

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

The Date of the Epistle to the Galatians,
*And Certain Passages in the First Epistle to the
Corinthians.*¹

BY PROF. B. B. WARFIELD, D.D.

THE determination of the exact date of the Epistle to the Galatians is one of the most delicate problems of New Testament criticism. The difficulty lies, not in the harmonizing of apparently conflicting statements or hints, but in the total lack of all plain indications one way or the other. The matter is not so much in dispute as in doubt. The proof is not only satisfactory but overwhelming that this epistle belongs with that group of great epistles—*1* and *2* Corinthians and Romans—which Paul wrote on his third missionary journey, in A.D. 57 and 58, and which in opposition to the errors of the Judaizers he made the chief vehicles of his doctrine of salvation. But as soon as it is asked where in this group it is to be placed, whether first, before *1* Corinthians, or near the end, between *2* Corinthians and Romans,—whether, in other words, its composition is to be assigned to the three years' stay of the apostle at Ephesus (A.D. 54–57) or somewhere in Macedonia during his subsequent journey from Ephesus to Corinth or even in Corinth itself (57–58),—every student finds himself immediately in a strait betwixt two. The plain fact is that this epistle is unique among Paul's letters in its entire lack of any allusion, capable of easy interpretation, to the apostle's circumstances and surroundings at the time when he wrote it. The student therefore is left to such vague and doubtful considerations to guide his decision as he would allow but subordinate weight to under other circumstances; and every slightest indication that promises to help to a doubtful conclusion is here invested with some importance,—whether it be derived from an obscure hint in the epistle itself or from a comparison of its style and lines of thought and feeling with the other letters of its group. Two such considerations have divided the opinions of recent investigators. The one, which, as the most tangible and easy of interpretation, has determined the decision of most critics, is derived from the indefinite words of Gal. i. 6: "I

¹ Read in December, 1884.

marvel that ye are *so quickly* removing from him that called you," from which the inference is drawn that the epistle must have been written soon after the apostle had left Galatia. Thus, these critics¹ have been led to place the writing of the letter at Ephesus, and to give it the first place in its group. The other, which has of late, in the train of Bishop Lightfoot's admirable argument in its behalf,² been obtaining an ever-increasing following, is derived from the close resemblance of Galatians to Romans and 2 Corinthians, from which it is inferred that it belongs with them in time as well as in character. Thus, these critics³ have been led to place its composition in Macedonia or at Corinth, and to interpose it between 2 Corinthians and Romans.

Neither of these dispositions is anything more than provisional. The inferences on which they rest are alike insecure; and each is adopted by its advocates only in the absence of decisive considerations either way. When grains are weighed against grains, a hair may tip the scales. The *οὐτως ταχέως* of i. 6 is clearly sufficiently consistent with a date for the epistle only a little more than three years after Paul's leaving Galatia, and, therefore, with the theory that it was written in Macedonia in 57. On the other side, the resemblances of this epistle with 2 Corinthians and Romans, while such as constitute ample proof that it was written about the same time with them, are not such as will prove absolute contemporaneity, and in the case of those with 2 Corinthians are not such as even suggest the order of composition. The likenesses coëxist with equally marked differences, which suggest either lapse of time, or at least great changes of circumstances. Prof. Jowett appears to have correctly stated the matter in the words: "The similarity and dissimilarity between the two epistles [to the Galatians and to the Romans] are of that kind which tends to show that the Epistle to the Galatians could not have been

¹ These are such as De Wette (in his *Einleitung*, Ed. 4), Olshausen, Usteri, Winer, Neander, Guerike, Meyer, Wieseler, Davidson (1849), Lange, Schaff, Reuss, Alford, Turner, Riddle, etc. Dr. Jowett, though not decisively, also takes this view in Ed. 1, vol. i.

² *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, etc. By J. B. Lightfoot, D.D. Andover (Draper): 1870, pp. 42 sq.

³ So, De Wette (in his *Commentary*, hesitatingly), Bleek, Credner, Howson (Com. in *The Bible Commentary*), Conybeare, Sanday, Davidson (1882), Farrar, etc. Even the most popular publications are following the lead of Dr. Lightfoot: cf. a volume printed by the Tract Society, *Lectures on the New Testament* (1881), "Galatians," pp. 7 and 10; and another by The Presbyterian Board of Publication, *The Westminster Question Book* for 1885 (1884), p. 8.

written either after or contemporaneously with the Epistle to the Romans, and that it was not, therefore, a compendium of it; nor is it probable that it was written very long before it." "A similar inference may be drawn from the relation of the Epistle to the Galatians to that [the second] to the Corinthians."¹ The resemblances are thus clearly sufficiently consistent with a date for the Galatians shortly before the apostle left Ephesus.² Whether, therefore, we accept the one conclusion or the other, we do it hesitatingly and with a feeling that the scale scarcely turns to the one side rather than the other.

In this state of affairs, critics are in search of hairs that will tip the beam. Dr. Lightfoot has brought forward two to throw into the scale for the later date: the one derived from the history of St. Paul's personal sufferings, with which he supposes the hints in these epistles to agree best if they are taken in the order, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans; and the other from the development of the Judaistic controversy, which, in like manner, he supposes to be best explained by assuming the same order. Both points appear, however, to be somewhat strained. Baur has set forth an order of development for the controversy with the Judaizers, which requires the epistles to follow the sequence, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, and which is no less or more likely than that defended by Dr. Lightfoot. In truth, however, any such arrangement is of more than doubtful propriety, and must proceed on the covert assumption—and, we may add, manifestly erroneous assumption—that the Judaizing heresy had reached, at the same point of time, the same stage of development everywhere. So soon as we remember that some of these epistles were written to enlightened Corinth, and others to barbarous Galatia, all these nice arrangements are seen to be the growth of misunderstanding. The

¹ *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans, etc.* By Benjamin Jowett, M.A. London (Murray): 1855. Vol. i., p. 202.

² The resemblances to Romans are most fully set forth by Dr. Lightfoot, as quoted above. Perhaps Dean Howson has most fully set forth the resemblances to 2 Corinthians in the introduction to Galatians in *The (Speaker's) Bible Commentary*. When Dr. Lightfoot writes, p. 55, "I cannot but think that the truths which were so deeply impressed on the apostle's mind, and on which he dwelt with such characteristic energy on two different occasions, must have forced themselves into prominence in any letter written meanwhile," we feel doubtful whether he has, in the present application of these words, sufficiently considered that the intermediate letters were written to a different community, that those truths made prominent in Galatians and Romans were not new to the apostle, and that they are as prominent as the occasion seemed to allow in both 1 and 2 Corinthians.

difference of Paul's treatment of the matter in these several epistles is, of course, due to the different states of affairs in these several churches; and so much as to speak, with this narrow reference, of the "progress of the controversy" is to introduce incongruous elements into the discussion. Paul was not a learned controversialist settling a theological controversy for the eye of the learned world, but a distressed pastor confuting error in his churches, — and for each church its own error. It would be more to the point if it could be shown that this order of epistles falls in more naturally with the hints dropped in them of the course of the apostle's personal sufferings. Unfortunately, however, the case is not so. The allusions to his sufferings which Paul makes in Galatians range most closely with those made in 1 Corinthians, and this, indeed, is apparent from Dr. Lightfoot's presentation of the matter. The state of uncertainty in which the balance swung does not appear, therefore, to be essentially altered by these new considerations.

The object of the present paper is to bring its hair to be thrown into the opposite scale. There are a few obscure allusions in the First Epistle to the Corinthians which, taken together, seem to raise a probability in favor of the priority of Galatians to that epistle sufficient to determine our opinion. These allusions seem to have been heretofore overlooked. They are not asserted to be demonstrative; but, in the nice balance in which the question hangs, they are thought to be worth adducing. And, unless we mistake, when taken together they raise a stronger probability than has as yet been made out in either direction. Before we proceed to them, however, it will be well for us to inquire what can be known of the condition of the Galatian churches at the time of Paul's second visit to them. The settlement of this question is not, indeed, necessary to the validity of the inferences we are to draw from the allusions in 1 Corinthians, but it will add new strength to them.

The Galatian Churches at Paul's Second Visit.

Commentators and historians seem to have been sometimes rather rash in their inferences as to the state of the Galatian churches, at the time of the apostle's second visit (Acts xviii. 23). There appear to be only five passages, which can be with any likelihood adduced as bearing on the matter; and no one of these speaks with unwavering voice. One of them, indeed (Gal. v. 3), may be at once set aside

as in every probability not referring at all to a former visit;¹ it is rather a strong asseveration, repeating, and at the same time broadening, the foregoing verse. We have left, then, only four passages, all of doubtful import. Acts xviii. 23 merely tells us that Paul "went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, establishing all the disciples," — a phrase which does not go very far in this matter, but which does not suggest that Paul found any serious heresies at work there.

The reference of Gal. i. 9 is not entirely obvious. Some have understood it to refer only to ver. 8,² though the contextual argument strongly suggests a reference to a previous occasion, when the apostle and his companions had made this proclamation.³ Most expositors⁴ at once assume that the second visit is meant, and infer that there was, therefore, at that time a tendency already visible, or a temptation already working towards Judaizing. There is nothing in the context, however, to suggest this. On the contrary, the surrounding verses would rather lend color to the feeling that the apostle is adducing here a prophetic warning, — just as at Miletum he prophetically warned the Ephesian elders of the errors which he himself had to oppose at a later day. There is certainly nothing in the context to suggest a distinction between the first and second visits. Von Hofmann, accordingly, understands⁵ the first visit to be here meant, and argues that the apostle would never have spoken of the second visit as distinguished from the first by a simple *πρό*, especially if the warning had been called out by a serious tendency in the churches to listen to another gospel. The apostle had had experience enough, he adds, of the Judaizers at Antioch to suggest to him the need of such a warning. This much is at least worth our careful attention: the apostle actually says only "on a former occasion," and leaves it, apparently as a matter of small moment, to the knowledge of the reader, to supply the closer definition.

The passage at Gal. iv. 16, "So, then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" is with even more doubtful justice applied to the second visit. The context suggests no such definition of time; and the reference has actually been taken to the time of writing⁶ and

¹ So, *e.g.*, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Alford, Eadie, Schaff, Sanday. Contra: Meyer, Sieffert, Schmoller.

² So, Chrysostom, Bengel, Winer, Neander.

³ See this well stated in Ellicott.

⁴ *E.g.*, Ellicott, Meyer, Lightfoot, Alford, Eadie, Schaff, Sieffert, Sanday.

⁵ *Die heilige Schrift neuen Testaments*, etc., ii. 1, p. 15, 2d edition.

⁶ Jerome, Luther, Koppe, Flatt.

to the first visit as well as to the second¹ visit. The commentators appear to have seriously misunderstood the purport of the verse, however, when they explain it as a declaration, that the apostle had some time or other severely blamed the Galatians. Both notions, that the truths he had told them were disagreeable, and that they were about the Galatians, are gratuitously brought into the passage by the expositors. If we observe the emphasis of *ἐχθρός*, and the tense of *γέγονα*, we will see that a fair paraphrase of the passage would be something like this: "So, then, is it an enemy of yours that I have become, by dealing² truly with you?"³ or even "So, then, is it an enemy of yours that I have become by proclaiming the truth to you?"⁴ Here is no distinction between what the apostle had been to them and what he now is; or between what he had been once, and had not been on another occasion,—no hint of a change in him. The contrast is between what he has been and is to them, and what the Judaizers are to them. Only if the context demanded a contrast between what the apostle had been to them on two previous occasions, could the ordinary interpretation be right. So far, however, from suggesting that, on his last visit, he had been harsh, the context emphatically states that he had been tender to them (vers. 18, 19). On the other hand the succeeding verses do suggest a contrast between Paul's dealing with them and the conduct towards them of the Judaizers. The verse, then, in all probability, does not distinguish times, but asserts that he had been always—and was now, as much as ever (vers. 18–20), despite appearances—true to them, while the Judaizers were self-seeking and designing.⁵

¹ Ellicott, Lightfoot, Meyer, Alford, Eadie, Sanday, Schmoller, Riddle, Schaff.

² Compare the Revised English Version of 1881, marginal reading.

³ Compare Revised English Version, 1881, American appendix.

⁴ Compare Grimm's Clavis, *sub. voc.*, and Eph. iv. 15, where only elsewhere in the New Testament the word occurs. It is certainly striking that in both passages the word is used in contrast to false teaching. In our own opinion, this is the true sense here; and the reference is to the *preaching* of truth.

⁵ Holsten's very valuable note on this passage escaped our eye until after the above was written; he alone of the commentators appears to have correctly caught the sense: "Paulus gibt mit diesen Worten das an, was aus der ersten seligpreisung der Galater unter der bearbeitung der judaisten, der sie unversständig gehör gegeben, in der gegenwart herauskommen ist (*γέγονα*). Die judaisten hatten den Galatern den Paulus als feind geschildert, der durch sein evangelium sie um die sohnschaft Abrahams und das vollerbe des heils bringen werde, wenn sie nicht dem evangelium der judaisten gläubig gehorsamen und gesetz und beschneidung auf sich rechnen würden; die Galater aber hatten die judaisten geglaubt. Und weil Paulus in v. 16, mit den Worten: *euer feind* den ausspruch

Finally, Galatians v. 21 bears on its face the absence of temporal definition. The apostle simply says he had on a former occasion given the same forewarning that he now repeats. Nor are the sins of this catalogue sufficiently unlike those of Romans xiii. 13 or 2 Corinthians xii. 20 to justify our finding in them any such special reference to the condition of the Galatians that we may assume that they were in evil case when the apostle visited them the second time and that this warning was then delivered. No doubt these particular sins were chosen for condemnation, because they were specially applicable to the Galatians. But it is safe neither on the one hand to assume that the apostle gives here a *verbatim* report of his previous warning, nor on the other to assert that the character of the Galatians was not sufficiently evident during his first visit to suggest such a warning. "This solemn censure," says Dr. Eadie, "might be given at any of his visits, for it fitted such a people at any time."

It produces an almost ludicrous effect on the mind to remember that these passages are absolutely the whole basis of fact for the very detailed descriptions of the sad condition of affairs at Galatia at the time of Paul's second visit which some writers have wrought out. Even the more cautious accounts of such commentators as Meyer and Lightfoot appear scarcely justified. At the most, even when we apply the hints of Galatians i. 9 and v. 21 to the second visit, we learn nothing further than that the apostle felt constrained to *forewarn* them then against divisions and strifes, and, probably also in the way of forewarning, to put them on their guard against other gospels than that he preached. There is a complete lack of anything that will justify us in asserting it to be even probable that the Judaizing heresy had already broken out, or even that unhealthy symptoms threatening the purity of the church had already appeared or that there was an inclination to yield to them apparent. When Reuss¹ takes refuge in the broad statement that the Galatians could not have understood their letter at all, had not Paul been discussing the same matters with them immediately before orally, the attentive student will not need to have it pointed out to him that nothing could be more mistaken,—and that nothing is presupposed in the letter beyond what must have

der judaisten über ihn aufgenommen hat, wie die Galater wol verstehen, so kann er nun (v. 17), unvermittelt auf diese judaisten übergehen und die selbstsucht ihrer beweggründe den Galatern enthüllen."—*Das Evangelium des Paulus dargestellt von C. Holsten*, i. 1, p. 116. Berlin, 1880. With this we very heartily agree.

¹ § 85 of *History of the N. T.*, E. T., by E. L. Houghton, Boston, 1884.

been well known in every community, where Jewish and Gentile believers existed together.

And if this is all we can learn concerning the condition of the Galatians at the time of the second visit, even if we apply both passages to that time, we are in a condition to estimate what we know of it in the actual state of doubt as to the true temporal reference of those passages. This much may be asserted as scarcely liable to contradiction: that the very indeterminate nature of the passages is itself a disproof of the theory which supposes a great change to have passed over Galatia between the apostle's first and second visits there. It is little short of incredible that he could have written so indefinitely if his second visit had been essentially different from his first. The broad *προ*- of i. 9 and v. 21, in other words, is an authoritative charter granting a monopoly to the opinion that the whole of the apostle's dealing with the Galatians up to his writing of this letter had been of one kind,—that he was conscious of no marked differences in their circumstances, demanding a marked difference in his treatment of them at his second visit,—and therefore that these churches were not in any essential danger at his visit at Acts xviii., which was not already threatening them at Acts xvi. The calm language of Acts xviii. 23 is in harmony with this inference.

Other hints in the letter to the same purport are not wanting. The fall of the Galatians is represented as a sudden and unexpected one (iii. 1, i. 6). The apostle writes the letter under shock and surprise (i. 6). The statements of iv. 18–20 appear to distinctly assert that when last present with them he had not had occasion to be harsh. Davidson well says: "The information [concerning the heresy of the Galatians] occasioned an outburst of righteous indignation. . . . The information was therefore unexpected."¹ Even Reuss admits that "the transformation . . . had come to the knowledge of the apostle suddenly, and . . . astonished him."² When we add to these notices and hints the fact that the epistle nowhere gives indication that the apostle had opposed or combated these evil tendencies when in Galatia, the probability rises very high that that very numerous body of critics³ are right who assume that the inroads of the Judaizers began only after the second visit.

¹ Introduction to the N. T. 1st Ed. London: 1849. Vol. II., p. 296.

² As above.

³ *E.g.*, Davidson (as above, p. 307); De Wette (*Einleitung*, Ed 4); Schaff (*Hist. of Apost. Church*); Bleek.

Two inferences follow from this conclusion of sufficient interest to warrant stating them. 1. We must put the composition of the epistle as late as other indications will allow. Some time, after all, even though an amazingly short one for so great a change, must be allowed for the machinations of the Judaizers to develop themselves and spread through these churches. The epistle was not, then, written at the beginning of the stay in Ephesus, but most likely only at the end of it, or after the departure for Corinth. 2. Since we must assume that the apostle wrote immediately on hearing of the evil case into which the churches had drifted, any allusions which we may find to the Galatians as heretics are allusions to the Epistle to the Galatians, and presuppose its existence.

Bearing these results in mind, we are in a position to estimate at their highest value the faint allusions, which we think we have found in 1 Corinthians, to the Epistle to the Galatians as already existing.

Allusions in 1 Corinthians.

There is, of course, but one passage in 1 Corinthians in which Galatia is explicitly mentioned, — that found at xvi. 1: "But concerning the collection for the saints: as I gave order to the churches of Galatia so do ye, — on the first day of the week let each of you lay by him in store," etc. Here is not only an implication, but a direct assertion, of communication between the apostle and the Galatians. But nothing is said as to the time when the apostle gave this command. It is not very probable, however, that he is referring in this simple manner to a command given so long ago as three years before, when he was personally with them. And this is somewhat supported by the fact that, at the time when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and thereafter, this collection was much in his thoughts, while there is no proof that he had it in mind three years before. We are glad to see that Bishop Lightfoot¹ agrees that some time subsequent to Paul's second visit to Galatia is probably referred to in these words. But if we thus assume, as appears most natural, that Paul had personal communication with the Galatian churches shortly before he wrote 1 Corinthians, — *i.e.*, late in his stay at Ephesus, — a faint probability is raised that this occurred when he sent the epistle to them. So early a writer as Capellus, followed by Burton, saw this, and assumed that

¹ *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 32. So also Prof. Jowett, l. c. I., p. 196. At p. 60, Dr. Lightfoot supposes this communication to have taken place only just before 1 Corinthians was written.

Paul gave this command through the messengers who bore his letter. It does not seem to be a valid objection to this, that the command here alluded to is not actually found in the epistle. It was somewhat of a custom with Paul to leave personal matters to the oral communication of the bearers of his letters ;¹ and this would be especially appropriate in the case of the fiery and tumultuous letter to the Galatians. And there are hints in the letter, or, at least, general instructions, to which such an oral command would be a fit supplement, and which, in a way, prepared the way for it (ii. 10 and vi. 6-10). On the other hand, there are difficulties in the way of supposing that the apostle was in constant communication with Galatia during his three years' stay at Ephesus. It is almost inconceivable that the Judaizing heresy there did not require most of this time for its development, and quite inconceivable that Paul should be in close communication with the churches and not be informed of what was toward. The tone of surprise of his letter sufficiently proves that he was wholly unprepared for the bad news when it did reach him, and this apparently indicates that he had not heard from the Galatian churches for some time previously. Of course, it is possible that Paul sent this command by a special messenger from Ephesus, and only heard from him, on his return to him in Macedonia, of the sad state of affairs in Galatia, and then was led to write the letter. A hundred other suppositions may be possible ; and, in the presence of any decisive considerations one way or the other, this passage could raise no probability in opposition to them. But we are here weighing the faintest indications, and it appears easier to suppose that he sent the command by a messenger whom we know he did send, than to invent a special and additional messenger for it.² As a mere balance of probabilities, then, it seems to remain as rather the likelier hypothesis *per se* that Paul sent the command by the bearer of the letter. Of course

¹ Cf. 1 Corinthians iv. 16; Ephesians vi. 21 sq.; Colossians iv. 7.

² If the common appeal to 2 Corinthians viii. 10, ix. 1, 2 to show that the collection was taken up first of all churches at Corinth, and that, a year only before 2 Corinthians was written, were justified, it would be almost demonstrated that Galatians was written just before 1 Corinthians. (See Dr. David Brown's note on 1 Corinthians xvi. 1 in Schaff's *Popular Commentary*.) For 1 Corinthians would presuppose, then (xvi. 1), a communication to the Galatians less than a year before (2 Corinthians viii. 10), conveying a command as yet unfulfilled. But the language of 2 Corinthians viii. 10, ix. 1, 2 is strained in this application of it. It only says that the Corinthians preceded the Macedonians in this matter, and took up their collection the previous year, *i.e.*, after 1 Corinthians, which was hence probably written before passover.

this would give way before any evidence that the letter was written after 1 Corinthians; but in the absence of such evidence the probability is tangible, and if any further hints can be found in 1 Corinthians pointing to the priority of Galatians, it will become strong.

Such a further hint appears to be possibly lurking in the somewhat obscure passage, 1 Corinthians ix. 2: "If to others I am not an apostle, yet to you at least I am." The apostle is commending the law of love to the Corinthians, and is appealing to them to embrace it by his own example. To enhance the value of this example he points out that he is free from all and an apostle. The mere assertion of this is enough for his present argument. But the presence of Judaizers (the Peter-party) at Corinth leads him to pause to prove it. Is it wrong to see in the tone he adopts in this proof a deeper and more serious worry than the stage of the Judaizing controversy at Corinth gave occasion for? At all events, in the midst of it he, quite needlessly for his purpose in this general context, introduces an allusion to certain others who denied his apostleship. This *ἄλλοις*—which, moreover, is emphatically put forward—has been quite a puzzle to commentators. Hofmann and Holsten wish (plainly wrongly) to understand the dative to express relation, rather than judgment, and the *ἄλλοις* to refer to believers not converted by Paul,—the Jewish-Christian party, or, as Hofmann prefers to say, with a reference to the arrangement reported in Galatians ii. 7–8, the Christians of the Circumcision. Meyer sees in it a reference to the strangers who, non-Corinthians themselves, had brought Judaizing doctrines to Corinth. Certainly they were non-Corinthians,—but why "who had come to Corinth"? There is no hint in the passage of this, and it seems inconsistent with the emphasis that falls on *ἄλλοις* in contrast with *ὑμῖν*. Moreover, as the *ὑμῖν* are here not individuals, but a church, *ἄλλοις* should be a church, or churches, too. Briefly, then, here is a reference, in a passage the tone of which betrays strong feeling, to some other church or churches than the Corinthians, which denied Paul's apostleship. We immediately think of the Galatians, who alone, so far as we know, were before the Corinthians affected with this form of Judaizing error. It may add an additional plausibility to this supposition to note that this passage, 1 Corinthians ix. 1 *sq.* (especially verse 11), has some points of resemblance with a passage in Galatians (v. 6–8). Holsten has also pointed out that the use of the phrase "Am I not free?" here (verse 1) finds its explanation in Galatians ii. 4, 5. On the whole a reference to the heresy of the

Galatians, which implies, as pointed out above, the epistle, seems somewhat likely here.

Another passage of somewhat like character meets us at 1 Corinthians vii. 17, where Paul after broadening the rule suggested in verses 8-16 into the general principle that each man is to continue in the condition in which God has called him, says that he thus commands in all the churches, and immediately illustrates it from circumcision, inevitably suggesting to us the words at the end of Galatians (vi. 15) : "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision ; but a new creature " (*cf.* also Galatians v. 6), which is very closely related to verse 19 of this chapter : "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing ; but a keeping of God's commandments." Apparently when the apostle speaks of commanding other churches, his mind goes back to the Galatians and he remembers what he has written to them. This is natural if we assume that he had just completed the Galatian letter when he was called upon to write 1 Corinthians. And the very naturalness of the result of such an assumption raises a probability in its favor.

Still another passage of similar character is worth adducing. It is found in 1 Corinthians iv. 17. The apostle beseeches the Corinthians to imitate him in his freedom from party-spirit, and tells them that he sends Timothy to them for the very purpose of enabling them to be the better imitators of him in his devotion to others and his inability to become a party leader. Hence Timothy will remind them "of all his ways that are in Christ Jesus, even as everywhere, in every church he teaches." The strength of this doubled universal is certainly significant. And we may suppose that Paul had, under some temptation to the opposite conduct, lately taught some church something that involved the refusal on his part to appear as a party leader and the disapproval in them of such party strife and division. Do we not again think of the Galatians? In whom else if not them can this pointed reference find its fulfilment? But if the reference be to the Galatians, it is, in the light of what we have discovered as to the time of the origin of Judaizing among them, to the Epistle to the Galatians.

Of course, considered as proof this argument is very imperfect. What we are in search of is only some, even faint, hint to lead us in choosing between two opinions, either probable enough in itself, but neither of which has decisive evidence in its favor. The probability raised by each of the passages, which we have adduced, separately, is no doubt small. But it is worth remarking that that raised by each

is independent of all the others ; so that they are related cumulatively to one another. Apparently each raises a slight presumption in favor of the priority of Galatians to 1 Corinthians ; the probability that results from the cumulative union of 1 Corinthians ix. 2, vii. 17, and iv. 17 is large enough to be felt and estimated ; and therefore the support which these three passages taken collectively give to the most natural implication of 1 Corinthians xvi. 1 is strong enough to make that implication somewhat the most probable one, — for their union with it too is cumulative. Thrown into the trembling balance, this final presumption seems to be enough to determine the dip of the scales to the side of the priority of Galatians to 1 Corinthians. The hints conveyed in these passages apparently stretch even to another point, and suggest that Galatians is only just earlier than 1 Corinthians, — perhaps only a few weeks, scarcely many weeks.

Some supporting considerations buttressing this conclusion might be suggested. Among them are the passages resembling each other that may be turned up in the two epistles, and the list of which is capable of considerable enlarging over what the "Introductions" usually give. As an example 1 Corinthians x. 32—xi. 2 is quite worth comparing with Galatians iv. 12 *sq.* But not staying to dwell on what is already familiar, it may be well to call attention to two points connected with St. Paul's sufferings, — the one with his internal sorrow, and the other with his bodily torture, — both of which seem to fall in with the order of the epistles which places Galatians first. When Bishop Lightfoot represents the apostle's sufferings as ever increasing until he came to Troas and thence to Macedonia where they reached their climax, before Titus' coming relieved him, we cannot follow him. Paul himself says his sufferings did not cease when he reached Troas (2 Corinthians ii. 13), or even when he came to Macedonia (2 Corinthians vii. 5) ; but this is essentially different from saying that all this time they were increasing. On the contrary, such passages as 2 Corinthians ii. 4 appear not obscurely to hint that his inner sorrows were at their climax when 1 Corinthians was written, though he struggled to prevent their expression in order to spare the Corinthians. Indeed, the free expression of his past griefs in 2 Corinthians is proof enough that they were well past as he wrote, and Paul sets as the time of their greatest pressure the date of 1 Corinthians. Now, if at this time he was suffering under the stunning blow of the Galatian' apostasy as well as under the evil news from Corinth, his deep grief is explained.

Again, the climax of his outer sufferings had been reached in Asia

(2 Corinthians i. 8-10). What desperate experience is here alluded to is, no doubt, not very clear. It seems obvious, however, that it is not the disturbance stirred up by Demetrius at Ephesus and recorded in Acts xix. That uproar did not bring the apostle into personal suffering, and he left Ephesus immediately afterwards. The narrative in 2 Corinthians seems to exclude any later occasion from consideration. Nothing appears in Acts or the Epistles so suitable for the reference as the allusion to the fighting with beasts, dropped somewhat incidentally at 1 Corinthians xv. 32 — there passed over lightly in accordance with the intention of the apostle recorded in 2 Corinthians ii. 4, but here in accordance with the altered character of his writing dwelt more fully upon. Indeed, the manner in which the apostle here describes his trial, almost implies that it had been already alluded to between him and the Corinthians. It is scarcely necessary to say that there exists no decisive reason for explaining away the hint in 1 Corinthians xv. 32 as if it were meant only figuratively. But if we assume that such a fighting with beasts did occur at Ephesus, the rather obscure verse at Galatians vi. 17, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus," receives a ready explanation. And its implication that the experience was recent, accords with the supposition that Galatians was written immediately before 1 Corinthians, before the writing of which the beast-fighting had occurred. Moreover the hints in these two epistles that have been read by some as implying that the apostle was ill at the time that he wrote them, and especially the large, painfully-formed and misshapen letters with which he wrote his accustomed line or two at the end of the Epistle to the Galatians (Galatians vi. 11), are explained, if we assume that he had been thrown to the beasts shortly before these letters were written, and was still suffering from the deadly injuries then received.

In the light of these considerations we may be able to come to a provisional conclusion concerning the date of the Galatian letter. In accordance with its resemblances with Romans and 2 Corinthians, we must place its origin somewhat near the dates of those epistles. In accordance with the *οὐτως ταχέως* of i. 6, the reference of which is no doubt to the time of the conversion of the Galatians, but, conjoined with that, also to the time of his last seeing them: "I marvel that you are so quickly [after your acceptance of him and my experience of your hold upon him]" (*cf.* the context) — we must place it not too long after the apostle's second visit. In accordance with its

hints as to its place in the history of the apostle's personal suffering, external or internal, we must place it almost contemporaneous with 1 Corinthians. And in accordance with some seeming allusions to it in 1 Corinthians, we must place it before 1 Corinthians. We propose, therefore, to assume provisionally that the epistle was written at Ephesus, about or somewhat earlier than the passover time of the year, A.D. 57, and only a few weeks at most before 1 Corinthians. This conclusion is not firm ; it can be readily overturned by any real evidence to the contrary. But in the lack of decisive evidence either way, it appears to be the most probable conclusion attainable.