

## THE PARENTHETIC EPISTLES – FAITH

### 2 CORINTHIANS

#### PAUL'S LOVE

Second Corinthians is an Epistle for the heart. It engages us with the fond solicitude, which stirs the affections of the Apostle for his much loved Corinth. It was written because he wished to spare them the dreaded severity that his presence might demand. This loving epistle reveals an aspect of the evangel that is well nigh lost.

#### CONCILIATION

This is the CONCILIATION. God is love. He will not rest satisfied in merely justifying us. He wishes to clasp us to His heart. To restore His creatures to righteousness may indeed erase the stain of sin, but offers no valid reason or excuse for sin's intrusion into the universe.

But if the entrance of sin is to bear the precious fruit of reconciliation.

*If it is to bring us infinitely nearer to God, than is possible without it,  
If it is the means of revealing God's love to us,*

THEN, we should give thanks even for sin, which is the source of our sorrows.

Sin made mankind not only a sinner, but also an enemy of God. It brought in estrangement.

The mediation of Christ not only saves and justifies but also removes every barrier for the free outflow of God's love. Now God, in this dispensation of grace condescends to beseech the sinner to be conciliated to Him.

What can be more gracious than this?

Such is the aspect of the truth in this Epistle.

#### PAUL'S EMOTIONS

More than anything else Paul has written, this reveals the personal experiences and inward emotions of himself during one of the most fruitful periods of his ministry.

Instead of the smiling, complacent, comfortable existence, which is usually supposed to be the ideal of Christianity, we find him full of fears within, distracted with fighting's without, restless, sick and despondent.

Yet all of this was in perfect accord with his fervent love for the saints and his vehement desire to lead them on into an appreciation of God's love.

The consolation and comfort he received in his afflictions fitted him to comfort and console others. It reveals God in the light of his affections. One short verse, "Now, passing through those parts and entreating them with many a word, he came into Greece". Acts 20:2. Gk. Hurries us over the whole period referred to in this Epistle.

This alone should suggest the total divergence of their themes.

Acts deals with Christ after the flesh, as the Messiah of Israel and always gives the other nations a place of subordination.

#### CONCILIATION

At the juncture when this Epistle was written Paul first made known the truth of the conciliation, that God, in Christ, is beseeching all humanity to be reconciled to Him. Physical relationship to Jesus no longer counted with Paul after this. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gk.

*"So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to the flesh. Yet, even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, nevertheless, Now, we know Him no longer".*

