

tence, or at least that was recognized by the church at the time. This statement does not, however, refer to his writings generally, but to certain things which he found it necessary for him, under the peculiar pressure of the circumstances then existing in the Corinthian Church, to write in vindication of himself. It was in respect to these personal allusions which he felt it humiliating and painful in the extreme to make, that he disclaimed divine inspiration, *if indeed he disclaimed it at all*. And this disclaimer upon the part of the apostle, if it really is a disclaimer, not only implies that he did ordinarily write under divine inspiration, but it also shows how conscientious and careful he was to distinguish between that which was inspired and that which was not. Thus understood, the passage so far from detracting from the authority of the writings of St. Paul, must add immense weight to that authority in the estimation of every intelligent and fair-minded man. But, though the preponderance of critical authority appears in favor of this view, it is possible that the apostle meant nothing more than that in adopting the *role* of the boaster, which he was compelled to do, by the boasting of others, and by the folly of those to whom he was now writing, who had allowed themselves to be led away from the simplicity and purity of the Gospel by their boasting, he was playing the part of a fool rather than following the meek and lowly example of his divine Master and Lord. It was his delight to hide himself behind the Cross; to preach his crucified Lord in a crucified style; and to take the place of the least of all saints. But there had been a false preacher among the Corinthian Christians in Paul's absence, who had preached himself rather than Christ; who, instead of adopting the chastened style of the apostle, made a brilliant display of his own parts, and, notably, took advantage of the self-deprecatory things which, in the depth of his humility, Paul had uttered concerning himself, to degrade him in the eyes of the people and to destroy his influence among them. To counteract the mischief which this man had wrought, Paul finds it necessary to magnify his own office, and to set forth his own claims. But this he does, as it were, under protest. He does it not because there is anything in which is congenial to his own feelings, or in accordance with the example of his Master; on the contrary, he feels as if he were playing the fool, acting a part in fact, which is strangely out of harmony with what he conceives to be proper in one who sustains the rela-