INTRODUCTION. ] 1 CORINTHIANS. [cn. 1.   
   
   
 of action as regarded meats offered to idols (ch. viii—x.); they had   
 apparently also referred to him the question whether their women should   
 be veiled in the public assemblies of the church (ch. xi. 8—16): and had   
 laid before him some difficulties respecting the exercise of spiritual gifts   
 (ch. xii—xiv.). He had enjoined them to make a collection for the   
 poor saints at Jerusalem: and they had requested directions, how this   
 might best be done (ch. xvi. 1 ff).   
 2. These enquiries would have clicited at all events an answer from   
 St. Paul. But there were other and even more weighty reasons why an   
 Epistle should be sent to them just now from their father in the faith.   
 Intelligence had been brought him by the family of Chloe (ch. i. 11) of   
 their contentious spirit, From the same, or from other sources, he had   
 learned the occurrence among them of a gross case of incest, in which the   
 delinquent was upheld in impunity by the church (ch. v. 1 ff.).—He had   
 further understood that the Christian brethren were in the habit of   
 carrying their disputes before heathen tribunals (ch. vi. 1 ff.), And it   
 had been represented to him that there were irregularities requiring   
 reprehension in their manner of celebrating the Agape, or love-feasts,   
 which indeed they had so abused, that they could now be no longer called   
 the Supper of the Lord (ch. xi.), Such were their weighty errors in practice:   
 and among these it would have been hardly possible that Christian doctrine   
 should remain sound. So far was this from being the case, that some   
 among them had even gone to the length of denying the Resurrection   
 itself. Against these he triumphantly argues in eh. xv.   
 8. It has been questioned whether St. Paul had the defence of his own   
 apostolic authority in view in this Epistle. The answer must certainly   
 be in the affirmative. We cannot read chapters iv. and ix. without per-   
 ceiving this. At the same time, it is most probable that the hostility of   
 the false teachers had not yet assumed the definite force of personal   
 slander and disparagement,—or not so prominently and notoriously as   
 afterwards. That which is the primary subject of the second Epistle, is   
 but incidentally touched on here. But we plainly see that his authority   
 had been already impugned (sce esp. ch. iv. 17—21), and his apostleship   
 questioned (ch. ix. 1, 2).   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION Iv.   
   
   
 OF THE NUMBER OF EPISTLES WRITTEN BY ST. PAUL TO THE   
 CORINTHIANS.   
   
 1. If we were left to infer a priori, it would be exceedingly probable   
 that an Epistle had been sent to the Corinthians before this which we   
 call the first. It appears from ch, xvi. 1 that they wanted some direc-   
 18