About the success of this enterprise of Titus the Apostle was intensely anxious. He left Ephesus for Troas, hoping that Titus would return from Corinth and meet him there, and in Troas he found an opening for missionary work. The suspense at last became so intolerable that he threw up his work in Troas and crossed over to Macedonia, in order to meet Titus the sooner. Here he did meet Titus, whose report of the result of his mission to Corinth was so unexpectedly favourable that St Paul, in a fervour of thankfulness and affection, at once begins to dictate this letter, in order to make the reconciliation between himself and his Corinthian converts complete (i.-vii.), and stir them up to increased sympathy with their fellow-Christians in Palestine (viii., ix.).*

Thus far we are upon sure ground; but there are at least a dozen questions arising out of this Epistle, or connected with it, respecting which great diversity of opinion exists. With regard to a few of them a decided answer may with confidence be given, in spite of diversity of view; but with regard to the remainder we can do no more than adopt what seems to us to be probable, while admitting that there is room for doubt. Not all of the questions are of equal importance, but hardly any of them can be set aside as trivial.

1. Did Timothy, who had been sent to Corinth before 1 Corinthians was written (see on 1 Cor. xvi. 10), and was with St Paul when 2 Corinthians was written (2 Cor. i. 1.), reach Corinth and was unsuccessful there? Or did he return to St Paul without having reached Corinth? If he reached Corinth, did he leave before 1 Corinthians arrived?

* The whole letter, as Bengel remarks, resembles an itinerary, interwoven with noble instruction. The main points of narrative are found i. 8, 15, 16, ii. 1, 12, 13, vii. 5, 6, viii. 1, 6, ix. 1, 2.

2. How long an interval was there between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians? See on 2 Cor. viii. 10, ix. 2.

3. Did the Apostle pay a visit, short and distressing, to Corinth before 2 Corinthians was written? If so,

4. Did this visit take place before or after 1 Corinthians?

5. Was there a letter (other than 1 Corinthians and the letter mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 9) written by St Paul to Corinth before 2 Corinthians? In other words, Does the severe letter mentioned in 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4 and vii. 8, 9 refer to 1 Corinthians? If it does not refer to 1 Corinthians but to some other letter, two questions arise;—

6. Was this severe letter before or after 1 Corinthians?

7. Is this letter wholly lost, or does part of it survive in 2 Cor. x.—xiii.?

8. Is the offender mentioned in 2 Cor. ii. 5–10 and vii. 12 to be identified with the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v. 1 f.? If not,

9. Who was the offender, and whom did he offend?

10. This offender was punished, not in accordance with a vote of the whole Church of Corinth, but only of a majority of the members (2 Cor. ii. 6). What was the punishment? and was it more severe, or less severe, than that which the minority proposed?

11. What was the nature of the opposition to St Paul at Corinth? Did it come from those who thought that he paid too much regard to the Law, or from those who thought that he paid too little?

12. Does part of the letter mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 9 survive in 2 Cor. vi. 14–vii. 1, or is it wholly lost?

At least two of these questions can be answered with certainty; two others can be answered with confidence, if not with absolute certainty; and in the case of two others the probability is very decidedly on one side. With regard to the remaining six the probabilities are more evenly balanced. In each case the reader is referred to the notes on the passages in question for a discussion of the arguments 'for' and 'against.'

5. It ought to be regarded as certain that 1 Corinthians cannot be the severe letter alluded to in 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4 and vii. 8, 9.* Therefore St Paul wrote two letters to the Church of Corinth in addition to the two which have come down to us, viz. the one mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 9 and this severe letter.

8. The offender mentioned in 2 Cor. ii. 5–10 and vii. 12 is not the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v. 1 f. The identification is untenable, and, like the identification of the sinner in Lk.

* It is little use to point to 1 Cor. iv. 8–13, 18–21, v. 1–7. It is of the letter as a whole that St Paul writes in 2 Cor. ii. 34 and vii. 8, 9.

vii. 37-39 with Mary Magdalen, it ought to be generally abandoned.*

3. It is almost certain that St Paul did pay a short and distressing visit to Corinth between his first stay there and the writing of 2 Corinthians (ii. 1, xii. 14, xiii. 1).

9. It is almost certain that the offender in 2 Cor. v. 5-10 and vii. 12 is some one who had behaved in an outrageous manner to the Apostle. But, if Timothy reached Corinth, it is possible that he was the person who was outrageously treated.

7. It is probable that part of the severe letter of 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4 and vii. 8, 9 survives in 2 Cor. x.-xiii.

12. It is probable that the letter mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 9 is wholly lost.

But it is not easy to determine

1. Whether Timothy failed to reach Corinth or reached Corinth and failed to effect any good there.

2. Whether the interval between 1 and 2 Corinthians was somewhat less than a year or somewhat less than two years.

4. Whether the distressing visit took place after or before 1 Corinthians.

6. Whether the severe letter was written after or before 1 Corinthians.

10. Whether the minority wished the offender to receive a more or a less severe punishment than that which was inflicted by the majority, and whether that punishment was excommunication.

11. Whether St Paul was opposed for having too little or too much regard for the Law.

In all these six cases the balance is *perhaps* in favour of the alternative which is stated first; but it is more easy to adopt a decided opinion than to convince others that it is right; e.g. in the volume on 1 Corinthians (pp. xxi-xxiv) reasons have been given for believing that the *second* visit of St Paul to Corinth † is an historical fact, and that it took place before the writing of 1 Corinthians; but Professor K. Lake (*Earlier Epistles of St Paul*, p. 152) has given strong reasons for believing that it took place between 1 and 2 Corinthians, an arrangement which has mani-

* "To identify this offender (*ἀδίκησας*)—who had not, as Paul insists, caused him personal sorrow (ii. 5)—with the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v. would be almost as monstrous, when we consider the mildness with which Paul treats him, as to identify the First Epistle with the stern letter described in the Second" (Jülicher, *Intr. N.T.* p. 91). After writing 1 Cor. v. 5 how could the Apostle say that he had not written 'for his cause that did the wrong'?

† Sometimes called "the intermediate visit," i.e. intermediate between the first visit, during which he founded the Church, and the visit which followed soon after the writing of 2 Corinthians.

fest advantages. How greatly opinions are divided on the subject will be seen from the following statement.

This intermediate visit is *doubted or denied* by Baur, Davidson, De Wette, Farrar, G. H. Gilbert, Heinrici, Hilgenfeld, Lange, Lewin, Lias, Paley, Ramsay, A. Robertson, Stanley.

It is *placed before 1 Corinthians*, and in most cases before the lost letter of 1 Cor. v. 9, by Alford, Beet, J. H. Bernard, Bleek, Conybeare and Howson, Cornely, Denney, Findlay, Klöpper, Hausrath, Lightfoot, McFadyen, Olshausen, Otto, Rübiger, Redlich, Reuss, Sanday, Schmiedel, Waite, B. Weiss, Wieseler, Zahn.

It is placed *after 1 Corinthians*, and before the severe letter of 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4 and vii. 8, 9, by Adeney, Bachmann, Barth, Bousset, Cone, Drescher, Ewald, Eylau, Godet, Hagge, Jacquier, Jülicher, Kennedy, Krenkel, Lake, Mangold, Massie, Menzies, Moffatt, Pfeiderer, Rendall, Sabatier, Weiffenbach, Weizsäcker. Allen and Grensted incline to this alternative, but doubtfully; so also D. Walker. Belser and Schäfer place the intermediate visit after 1 Corinthians, but they omit the intermediate letter, identifying the severe letter with 1 Corinthians. Völter regards the intermediate visit as a return to Corinth after a missionary excursion during the Apostle's first stay in the city. His elaborate dissection of both Epistles, as consisting of Pauline material very freely edited on doctrinal grounds, does not merit consideration.

The problems respecting the intermediate letter will be most conveniently studied when the question respecting the integrity of the Epistle is discussed.

The following scheme as to the sequence of events connected with these two great Epistles covers the whole period of the Apostle's work at Corinth. It is tentative, as all such schemes must be, and the more conjectural items are placed in square brackets. From what has been already stated it follows that no scheme which identifies the severe letter (ii. 3, 4, vii. 8, 9) with 1 Corinthians, and which identifies the great offender (ii. 5-10, vii. 12) with the incestuous man (1 Cor. v. 1), can be right. St Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthian Church, two of which have come down to us, while two have partly or wholly perished; and there were two great offenders whom he required the Church to punish. This much may be treated as too firmly established to be open to reasonable doubt. A good deal of the accompanying scheme is generally admitted to be correct.

Possible Sequence of Events.

1. St Paul spends 'a year and six months' at Corinth, 'teaching the word of God' (Acts xviii. 11).

2. He leaves Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla and settles at Ephesus (Acts xviii. 18, 19).

3. Apollos continues the work at Corinth, 'powerfully confuting the Jews' (Acts xviii. 27, 28, xix. 1), and returns to St Paul at Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 12).

4. St Paul sends a letter [by Titus], now [wholly] lost, to Corinth condemning fornicators (1 Cor. v. 9) [and announcing the plan mentioned 2 Cor. i. 5, 16]. [A collection for the poor at Jerusalem is started by Titus.]

5. Bad news is brought from Corinth to Ephesus by members of Chloe's household (1 Cor. i. 11) [and also by Apollos (1 Cor. xvi. 12)].

6. Timothy starts from Ephesus for Macedonia and Corinth, and reaches Macedonia (1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10; Acts xix. 22; 2 Cor. i. 1).

7. Letter of the Corinthians to St Paul (1 Cor. vii. 1) [brought by Fortunatus, Stephanas, and Achaicus (1 Cor. xvi. 17)].

8. St Paul writes 1 Corinthians at or near Easter [and sends it by Titus and a brother; the collection for the poor is now organized (1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 6, xii. 18), and Titus then returns to the Apostle at Ephesus].

9. [Timothy arrives at Corinth.] Fresh difficulties arise in the Corinthian Church; the Apostle's authority is questioned, and by some is defied (2 Cor. x. 7, 10, xi. 23, xii. 16, 17). [Timothy leaves, unable to deal with the crisis.]

10. St Paul hears of this [from Timothy] and pays a short visit to Corinth (2 Cor. ii. 1, xii. 14, xiii. 1), during which he is grossly insulted by some Corinthian Christian (2 Cor. ii. 5-8, vii. 12).*

11. St Paul sends Titus to Corinth with a severe letter (ii. 3, 9, vii. 8-12), [the greater part of which is preserved in 2 Cor. x.-xiii.]. Titus is instructed [to press for the collection for the Palestinian Relief Fund and] to return to St Paul through Macedonia and Troas (ii. 12, 13, vii. 5, 6).

12. [Longer stay in Ephesus having become perilous.] St Paul leaves Ephesus for Troas, and being intensely anxious about the effect of the severe letter, he leaves Troas for Macedonia, in order to meet Titus the sooner and get his report (ii. 12, 13).

13. He meets Titus in Macedonia and receives from him a most encouraging report as to the end of the grave crisis in Corinth (vii. 6-16).

* This visit ought possibly to be placed earlier, either between 3 and 4 or between 4 and 5. If the former, then it would be mentioned in the lost letter of 1 Cor. v. 9, and this would account for its not being mentioned in 1 Corinthians.

14. He writes 2 Corinthians [i.-ix.] and sends it from Macedonia by Titus and two brethren (viii. 16-24).*

15. St Paul reaches Corinth, and during a stay of three months there (Acts xix. 21, xx. 3) writes the Epistle to the Romans (see Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. xxxvif.).

The most speculative portions of this scheme are those which are placed in square brackets in the sections numbered 4 and 9. That Titus was the bearer of the first letter written by the Apostle to Corinth, and that he then began to urge the Corinthians to raise money for the poor Christians in Judaea, is not improbable, but there is little evidence for either conjecture. That Timothy reached Corinth and was a failure there is possible, but the silence about his doing anything there is equally well explained by the hypothesis that he never got so far. If he reached Corinth and was contemptuously treated, he probably returned as quickly as possible to St Paul at Ephesus, and his report of the grave condition of things at Corinth would account for the Apostle's decision to hurry across to Corinth himself. But the bad news from Corinth may easily have reached St Paul in some other way.

§ III. PLACE, DATE, AND CONTENTS.

Both place and date can be fixed within narrow limits. The country was Macedonia (ii. 13, vii. 5, viii. 1, ix. 2-4); and it is possible that the subscription of the Epistle, which is certainly early (B³, Syr-Pesh. Syr-Hark. Copt.), is correct in saying that the city was Philippi. It has already been shown (*1 Corinthians*, p. xxxiii) that the First Epistle was probably written in the spring of A.D. 55, and it is probable that the Second Epistle was written in the autumn of the same year. In neither case, however, is the year quite certain. For the First Epistle nearly all modern writers allow some margin; Harnack, A.D. 50-53; C. H. Turner, 52-55; Ramsay, 53-56; Lightfoot, Lewin, and Wieseler, 54-57. For the Second Epistle, Harnack says 53, Turner 55, Ramsay 56, Lightfoot, Lewin, and Wieseler 57. There is no serious objection to assigning both Epistles to the same year, even for those who believe that between the two letters St Paul paid a brief visit to Corinth. In favourable weather that might be accomplished in less than three weeks. All the events enumerated above, 8-14, might take place in seven or eight months. But Jülicher and others think that we must place about a year and a half between the two Epistles.

* This is at least the *third* mission of Titus to Corinth (8, 11), and may be the *fourth*, if Titus was the bearer of the first letter, now lost (4).

With regard to the letter itself it is better to talk of "contents" rather than "plan." Beyond the three clearly marked divisions (i.-vii.; viii., ix.; x.-xiii.) there is not much evidence of plan. In these main divisions the Apostle seems to have dictated what he had to say just as his thoughts and feelings moved him, without much consideration of arrangement or logical sequence. We may conjecture that the last four chapters were dictated at one sitting, without much pause until the last chapter was reached. But between vii. and viii., and between ix. and x. there were doubtless breaks of some duration, if not between viii. and ix.; and it is not likely that the first seven chapters were dictated all at one time. Hence the rapid changes (as they seem to us) of topics and temper; but something more than a break in the time of dictating is required to account for the immense change from ix. to x. The following analysis of the three main divisions is offered as a help to a study of the Epistle in detail. It is not meant to imply or suggest that the Apostle had any such scheme in his mind as he dictated the various paragraphs. As in the first Epistle, there is a mixture of precept and instruction with personal matter; but the proportion of the two elements is reversed. In 1 Corinthians the personal element is comparatively slight and appears incidentally. In 2 Corinthians the personal element is the main thing, especially in the first and last divisions; what is didactic, however important, is not the leading topic or series of topics. It is the Apostle's conduct and authority that comes to the front throughout.

I [Epistolary] Introduction, i. 1-11.

A. *The Apostolic Salutation*, i. 1, 2.

B. *Preamble of Thanksgiving and Hope*, i. 3-11.

II [Review of] his recent Relations with the Corinthians, i. 12-vii. 16.

A. *Defence of his Conduct with regard to his promised Visit and the great Offender*, i. 12-ii. 17.

1. [The] postponement of the intended Visit, i. 12-ii. 4.

2. [The] Treatment of the great Offender and the Result of the severe Letter, ii. 5-17.

B. *The Glory of the Apostolic Office*, iii. 1-vi. 10.

1. [The] Superiority of the New Ministration to the Old, iii. 1-11.

2. [The] great Boldness of the New Ministers,
iii. 12-iv. 6.
3. [The] Sufferings and Supports of an Apostle,
iv. 7-v. 10.
4. [The] Life of an Apostle, v. 11-vi. 10.
- C. *The Restoration of Confidence between the Apostle
and the Corinthians*, vi. 11-vii. 16.
 1. Appeal of the reconciled Apostle to the Cor-
inthians, vi. 11-vii. 4.
 - * 2. The Reconciliation completed, vii. 5-16.

II. The Collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem,
viii. 1-ix. 15.

1. [The] Example of the Macedonian Churches,
viii. 1-7.
2. [The] Example of Christ, viii. 8-15.
3. [The] new Mission to be entrusted to Titus and
two others, viii. 16-24.
4. Exhortation to Readiness, ix. 1-5.
5. Exhortation to Liberality, ix. 6-15.

**III. Vindicating his Apostolic Authority; the great In-
vective, x. 1-xiii. 10.** (*Perhaps part of letter referred to*

- A. *The Apostle's Authority and the Area of his Mission*,
x. 1-18. *in 2:3, 9 and 7:8-12*
 1. Reply to the Charge of Cowardice, x. 1-6.
 2. Reply to the Charge of Weakness, x. 7-11.
 3. The Area of his Mission includes Corinth, x.
12-18.

B. *Glorying a Folly which has been forced upon him*,
xi. 1-xii. 18.

1. [The] Reason for this Folly, xi. 1-6.
2. Glorying about refusing Maintenance, xi. 7-15.
3. Glorying about his Services and his Sufferings,
xi. 16-33.
4. Glorying about Revelations to his Soul and a
Thorn for his Flesh, xii. 1-10.
5. [The] Credentials of an Apostle; exceptional Signs
and exceptional Love, xii. 11-18.

C. *Final Warnings in view of his approaching Visit*,
xii. 19-xiii. 10.

**V. Concluding Exhortation, Salutation, and Benediction, xiii.
11-13.**

* 6:14 - 7:1 is - probably part of the letter referred
to in I Cor. 5:9, "Do not associate with the immoral."

These contents, however we may interpret them in detail, reveal a situation very different from that which is exhibited by the First Epistle. Even with regard to the features which are the same in both letters there is difference. The old relations between Apostle and converts may remain, but they have been, and perhaps still are, severely strained. Some of the old features have vanished and new features have appeared. The Apostle is no longer so serenely sure of the Corinthians' affection and loyalty. They had sometimes criticized him before, and had raised questions as to his being an Apostle (1 Cor. iv. 3, ix. 1, 2); but now he has been openly insulted, defied, and laughed at, and his Apostleship has been denied. He says that self-praise is no recommendation, but they say that he is always singing his own praises and asserting his own importance. Although we hear no more of the four factions of which St Paul speaks with disapproval in 1 Cor. i. 12, 13, yet faction of a far more virulent kind is manifest, and it threatens the Church of Corinth with ruin. Corinth has been invaded by a band of fanatical Jewish Christians, who have a narrow and bigoted view of the spirit of the Gospel and an intense hatred of St Paul's free interpretation of it. They did not attempt to enforce circumcision, as similar fanatics were endeavouring to do among the Galatians, for they probably saw that such attempts would have no success in Greece; but they did their utmost, by accusation and insinuation, to undermine and overthrow the influence of St Paul. We can measure the malignity of their attack by the vehemence of the Apostle's language in repelling it, and indeed we have to attribute atrocious conduct to them in order to understand how he could regard as justifiable all the strong expressions which he uses. This applies specially to xi. 13-15. See Menzies, *ad loc.*, and McFadyen, pp. 247, 248.

§ IV. INTEGRITY.

Among the many features in which 2 Corinthians differs from 1 Corinthians is that of structure. The First Epistle exhibits an evenness of style so complete that its unity, although disputed by a few eccentric critics, as Hagge and Völter, is not open to serious question. A few words in the traditional text are wanting in authority, as 'and in your spirit, which are God's' (vi. 20); and a few are open to suspicion, but not well-grounded suspicion, as possible glosses, as xiv. 34, 35, xv. 56. But proposals to treat the Epistle which has come down to us in the familiar form as a conglomeration of several letters, or of portions of several letters, are not worthy of consideration. The

same cannot be said of the Second Epistle. There is considerable probability that it is composite, and that chapters i.-ix. are the greater part of a conciliatory letter, while chapters x.-xiii. are the greater part of a sharp and severe letter which was written before the conciliatory letter was sent; and there is a possibility that part of a third letter, written before either of the Epistles which have come down to us, is embedded in it (vi. 14-vii. 1). Moreover, doubts have been raised as to whether both viii. and ix. belong to the same letter, some critics regarding ix. as an intruder while a few regard viii. as the intruder. Nor is this all. The verses which tell of the Apostle's escape from Damascus (xi. 32, 33) come so abruptly and prosaically in a passage of lofty feeling and language, that they also are suspected of being out of their original position. They may be a fragment from some other letter, or they may have been accidentally omitted from this letter and then reinserted in the wrong place. A less violent conjecture is that St Paul inserted them after the letter was finished, without caring whether they were quite in harmony with the context.

But the large majority of the critics who are inclined to adopt one or more of these hypotheses are agreed that all the passages in question, vi. 14-vii. 1, viii., ix., xi. 32, 33, and x.-xiii., were written by St Paul. This consensus is specially strong with regard to the last four chapters. There are a few wild critics who contend that not one of the Pauline Epistles is genuine, and their criticisms carry no weight. To accept Galatians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Cor. i.-ix. as by St Paul, and reject 2 Cor. x.-xiii. as spurious, would be an amazing result to reach by any kind of argument.

It must always be remembered that in every one of these four cases the doubts as to their being part of the Second Epistle, as St Paul dictated it, *are based entirely on internal evidence*. No MS., no version, and no patristic quotation supplies any evidence that the Epistle was ever in circulation anywhere with any one of these four portions omitted.

It will be convenient to take the four shorter passages first, in the order of their occurrence, reserving the more important question respecting the last four chapters for more detailed treatment after the other passages have been discussed.

1. The strength of the case against vi. 14-vii. 1 lies in the facts that (1) the six verses violently interrupt the sequence of thought, and that (2), when they are removed, vii. 2 fits admirably to vi. 11-13. 'My lips are unlocked to tell you everything; my heart stands wide open. There is no restraint in my feeling towards you; the restraint is in your own affections. But love should awaken love in return; let your heart be opened