

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Analysis

- A. Paul appealed to the Corinthians to understand his position in respect to their relation to Christ (1-5).
1. He began with an ironical appeal for them to "bear with a little foolishness" (1-6).
 - a) He made the appeal even though he aware that they were bearing with him (1).
 - b) He stated his position in respect to their relation to Christ (2-3).
 - (1) He was the one who had betrothed them to Christ.
 - (a) As such, he was jealous of others who might usurp his position.
 - (b) He wanted them to remain as a pure virgin betrothed to Christ.
 - (c) He reminded them that Christ was to be their one husband.
 - (2) He expressed his fear that they might be led away from this pure relationship to Christ.
 - (a) Just as the serpent deceived Eve, they were being deceived by false teachers.
 - (b) They were actually in danger of being led away from sincere devotion to Christ.
 - c) He pointed out the conditions under which they were ready to listen to other teachers (4).
 - (1) They would listen if some came preaching another Jesus.
 - (2) They would listen if they received a different spirit than that which they had received when they accepted the gospel that Paul preached—this is a part of the "foolishness" about which he wrote.
 - (3) They would even listen to a different gospel which was not the one they accepted when he led them to Christ.
 - d) He defended his apostleship against these deceivers (5-6).
 - (1) He was in no way inferior to these "super-apostles."
 - (2) He admitted that he was no professional orator, but

II CORINTHIANS

defended his knowledge which he had in every way shown to be from God. They had seen the evidence that this was true.

2. He contrasted his ministry at Corinth with that of the false teachers (7-15).

a) He asked, "Did I sin in lowering myself that you might be exalted?" (7-11)

(1) This issue was based on the fact that he had preached the gospel to them without charge (7).

(2) Ironically, he stated that he had "robbed" other churches—he had accepted support from them—in order to preach the gospel without charge to the Corinthians. (8)

(3) The brethren of Macedonia had supplied his needs when he was at Corinth and in want. (9a).

(4) He determined not to be a burden to them and that no one would stop him from boasting about this in Achaia (9b-10).

(5) Why was this? It was to show his love for them, for God knew that he did love them (11).

b) He explained his reason for continuing this policy in Achaia (12-15).

(1) It was to prevent others from making the claim that they were on the same footing as Paul in relation to the Corinthians (12).

(2) It was to show the real motive of others (13).

(a) He revealed what they really were:

i) False apostles.

ii) Deceitful workers.

iii) False apostles of Christ.

(b) He revealed their relation to Satan (14-15).

i) Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

ii) His servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. See Rom 6:16 ff.

(c) He revealed what their end will be: It will be according to their deeds.

B. Paul ironically asked to be allowed to boast a little (16-33).

1. He asked that no one think him foolish; yet if they did, he wanted them to allow him to boast a little (16-21a).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- a) He asked them to accept him even if he was boasting foolishly (16).
 - b) This approach was not the manner in which the Lord had appealed to His hearers (17a). See 10:1.
 - c) He had confidence in his grounds for boasting about these things (17b).
 - d) Since others gloried in the flesh—their human accomplishments—he would also, for the Corinthians seemed to be willing to listen to this foolishness. They thought of themselves as being wise. (18-19).
 - d) He described the type of man they were willing to put up with (20).
 - (1) One who enslaved them.
 - (2) One who devoured them.
 - (3) One who took advantage of them.
 - (4) One who exalted himself.
 - (5) One who struck them in the face.
 - f) Judged by such standards Paul admitted that he was weak (21a).
2. He compared his grounds for boasting—his labors and sufferings—with that of others (21b-29).
- a) In relation to the fathers, he was their equal (21b-22).
 - (1) Are they Hebrews? So was he.
 - (2) Are they Israelites? So was he.
 - (3) Are they Abraham's seed? So was he.
 - b) In relation to Christ, he excelled them (23).
 - (1) To call them ministers of Christ is to speak as one who is mad.
 - (2) Paul excelled them in labors, imprisonments, beatings, and death for Christ.
 - c) In relation to the things he suffered as a minister of Christ, he was far beyond them (24-29).
 - (1) Beatings, stonings, shipwrecks (24-25).
 - (2) Journeys and perils (26).
 - (3) Labors, travail, watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness (27).
 - (4) Anxiety for all the churches (28).
 - (5) Identity with the weak and stumbling (29).
3. He presented an example of the solemn truth about his boasting in weakness (30-33).

- a) The truth of this account was known to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus. (30-31).
- b) As evidence of his weakness, he related the story of his escape from persecution at the hands of the governor under Aretas (32-33).

An Ironic Appeal

Scripture

11:1-6 Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness: but indeed ye do bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach or if ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with him. 5 For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 6 But though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge; nay, in every way have we made this manifest unto you in all things.

Comments

in a little foolishness.—It was really unnecessary for Paul to defend his apostleship since it had been established by the signs which he had performed in their midst. More than that, the Corinthians were thoroughly aware of the fact that their relation to Christ depended on the message which Paul had preached to them and which they had accepted. See I Cor. 9:1-2 and II Cor. 3:1-3. Consequently, Paul could say, "I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness." That is, let him go on defending his apostleship which had come under attack from false leaders who had come to Corinth after his departure. *but indeed ye do bear with me.*—Paul knew from the report of Titus that the Corinthians had responded to the directions he had given them in his first letter. They's why he said, "Of course, you do bear with me. But in this particular issue in which my apostleship is being attacked by the super-apostles, I want you to let me restate the facts in answer to the charges that are now being brought against me."

For I am jealous over you.—Paul's position in the Corinthians' relation to Christ was that of a father who had espoused his daughter to the bridegroom. Paul had espoused them to Christ. Just as a father would

be jealous of anyone seeking to usurp his position in such a case, so Paul expressed his jealousy over the fact that some of the Corinthians were listening to the Satanic teachers who were interfering with the arrangements that he had made in committing the Corinthian Christians to Christ.

a godly jealousy.—Paul's attitude was like that of God toward those who would lead His people away from Him.

Jealousy can be, and often is, an evil thing. This is true when it becomes an expression of selfish envy. But no such element enters into the attitude of Paul in his relation to the church at Corinth.

The Old Testament frequently represents God as the jealous husband of a faithless wife who has forsaken her husband for another man. Israel kept forsaking God for the gods of the pagans. She was like a faithless wife, and God is said to be jealous in such cases. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" is the basic principle on which the Law of God for the Israelites rested. He would not tolerate Israel's running after idols and getting involved in all the sinful practices associated with idolatry.

The apostle of Christ with Godlike jealousy resented the defection of the Corinthian Christians to the false teachers whose true character Paul was about to point out as being Satanic.

to one husband.—The marriage relationship presented a perfect illustration of the point Paul was making. From the beginning, the divine plan was that there should be one husband for one wife. See *Studies in First Corinthians*, chapter seven, for the instruction Paul had given the Corinthians on the divine standard of marriage. With that letter before them, they knew exactly the meaning of Paul's words when he said that he had espoused them to one husband that is, to Christ. In the Ephesian letter, Paul referred to the relationship between the church and Christ and called upon wives to be faithful to their own husbands as unto the Lord. See Eph. 5:22-23.

John wrote about the marriage supper of the Lamb as he anticipated the coming of Christ and the gathering of the saints unto Him. "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God" (Rev. 19:7-9).

a pure virgin to Christ.—Paul indicates that the purity of the bride who anticipates her wedding should symbolize the purity of the church as it anticipates the coming of Christ and the privilege of being with Him in the heavenly kingdom. Purity, of course, meant loyalty to Him and none other, abiding by the truth of His gospel, rejecting all falsehood, and keeping themselves unspotted from the sinful practices of the world. It meant faithfulness to Christ and His word in the Christian life which is the period of preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The term "virgin" in our language denotes purity. Since it had other connotations in the language of the Greeks, it became necessary for Paul to define his meaning by saying "pure" virgin so that no member of the church could mistake his meaning.

To further insure his readers against any possible misunderstanding, he illustrated exactly what he meant by calling their attention to Satan's complete deception of Eve in the Garden.

But I fear.—Paul had grounds for his fears, for the Corinthians were in real danger. They were gladly listening to the false teachers who were endeavoring to undermine the work of the apostle of Christ who had preached the gospel to them. And it was that gospel that had converted them to Christ.

as the serpent beguiled Eve.—There isn't the slightest indication that the inspired apostle Paul believed that the account of Satan's effort to deceive Eve was some mythological explanation of the presence of evil in the world. He presented it in exactly the same way that Moses did in the third chapter of Genesis, that is, as an historical fact. To complete his account, he identified Satan, the troublemaker at Corinth, with the serpent. John does the same thing when he refers to the old serpent as the one who is called the devil and Satan. See Rev. 12:9.

his craftiness.—Paul had already warned the Corinthians against the schemes of the devil as he tried to take advantage of God's people. His craftiness had succeeded in Eve's case. Paul had his fears that Satan might also succeed in some instances at Corinth.

corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ.—In the epistle to the Romans Paul tells what happens to men who turn from the knowledge of God to the worship of idols and the sins that accompany such worship. When they did so, God gave them up to an unapproved mind. See Rom. 1:18-32. But since God has provided the means by which sins are blotted out, Paul could exhort his readers to be not fashioned according to this present age, but to be transformed

by the renewing of their minds, so that they might approve the will of God, the thing that is good, acceptable to God, and complete. See Rom. 12:2. The plea of the message of the Bible is for men to straighten out their thinking in the light of the truth of God revealed Word.

Some of the Corinthians were in danger of having Satan corrupt their minds from the simplicity and purity of the truth by which their relationship to Christ was governed. The word "simplicity" suggests the single-minded devotion to the things God wants man to do. It is translated "liberality" in 8:2. This singleness of purpose had led the Macedonians to give generously for the relief of the saints in Judea. But in 11:3 it suggests the sincere dedication of mind and purpose to the service of Christ. It is coupled with purity of heart and mind in all this vital relationship.

Paul had good reason to fear that some of the Corinthians were being led astray from this devotion to Christ through the craftiness of Satan. Every Christian must be constantly on guard against this happening to him. Some things that help prevent it are: (1) A real knowledge of the Word of God. Jesus illustrated this when He said to Satan, "Thus it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That individual who does not know what God has written may fall easy prey to the devices of Satan cleverly presented by false teachers. (2) Not only must one know the Word but he must also translate it into life. Anything short of active participation in the total program of Christ for His church places the Christian in jeopardy. Paul had written that it was necessary for him to buffet his body and bring it into bondage lest by any means after he had preached to others, he might be rejected. See I Cor. 9:27. There is more to Christianity than being present in the assembly on the Lord's Day, keeping the Lord's supper, and hearing the Word taught. The first business of the church is to seek and save the lost. Every Christian should be busily engaged to the extent of his ability in this work of Christ. The untaught, idle church member needs to be brought to the realization of the peril which he faces, the very real danger of being lost.

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus.—Paul had been sent to Corinth to preach the Lord Jesus Christ. "Lord" indicated, in all probability, that Jesus was identified with the eternal living God. "Jesus" means "Savior." "Christ" refers to the fact that He is prophet, priest, and king. Could the super-apostles who had come to Corinth

preach another Jesus who was superior to Jesus whom Paul preached? It is true that they were preaching another "Jesus" but the Corinthians needed to learn that Jesus whom Paul preached was the only one in whom there is salvation, for there is no other name given among men in whom they must be saved. See Acts 4:12.

if ye received a different spirit.—This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit. The Galatian churches had been corrupted by false teachers just as the Corinthians were being corrupted by the super-apostles. Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Spirit that is, the Holy Spirit—by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2)? By "receiving the Spirit" in that context, Paul referred to the miraculous power which had been granted to those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands. This demonstration of power showed the Galatians that they should not follow the false teachers who wanted them to observe the works of the Law. Paul encountered a similar situation in the case of the disciples of John whom he found at Ephesus. They knew only what John had taught about Jesus. Paul asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" They had heard nothing of the Holy Spirit, so Paul commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. After he had laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them in the manifestation of miraculous power that enabled them to speak in foreign languages and to prophesy. See Acts 19:1-7.

Since Paul was referring to a different spirit which the Corinthians received through the work of false teachers who in no way could impart the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, it becomes necessary to determine the meaning of his question in the light of what he has taught in his epistles. Paul wrote to the Romans explaining that those who are led by the Spirit of God, that is, led through the things said by the inspired apostles, are sons of God. Then he added, "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear: but ye received the spirit of adoption—that is, sonship—whereby we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:14-15). The spirit that is received as a result of obeying the gospel is that frame of mind of the one who knows he is a child of God and can give expression to this knowledge by calling God "Father." See also Gal. 4:4-7. It was this spirit which the Corinthians had received as a result of their obedience to the gospel which Paul preached.

What, then, was the different spirit which they received when they submitted to false teachers? It was a spirit of faction, jealousy, and

deception that characterizes the children of the devil. See John 8:44. It is no wonder that Paul was afraid lest they be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ.

a different gospel.—Paul marveled at the Galatians who so quickly after their conversion to Christ were transferring their allegiance to a different kind of gospel which was not another gospel of Christ. See Gal. 1:6. The super-apostles were preaching a different kind of gospel to the Corinthians. It was not the Word of the Cross that had saved them when they believed in Christ.

ye do well to bear with him.—A fine touch of irony in the same vein as that regarding "foolishness of his boasting."

For I reckon.—As Paul considered the issues, he was convinced that in no way was he inferior to these super-apostles.

But though I be rude in speech.—An unfortunate translation, misleading in every way. Paul was never rude in our understanding and use of the term. This does not mean that he did not denounce false teaching in the severest of terms. Jesus had done the same thing in the case of the hypocrites with whom He dealt, but He was never rude.

The word translated "rude" simply means one who does not belong to the class of professional people, in this case orators. It is to be doubted, however, that the professionals were ever able to match the eloquence of Paul as he preached the gospel. He openly set forth Jesus Christ crucified before the eyes of his listeners. See Gal. 3:1. Festus, listening to his defense of the gospel, cried out, "Paul, you are mad. Your much learning has turned you mad." Even the king said, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." While there are differences of opinion as to the interpretation of Agrippa's words, it is evident that the eloquent defense of the gospel which Paul made that day really stirred the minds of all who heard him. See Acts 26:24-29. Not infrequently in Paul's writings do we find examples of his ability to express himself in excellent style. See Rom. 11:33-36; I Cor. 13:1-13; and I Cor. 15:51-58. Examples are also to be found in Second Corinthians.

not in knowledge.—His knowledge came through the ability given him as an apostle by the Holy Spirit to understand the deep things which he received by revelation from God. See I Cor. 2:6-16. No super-apostle nor false teacher was superior to Paul in knowledge pertaining to the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

we made this manifest to you in all things.—When he was present

with the church at Corinth and through his letters, Paul had clearly demonstrated the fact that his wisdom and knowledge came from God. See I Cor. 1:18-31; 2:1-5, 10, 16.

Paul's Defense Of His Ministry At Corinth

Scripture

11:7:15. Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God for nought? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; 9 and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13 For such men are false apostles deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Comments

did I commit a sin?—This is a continuation of the ironical appeal in defense of Paul's ministry. The Corinthians knew that Paul had refused to accept support from them in order to avoid criticism from those who might say that he was preaching the gospel for material gain. See I Cor. 9:12-18.

They were also aware of the fact that as a teacher Paul had a right to receive support from them. He did not hesitate to work with his hands at tent-making when he first came to Corinth while awaiting the help that later came from the churches of Macedonia. It was a custom that every Jewish boy be taught a trade and learn the dignity of work. Paul was no exception. The only reason that he said that he had humbled himself by working with his hands is that it was not in accord with the custom of that day to let teachers do so.

I robbed other churches.—This is also said in irony, for it was actually

a privilege for those who had received the gospel through the ministry of Paul to share with him as he went elsewhere preaching the Lord Jesus Christ. He had taken wages from them that he might preach to the Corinthians. His needs had been met by others, and he kept himself from being a burden to any man at Corinth.

when they came from Macedonia.—The church at Philippi began supporting Paul when he was at Thessalonica. At that time they were the only ones helping him. More than once they responded to his needs. See Phil. 4:14-18. For some reason not stated by Paul, the line of supply was broken when Paul came to Corinth. This caused him to fall back on his trade to make a living. In the light of his own statement about the matter, we can be reasonably sure that Paul was entirely too busy spreading the gospel to continue working at a trade any longer than necessary for the support from Macedonia to reach him. But he had kept himself from being a burden to the churches of Achaia and he was determined to hold steadfastly to that policy. As the inspired apostle of Christ he spoke the truth when he preached, and what he was now saying was equally true. No one, not even the super-apostles who may have been pressing the issue, could stop him from boasting about this in the regions of Achaia.

Wherefore?—Such a statement called for an explanation. The teachers who had come to Corinth after Paul left were evidently aware of the fact that he had received no support from the Corinthians. Apparently they were endeavoring in some manner to get him to do so, or to insinuate that he had done so, in order that they might have the opportunity to receive support or to justify the support they had already been accepting. Since they were false teachers, Paul absolutely refused to allow them any such opportunity to boast about their work.

because I love you not?—Paul's attitude toward the churches of Achaia in no way indicated that he loved the less than the churches of Macedonia from whom he had received support. God knew his love for them. Since Paul had demonstrated it to them time and again and had openly declared it in his letters, the Corinthians knew that he loved them.

For such men are false apostles.—Paul boldly labeled those who had been attacking him and attempting to undermine his work at Corinth. They were not apostles of Christ; they were false apostles, deceitful workers who were attempting to appear as apostles of Christ. Where they came from or who had sent them is not known, but the Corinthians must have known about it.

for even Satan.—Paul clearly implies that Satan was back of the work of those whom he called false apostles. Since Satan could fashion himself into an angel of light, his ministers had no difficulty in masquerading as ministers of righteousness. Their destructive work only served to indicate the ultimately destruction that would be visited upon them.

Satan had appeared in an attractive form when he completely deceived Eve. His true character is indicated by such figures as those used by Peter and others. Peter refers to him as a roaring lion seeking to devour his victims. See I Pet. 5:8. John refers to him as a great dragon and calls him the old serpent and deceiver of the whole world. See Rev. 12:9. Jesus said he is a murderer and the father of the lie. See John 8:44. Being warned by such clear description the enemy of all righteousness, the people of God ought not to listen to his ministers.

Boasting A Little As One Counted Foolish

Scripture

11:16-21a. I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little. 17 That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying. 18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 19 For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise yourselves. 20 For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you captive, if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face. 21 I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak.

Comments

Let no man think me foolish.—Paul had begun this ironical appeal as if speaking in foolishness. The evidence he gave in his defense was based upon truth; the element of foolishness lies in the fact that the Corinthians knew that he was an apostle of Christ for he had performed the signs of an apostle in their midst and God knew that he loved the brethren in Christ. It should not have been necessary, therefore, to defend his apostleship against the charges of the ministers of Satan. But since it had apparently become necessary, he continued the defense of his apostleship.

I speak not after the Lord.—This does not indicate that Paul was

setting aside his power to speak under the direction of the Holy Spirit. He had begun his appeal by speaking in the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But there is no example in Our Lord's ministry of the type of defense which Paul was now forced to make because of conditions in Corinth resulting from charges and false claims of the super-apostles. They were boasting from a purely human point of view. They were boasting of their professional status. They were boasting of their wisdom which, of course, was the wisdom of the world. It would be foolish for the apostle to come to that basis in order to offset their claims. But he was more than a match for them even on their own grounds.

Seeing that many glory after the flesh.—Since others were boasting about their human achievements, Paul would do so also. The Corinthians considered themselves wise and gladly listened to this type of boasting. They did so even though they were being enslaved by it, even though such persons were taking unfair advantage of them, even though the false teachers were exalting themselves while striking them in the face.

I speak by way of disparagement.—It was a shame for the apostle to be forced to follow this line of reasoning; but since he was compelled to do so, he spoke of his weakness as demonstrated by all the things which he suffered in his service for Christ.

Paul's Labors and Sufferings

Scripture

11:21b-33. Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also. 22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; 26 in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily,

anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus he who is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to take me: 33 and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Comments

Yet whereinsoever any is bold.—It was foolish to be forced to compare his sufferings for Christ with anything the false teachers had suffered, for they were preying on the church at Corinth and endeavoring to lead the people away from Christ. In relation to God's ancient people, Paul was their equal; but certainly in relation to Christ he excelled them. In relation to the things he suffered for Christ, he was too far beyond them for comparison.

Are they Hebrews?—Although Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, his parents were Hebrews and on that score he was easily equal to any of the false teachers who were claiming to be true teachers since, in all probability, they had come from Jerusalem.

Are they Israelites?—The ancient chosen people of God bore the name which was given to Jacob after he had wrestled with the Angel of the Lord and had been blessed by him. The name symbolized the transformation that had taken place in his life. It appropriately applied to the nation that had been chosen from among all the nations of the world as "a royal nation, a holy priesthood, a people that belonged to God." Were these teachers at Corinth Israelites? So was Paul.

Are they seed of Abraham?—The Jews proudly looked to Abraham as their father. They argued with Jesus despite their intention to put the Son of God to death that they were the seed of Abraham. Literally, of course, they were; but their hatred for Jesus proved that they were the offspring of Satan. See John 8:31-44. The Jewish teachers who troubled the church at Corinth claimed to be Abraham's offspring. Paul could substantiate his right to be called a child of Abraham for he was of the stock of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin. More than that, He had surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are they ministers of Christ?—While one would have to be out of his mind to admit their claim to be ministers of Christ was true, Paul was prepared to compare his ministry with theirs and to demonstrate

that he far excelled them in relation to Christ. He had labored more abundantly than they. He had been imprisoned as a result of his service to Christ more than they. He had undergone countless beatings and had constantly faced death for Christ. What had they done for Him?

Of the Jews five times received forty stripes save one.—This list of the things that Paul had suffered in his ministry for Christ is a challenge to the false teachers at Corinth to compare the things that they had done with the things Paul had endured. The Corinthians who certainly must have known much of what Paul had undergone were well aware of the fact that the super-apostles were in no way a match for him.

He mentioned the beatings which he had received, the time when he was stoned, and the times that he had suffered shipwreck. Although he was a Roman citizen, he had been beaten and imprisoned at Philippi. He was stoned and abandoned for dead at Lystra. He suffered shipwreck three times. At one time, probably because his ship went down far from shore, he spent a full twenty-four period in the deep.

in journeyings often.—Paul listed the perils which he had faced on his many travels. He had risked his life in crossing rivers, in traveling through bandit infested areas, in the things he had suffered from the hands of his own countrymen as well as Gentiles. He had faced perils in the cities, in the wilderness and at sea. He knew what it meant to be among false brethren. His experience with them was enough to justify his warning the church against them.

in labor and travail.—Paul did not have an easy life; it was one filled with labor, hardship, and suffering. It meant standing guard during periods of distress; it meant being without food and drink; it meant fasting often in order that he might give all his time to the task before him; it meant enduring cold and nakedness.

Besides those things that are without.—Paul gave the list of the things he had suffered for the cause of Christ. It was adequate to establish his claim to have undergone suffering for beyond anything the false teachers at Corinth had ever done. Aside from all this, there was one thing that had not been mentioned: the thing that brought daily pressure upon him, anxiety for all the churches. If there had been any question in the mind of anyone regarding all that he had said in refutation of the claims of the false teachers, there could be no doubt whatever about this climactic issue, for Corinthians knew very well about Paul's anxiety for them. But he was just as concerned for the

Philippians and the brethren at Thessalonica. They all knew of his deep concern for the saints in Judea.

Who is weak?—The meaning of anxiety is indicated in Paul's attitude toward the weak. He understood and desired to help as if he were that weak person himself. It is doubtful if any more Christlike attitude toward the weak can be found. As he thought of the brother in Christ who for some cause had stumbled, he so identified with that one that he burned with the shame that should have been felt by the erring one. The Corinthians knew about his concern for the weak and erring. Did they see anything like it in the teachers who were attempting to discredit Paul by saying that he was weak in their presence even if he was bold in his writings?

If I must needs glory.—Since the situation at Corinth had forced Paul into this line of defense, he insisted in boasting not about his power but about his weakness. The secret of this weakness is revealed in 12:9. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ knew that Paul was not lying when he related the incident by which he was to prove his weakness and humility and through which he had been forced to put his trust in God alone. The incident had taken place in Damascus. A guard had been thrown around the city to prevent his escape, but his friends had let him down through an opening in the wall, and he had escaped the hands of those who were bent on killing him. See Luke's description of the incident in Acts 9:23-25. The providence of God had watched over him; the faithful messenger of the gospel went on his way preaching Christ.

Summary

As Paul continued the defense of his apostleship, he began a long, ironical appeal for them to bear with him in a little foolishness. Irony is seen in the fact that he appeared to boast, but in reality he wasn't. His sincere purpose in coming to Corinth was to preach the gospel that he might espouse them to Christ as a pure virgin. He was afraid lest false teachers should lead them away from the simplicity and purity that ought to mark their relation to Christ. Eve had been completely deceived by the serpent. They were in danger of having the same thing happen to them through the work of the ministers of Satan in their midst.

In each of the examples given to support the charge, Paul assumes that the thing was being done. Someone had come to them and had preached another Jesus. Paul had preached Jesus Christ

CHAPTER ELEVEN

and Him crucified. He had preached the resurrection of Christ as the foundation of hope of resurrection from the dead. But some in Corinth had denied that there is a resurrection, despite the evidence Paul had given to prove it. Just what the super-apostles were saying about another Jesus is not stated, but no other Jesus could have them from their sins.

The second example had to do with the spirit they had received. What was the different kind of spirit which they had not received through his ministry? It may have been the spirit of slavery as opposed to the spirit of freedom found in the spirit covenant.

His third example had to do with the gospel. They were accepting a different kind of gospel. It may have been some such perversion of the gospel as mentioned in Gal. 1:6-8. Paul said, "You bear beautifully with this kind of thing." The irony lies in the fact that they could not put up with his gospel as he preached the truth about Christ.

In defense of his ministry as an apostle of Christ Paul said, "I consider that I do not fall short of the chiefest apostles." Who were they? Not Peter nor John, for there was no such distinction among the apostles of Christ. Paul had in mind those who were preaching another Jesus, those whom he labeled "false apostles." Paul freely admitted that he did not belong to the class of professional orators, but this implied no inferiority in his message. Our word "rude" denoting a lack of artistic or refined expression misses the point, for no uncultured crudeness or unpolished, inelegant speech can be attributed to Paul.

Paul continued to speak in irony as he asked, "Did I commit a sin by preaching to you without pay, robbing other churches that I might be able to do so?" Macedonia had supported him in Corinth. He had been a burden to no one. He was determined to maintain this policy in order to prevent false apostles having an excuse to receive support from the church. They had boasted of the right to support and apparently would have been glad for Paul to receive it in order to justify their doing so. Paul was determined to give them no grounds for such a thing.

In irony he said, "Let no one think that this attitude of mine is foolish." But even if they did, he was going to boast a little about it. This was not through the gentleness and meekness of the Lord, that is, the Lord had not used this approach in dealing with false teachers

II CORINTHIANS

in His day. Paul was not saying, however, that he was substituting his opinion for the inspired message of the Lord.

He intended to boast in the flesh—as a human being—since others were doing so and the Corinthians were gladly listening to them. They thought this was permissible since they were wise—irony again!

Paul compared his racial and religious background with that of the false apostles. He compared his service for Christ with that of the false apostles, even if it was foolish to think of them as ministers of righteousness.

After telling of his labors, his sufferings, and his trials, there was one more thing to mention: his anxiety for all the churches. Even the foolish ones at Corinth would know better than to attempt to compare the super-apostles with Paul on this point.

His experience in Damascus was another example of his weakness in which he boasted, since boasting seemingly had to be done.

Questions

1. Why did Paul ask that they bear with him in a little foolishness?
2. Why did he say that they were bearing with him? What evidence did he have to prove this?
3. Why did Paul say, "I am jealous over you"?
4. To what kind of jealousy did he refer? How did he illustrate it?
5. What were the Corinthians doing to make him jealous?
6. What was Paul's position in their relation to Christ?
7. How does marriage explain the relation of the believer to Christ?
8. What had Paul written to the Corinthians on the subject of marriage that would cause him to recall this point?
9. What had Paul written to the Ephesians illustrating the same point?
10. What is suggested in Revelation on the subject?
11. Why was it necessary for Paul to use the word "pure" in connection with the word "virgin"?
12. What was he implying by the use of these terms as to the conduct of the Corinthians?
13. How had Satan completely deceived Eve?
14. What grounds did Paul have for his fears that the Corinthians were being deceived?
15. What did John say about the old serpent?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

16. How is the craftiness of Satan illustrated in his deception of Eve?
17. What is meant by the simplicity and purity that it showed toward Christ?
18. Explain how the word translated "simplicity" can also be translated "liberality."
19. How can the Christian guard himself against the crafty deception of Satan?
20. What is the first business of the church?
21. What comparison can be made between Jesus whom Paul preached and the Jesus whom the false apostles were preaching?
22. What was the different spirit which they were receiving?
23. What did Paul mean when he asked the Galatians, "Did ye receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"
24. What did he mean when he asked the disciples at Ephesus "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?"
25. What did the Christians at Rome receive that enabled them to call God "Father"?
26. What, then, was the different spirit which the Corinthians received when they listened to the super-apostles?
27. How did the gospel which Paul preached compare with the different gospel preached by the false apostles?
28. Why did he say that they did well to bear with such false teachers?
29. What did Paul say about himself in comparison to such teachers?
30. What is meant by the word that is translated "rude" in some of our Bibles?
31. What may be said of Paul's style and manner of speech and writing?
32. What claim did Paul make as to his knowledge? Why?
33. Why did Paul ask, "Did I commit a sin?" by not taking wages from the Corinthians?
34. How had Paul demonstrated to the Corinthians that his message was from God?
35. How had he been supported when he was at Corinth?
36. How are we to understand his statement that he "robbed other church"?

II CORINTHIANS

37. What did Paul say to the Philippians about the support of his ministry?
38. Why did he say that no one could stop him from boasting about this policy in the regions of Achaia?
39. Why did he raise the question of his love for them in this connection?
40. In what terms did Paul describe these false teachers?
41. In what terms did he describe Satan's activity?
42. In what terms did Jesus and Peter describe Satan?
43. How explain the irony in Paul's reference to foolishness?
44. Why did he say, "I speak not after the Lord"?
45. What were the false teachers at Corinth boasting about?
46. Why did Paul feel a sense of shame in having to boast about the things he had suffered in his ministry for Christ?
47. How did Paul compare with the super-apostles in relation to the Israelites? the Hebrews? the ministry for Christ?
48. What is the meaning of "Hebrews" and "Israelites"?
49. Who are the seed of Abraham?
50. Into what categories did Paul put the things he had suffered as an apostle of Christ?
51. What did he mean by anxiety for all the churches?
52. What had been his attitude toward the weak?
53. Why did he insist that he would boast only in his weakness?

For Discussion

1. What are some of the crafty ways in which Satan is attempting to deceive the church today?
2. What can the church do to demonstrate its faithfulness to Christ?