

Commendation in the Face of Condemnation

A.W. Tozer:

Paul's Corinthian detractors first tried to discredit him entirely by starting a whispering campaign to the effect that he was actually no apostle but a power-hungry impostor seeking to bring them under his control. When the apostle had written his reply in defense of his apostolic authority, they then shifted their attack and accused him of other kinds of double dealing. "He gives himself as a reference for himself," they said sarcastically. "He must have letters of recommendation like a common traveling preacher. Such a man cannot be an apostle." Paul had to answer that, and he did. But it was not easy. His second epistle to the Corinthians was surely one of the most difficult he was ever called upon to write, for he was forced for the church's sake to speak in his own defense. His beloved fellow Christians must trust him if he is to help them, so he will state his case frankly, even if his whole soul shrinks from the task. The words "I am speaking as a fool," "I am become a fool," indicate how deeply he felt the humiliation. But he sacrificed himself for the good of the church and let his enemies think what they would. That was Paul's way.