

CHAPTER TWELVE

Analysis

- A. Paul continued boasting in his weakness (1-13).
1. He reminded the Corinthians of the visions and revelation of the Lord (1-10).
 - a) He was compelled to boast because it was forced upon him by the claims of the false apostles, although nothing was gained by it (1a).
 - b) He came to the matter of visions and revelations of the Lord, that is, given to him by the Lord (1b).
 - c) In an impersonal manner he told of the experience in which he was caught up to the third heaven (2-4).
 - (1) He said "I know a man in Christ." This happened to such a one—it was, of course, Paul himself.
 - (2) This happened some fourteen years before his writing Second Corinthians.
 - (3) He said, "Whether in the body I know not; God knows." He had no way of knowing whether he was taken up bodily or just in spirit.
 - (4) Such a one was caught up to the third heaven.
 - (5) He was caught up to Paradise.
 - (6) He heard words not lawful for man to utter.
 - d) Boasting about this experience emphasized his own weakness (5-10).
 - (1) On behalf of one who had such an exalted experience, he boasted; but as to himself he boasted in his weakness (5).
 - (2) This actually happened to Paul, so it was not foolish to boast about it, except that some might tend to overrate him because of it (6).
 - (3) To keep him from self-exaltation, Paul was given "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet him" (7).
 - (4) He asked the Lord three times to remove it, but the answer was: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (8-9a). God's favor had already granted him strength to endure it. Cf I Cor. 10:13.
 - (5) Paul gladly, therefore, boasted in his weakness

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that the power of Christ might rest upon him or cover him (9b).

(6) It was for that reason that he took pleasure in weakness, injury, necessity, persecution, and distress for Christ's sake for while he was weak in himself, he was strong in Christ (10).

2. Paul concluded the defense of his boasting by admitting that he had become foolish (11-13).

a) He had become foolish, but they had compelled him to do so by their attitude toward the super-apostles (11).

(1) He should have been commended by the Corinthians.

(2) Even though he was nothing in himself, he was in no way inferior to these false apostles.

b) He reminded them that he had performed the signs of a true apostle before them (12).

(1) These signs were done in all patience.

(2) They were signs and wonders, and mighty works.

c) Since the Corinthians had received all these benefits, Paul asked, "In what sense were you inferior to the other churches?" The implied answer was: "In no way."

d) Then he referred to the only possible thing in which they were not on the same footing at the other churches: He had not been a burden to them. Ironically, he added, "Forgive me this wrong."

B. As Paul neared the end of the epistle, he turned again to the matter of his intended visit (14-21).

1. He reaffirmed his intention not to be a burden to them (14-18).

a) He explained his reasons for this position (14-15).

(1) He did so because of his impending third visit.

(2) He laid down his basic principle in dealing with them: "I seek not yours but you."

(3) He explained the issue involved: "Children ought not to lay up for the parents but the parents for the children."

(4) As their father in the gospel, he said, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls."

(5) Then he asked, "Since I love you more, am I to be loved less?"

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- b) He answered a possible charge of crafty dealing (16-18).
 - (1) He stated the issue involved in the charge (16).
 - (2) Then he asked, "Did I or any of those whom I sent (Titus and the brother) take advantage of you?" (17-18a).
 - (3) Didn't these co-workers act exactly as he had done? (18b) These questions would force the Corinthians to admit that he had dealt with them in a thoroughly Christian manner.
- 2. He reminded them of his reason for the delay in making this third visit (19-21).
 - a) It was for their own good (19).
 - (1) Did they think that he was making excuses for himself?
 - (2) He solemnly declared as an apostle of Christ that it was for their upbuilding.
 - b) Then he explained his fears that he might find them acting as he would not want and as they might not want him to find them (10-21).
 - (1) He again named the conditions that he feared might exist: Strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and tumults. These were the very things about which he had written in his first epistle.
 - (2) He had delayed lest God should humble him before them in mourning over their sins and failure to repent.
 - (3) He listed these sins: Uncleaness, fornication, and lasciviousness. He had spoken of them in detail in his first epistle.

Visions and Revelations of the Lord

Scripture

12:1-10. I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God

knoweth), 4 how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. 6 For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. 7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. 8 Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Comments

I must needs glory.—Paul had been forced by existing circumstances at Corinth to boast about his weakness. Although there was nothing to be gained by it, since he had demonstrated through the miracles which he had performed as an apostle that the approval of God rested upon him, he nevertheless, proceeded to relate an incident that had happened in the life of one on behalf of whom he could boast.

visions and revelations of the Lord.—Paul had been given the privilege of seeing the risen Christ at the time of his appointment to the apostleship, but the incident to which he was referring had to do with the visions and revelations which the Lord had permitted him to see and hear after his conversion.

I know a man in Christ.—Although there can be no doubt that Paul was speaking of himself, he did so in an entirely impersonal manner for the simple reason that this was something that the Lord had done in contrast to the long list of weaknesses which he had experienced.

fourteen years ago.—The incident was so vivid that it remained in the mind of Paul even after all those years. There is no point in trying to fix the date when this occurred, since Paul chose to point out the significant fact that it had remained in his mind throughout this long period of his labor and suffering for Christ.

whether in the body.—While Paul knew exactly when the incident

had occurred and what had happened at that time, he could not say whether it happened to him bodily or in the spirit. But he knew that he had been caught up even to the third heaven. It made no difference whether bodily or spiritually, for it was something the Lord had done and it had left this lasting impression upon him.

the third heaven.—This expression has caused much speculation on the part of commentators. Some even suggest that after he was caught up to the third heaven he was again elevated to an even higher position called Paradise. It seems better to assume that the third heaven was Paradise where Paul heard "unspeakable words."

I know such a man.—Paul again emphasized the impersonal aspect of the incident. He did not know whether it was bodily experience or not, nor did it matter, for he said, "God knows."

Paradise.—Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today, shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It is safe to say, then, that Paradise is the place where the Lord is. We do not know all things about the future state, but we do know that absence from the body is at home with the Lord. As to Paul's experience, he knew that he had been caught up into Paradise and had heard things that could not be revealed. See *Studies in Luke*, pages 278-279 and 380.

It is impossible to put into human language the glories that shall be revealed for the saints of God at the coming of Christ. John says, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know, that when it shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3:2). This was enough to make Paul "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8).

On behalf of such a one I will glory.—In face of the boastful claims of the false teachers at Corinth, Paul had lowered himself to that which should have been entirely unnecessary: the giving of a detailed account of the sufferings which he had undergone as an apostle of Christ. But he was determined to limit his boasting to his weakness. There is no inconsistency between this and his boasting on behalf of the one to whom the Lord had given such visions and revelations, for it was a thing the Lord had done, not Paul. Furthermore, it was something that could not possibly have happened to those who were boasting about their power and position among the Corinthians for they were ministers of Satan, not of Christ. Paul occupied an unassailable position when he restricted his boasting to the things done by the Lord and his own weakness.

I shall not be foolish.—It was not foolish to boast in the thing which the Lord had done. Paul spoke the truth about what the Lord had done with him and limited his remarks to this lest anyone should exalt him above what they saw in him and heard from him.

And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations.—Paul was now ready to relate the incident about which he had boasted. Such an exalted experience could easily tempt one who was less dedicated to Christ to distort its meaning and lead others praise him rather than the Lord. To prevent this thing from happening, there was given Paul a thorn in the flesh.

thorn in the flesh.—Paul identifies this as a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Much speculation has been indulged in in an effort to identify the thorn in the flesh. No one really knows what it was, except for the things Paul said about it. It was in the flesh as a messenger of Satan and acted as an opponent in the boxing ring that kept him from being too elated over what had happened. It kept him from using what the Lord had done for him as a means of self-glory.

a messenger of Satan.—Paul wrote to the Ephesians indicating that the forces of Satan are like an opposing army against which the followers of Christ must wage war. The church has been equipped with the whole armor of God with which to stand against the wiles of the devil. See Eph. 6:10-18.

God permitted Satan to afflict Job with great bodily suffering. But Job remained steadfast and faithful to the Lord through all of it. Paul reminded the Corinthians that God would not permit them to be tempted above their ability to endure, for He would with the temptation make the way of escape that they might be able to endure it. See I Cor. 10:13. In this life, the people of God constantly face the enemy who will destroy them unless they remain faithful to the Lord.

I besought the Lord thrice.—Whatever this thorn in the flesh was, it brought such distress to Paul that he asked the Lord three times that it might depart from him. The answer was: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness."

God does not always answer our requests in the manner in which we might expect. Certainly He was not deaf to the plea that Paul made. The favor that He had already bestowed on him in commissioning him as an apostle of Christ, in endowing him with all the signs of an apostle, in providentially watching over him through all the

things he suffered for the sake of Christ, was sufficient to assure him that he could triumph over this thing even though it had brought him great distress. He had written to the Corinthians in the first letter about his apostleship despite his having persecuted the church of God. He said, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace which was with me" (I Cor. 15:10).

for my power is made perfect in weakness.—Paul's reason for relating this experience is now made clear. The thorn in the flesh symbolized human weakness. There were some things that he could not do; only the Lord could have caught him up to the third heaven. Thus the power of the Lord stood in bold contrast to the weakness of Paul even though he was a true apostle of Christ.

that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—Jesus had promised the eleven that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit should come upon them. See Acts 1:8. On the Day of Pentecost they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and were empowered to speak in other languages that those who heard the message on that day might know that it came from God. More than that, they were enabled to perform miracles that demonstrated that the Spirit of God was speaking through them. See Acts 2:43 and Heb. 2:3-4.

All of the signs of an apostle were done by Paul in the midst of the Corinthians. God's providential protection had covered him like a tent that protects the desert traveler from the burning sun. For all this, Paul gladly boasted in his own weakness.

I take pleasure in weakness.—Paul had listed the weaknesses that were his, the injuries he had sustained, the wants in which he had found himself, the persecutions which he had endured and the distresses which he had undergone for Christ's sake.

for when I am weak, then I am strong.—This is the remarkable climax of the boasting that was forced upon Paul. Being aware of his weakness, he had committed himself to the providential care of the Lord. Knowing his weakness, he determined to preach Christ and Him crucified, for therein lay his strength.

Admission of Foolishness

Scripture

12:11-13. I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very

chieftest apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works. 13 For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except it be that I myself was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong.

Comments

I am become foolish.—Paul did not hesitate to remind the Corinthians that he should have been commended by them. Their very position in relation to Christ depended upon the gospel which he had preached to them. Through his preaching and their obedience he had become their father in Christ and they were his children. His credentials as an apostle were well known to them. Through them they had been given spiritual gifts involving the word of wisdom and knowledge as well as the powers by which these were proven to be the revelation from God. See I Cor. 12:8-10. It is difficult to understand how they could have forgotten all this and gladly listened to the claims of false teachers in the absence of Paul.

though I am nothing.—Paul readily admitted that in himself he was nothing. The favor that God had granted him had enabled him to do the work of an apostle. He had therefore refused to boast in anything save his own weakness. But though he was nothing, he maintained that he was in no way inferior to the super-apostles who had attacked him in order to gain power over those whom he had converted to Christ.

by signs and wonders and mighty works.—These were the credentials of the apostles through which the Lord demonstrated His approval on their ministry. They were guided by the Holy Spirit into all the truth pertaining to life and godliness. What credentials could the super-apostles present? Empty claims and boastful pretensions!

inferior to the rest of the churches.—The Corinthians knew that they had been "in everything enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed among them" (I Cor. 1:5-6). They lacked no gift that would enable them to conduct themselves as true followers of Christ while awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had preached the same gospel to them that he had preached to all the churches. He had performed the same apostolic signs in their midst that he had shown in all the churches.

except it be that I myself was not a burden to you?—This is an

ironical thrust at those teachers who were seeking, if indeed they had not already been receiving, support from the church at Corinth. *forgive me this wrong.*—In the height of irony, Paul begged for their forgiveness! They knew that there was nothing to forgive. Did they burn with shame when they remembered how he had labored in their midst while insisting on preaching the gospel of Christ to them for nothing?

Paul's Intended Visit

Scripture

12:14-21. Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? 16 But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you? 18 I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? 19 Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying. 20 For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means there should be strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; 21 lest again when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed.

Comments

this is the third time I am ready to come to you.—The first time Paul had visited the Corinthians was when he first preached the gospel to them and established the church. The second time was when he was present in spirit as they obeyed the instructions he gave in his first letter for them to follow in dealing with the sinful practices which they had allowed to grow up in their midst. He had delayed coming again, as he had explained in the beginning of the letter, that they might have an opportunity to carry out those instructions. News had

been brought to him by Titus that they had gladly obeyed. The section of this letter beginning in chapter ten, however, clearly indicates that false teachers whom Paul had designated "super-apostles" and who were actually servants of Satan had come to Corinth seeking to undermine his influence and insinuating that he was interested in the money he might obtain from them. It is possible that they had been distorting his purpose in connection with the collections for the saints in Judea. It is evident that their own motive was a desire for financial gain as they pretended to serve as ministers of righteousness.

and I will not be a burden to you.—Paul defended his position on this issue from every standpoint, since it seems to have been the chief point of attack of the false teachers who were opposing him.

for I seek not yours, but you.—There is an implied thrust in this remark at the false teachers to whom the Corinthians had so readily listened. Their ministry was being carried out for what they could get out of it in contrast to the unselfish devotion to Christ that characterized all of Paul's work on their behalf. It was not their possessions, but themselves that Paul sought. He wanted their understanding and love and, above all, their faithfulness to the Lord.

for the children ought not to lay up for the parents.—Paul had repeatedly reminded them that the relation which they sustained to him was as children to parents. As their father in the gospel he had done everything in his power to protect them from the erosion of sinful practices which they had allowed to go on. He had sought to warn them against the encroachment of the false teachers who had come to them and to protect them from the subtle attack of Satan whose goal was their destruction. Just as parents lay up for their children, so Paul had done all this for their benefit, for they were dear to him in the Lord.

for your souls.—Paul reminded them of what they must have known: he was willing most gladly to spend and be spent for their souls. He was following the pattern set by Our Lord who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. See Mark 10:45. This must ever be the position of the true minister of Christ.

am I loved less?—Was this demonstration of Paul's overflowing love for them to result in their loving him less? As this letter was being read to them, one wonders if many present hid their faces in shame for failing to respond in kind to the love of the apostle whom Christ had sent to them with the message of His love?

being crafty.—Again Paul reminded them that he had not become

a burden to them. He had anticipated possible difficulties which might arise in connection with his preaching the gospel to them. He had written to them in the first letter telling them that he was willing to forgo his right to support in order to avoid any criticism of his ministry. He was "being crafty." He had caught them unawares. They had not seen through his reason for refusing to accept support from them, although he did receive support from others. But the thing that Paul feared had happened. Now, perhaps, they would understand his position and his determination to maintain it.

Did I take advantage of you?—Having called attention to a fact which they well knew, for he had not been a burden to them, he came to the defense of Titus and the brother who was sent with him to carry on the work of the gospel in his absence. Did Titus take any advantage of you? They knew that he had conducted himself in exactly the same spirit of devotion to Christ that had characterized all of Paul's labors in their behalf. He had walked in Paul's footsteps leaving no ground for criticism of himself or of Paul.

Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you.—It is possible that Paul put this in the form of a question as the footnote in some Bibles indicates. But the punctuation makes little difference, since the point that Paul was making was that all this defense was not a matter of excusing himself in connection with the delay of his intended visit. He was aware that he lived and acted in the sight of God and that what he said was spoken as an apostle of Christ. Instead of making excuses for himself, he was sounding the warning and giving instructions for their benefit. Christ's purpose in his ministry was that they might be built up and not torn down. If they should follow his directives they would be built up in the faith; if they failed to do so, they would certainly be punished when he arrived.

For I fear.—Paul had a right to fear the consequences of the presence of false teachers in Corinth. He knew that they were listening to them gladly. He knew how they had permitted sinful practices to go on in their midst which had all but destroyed the church of God. The false teachers and indifferent leaders would have accomplished their goal if the church had not responded to Paul's instruction in his first letter to them. Titus had reported their obedience to this instruction; but as this had happened before, there was real possibility that they might again fall victims to the influence of the false teachers.

when I come, I should find you not such as I would.—Paul longed to see them break with these false teachers who were ministers of Satan and discontinue their sinful practices. He wanted them to reach ma-

turity so that they might function to the fullest capacity as members of the body of Christ.

lest by any means there should be strife.—Those of the household of Chloe had reported to Paul the divisions, factions, jealousies, and wraths that had existed among them. Would they slip back into this sinful practice? Would they give themselves again to slander, gossip, conceit and disorder, acting in a manner unbecoming to the saints of God?

Lest again when I come my God should humble me before you?—Paul had written of his anticipation of a joyful visit both in his first letter and in the beginning of this second letter. Now he wonders if it will be necessary for God to humble him before them when he comes again. Will they reject the apostle whom Christ is sending to them for the ministers of Satan? They had been led into sin before, and that had caused great grief to Paul. He had told them in the beginning of the letter about his sorrow. He repeated the warning at the close of the letter, for he did not want them to forget it. Would those who had sinned fail to repent of their impurity, immoral conduct, and licentious practice?

Summary

Paul continued to boast in his weakness, since it had been forced upon him by the claims and false charges of his critics. But nothing was to be gained by it, since none of the critics could possibly match the experience about which he was to tell. He took up the matters of visions and revelations which the Lord had permitted him to have. The Lord had granted visions and revelations to Paul on various occasions, but this one was different. Its purpose was to emphasize the power of the Lord and the weakness of the apostle.

The incident which he related occurred fourteen years before the writing of Second Corinthians. No information is available that would enable us to fix the exact date of the incident or the place where Paul was when it happened. The vivid impression which it had made on Paul had remained with him through all those years.

Paul said that he was caught up to the third heaven, caught up to Paradise. There he heard words not to be uttered by man. He did not know whether this had been a bodily experience or just one that had occurred in the spirit. This may have some bearing on the intermediate state of the dead, since the term "Paradise" is used elsewhere in that connection. If so, it would indicate that Paradise existed after the resurrection of Christ. Although it is interesting, the theory is not

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vital: freedom of opinion should be observed in connection with it.

The purpose of the vision was clear, as well as Paul's reason for relating it. After such an experience, Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from arrogant boasting. We do not know what that sharp thing was; there is no use to speculate on the matter.

Paul said that it was a messenger from Satan. Perhaps Job's experience may shed some light on its meaning. It did serve to remind Paul of the power of the Lord and of his own unfinished task. Three times he asked to have it removed, but the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The unmerited favor of the Lord Jesus had made him an apostle. His providential protection had been with him in all the hardships which he had endured for the sake of Christ. Paul boasted in his weakness, for then the protecting power of Christ was spread over him like a tent.

As he looked back at what he had just written about the divine approval of his apostleship, Paul said, "I have become foolish." They had compelled him to mention these things in order to answer the false charges against him. The evidence of his apostleship, however, was to be seen in the miracles which he had performed in their midst. The Corinthians were in no way inferior to the rest of the churches in this regard. But there was one difference: He had not been a burden to them. Ironically, he said "Forgive me this wrong."

Paul was determined not to be a burden to them on this third visit. Speaking ironically, he said, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." He had anticipated the possibility of some charging him with the guilt of preaching the gospel for the sake of money. Although he had a right to receive support, he had not used it. His purpose was to preach the gospel to win men to Christ. He had worked with his own hands when he was in Corinth and in want. He had received help from the brethren in Macedonia, but he had not and would not become a burden to Achaia.

Paul was not making excuses for himself. He had delayed his visit to give them time to set their house in order. But he was fearful lest upon his arrival he might find things not as he would have them to be. He knew that false teachers were present and that some of the people had gladly listened to them. Would God humble him again by letting him find strife, jealousy, wrath, faction, backbiting, whispering, swelling, and tumults among them? It had happened once; would they see to it that these things were not present again when he arrived on this impending third visit?

II CORINTHIANS

Questions

1. Why had it become necessary for Paul to boast in his weakness?
2. Why did he say that nothing was to be gained by it?
3. What are some of the visions and revelations in which the Lord had appeared to Paul?
4. Why is this one different?
5. Why did he write about it in an impersonal manner?
6. What evidence is there that he was the man who had actually experienced this thing?
7. What is the point in his having mentioned the fourteen years that had elapsed since this happened?
8. Why did he say that he did not know whether it had been in the body or just in spirit?
9. What is the third heaven?
10. What is Paradise? What are some of the things said about it in the Scriptures?
11. Why was Paul permitted to hear things which man was not permitted to speak?
12. What are some of the things which Paul and other New Testament writers were permitted to reveal about heaven?
13. Why could Paul boast about "such a one" while refusing to boast about himself?
14. Why did he indicate that he was not foolish in boasting about this one?
15. Why was he given a thorn in the flesh?
16. What is meant by the messenger of Satan?
17. How may the story of Job help to explain this?
18. What is shown by the fact that Paul asked the Lord three times to remove this thing?
19. What was the answer to his prayer?
20. In what way had the grace of God been with Paul?
21. What was it to do for him under these circumstances?
22. How is the Lord's power made perfect in human weakness?
23. What special power had the Lord given to the apostles?
24. In what way had He providentially watched over Paul?
25. Why did Paul take pleasure in his weakness?
26. Why did Paul finally say, "I am become foolish"?
27. Although Paul said he was nothing, how did he compare with the super-apostles?

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28. What were the apostolic credentials which Paul presented to the Corinthians?
29. What credentials could the super-apostles present?
30. How had Paul shown that the Corinthians were in no way inferior to the other churches?
31. What difference had he made between them and others?
32. Why did he say, "Forgive me this wrong"?
33. What are some of the views by which attempts have been made to explain the number of times Paul visited Corinth?
34. Why are such matter, while interesting, unimportant?
35. Why did Paul insist on continuing his policy of not being a burden to the churches in Achaia?
36. What was his real interest in them?
37. How did he use the relationship of parents to children to illustrate his meaning?
38. In what way was Paul following the example of the Lord in thus dealing with the brethren at Corinth?
39. Why did he ask, "Am I loved the less?"
40. Why did he say that he had been crafty?
41. Why did he ask if he or Titus had taken advantage of them?
42. What point was Paul making when he said, "You are thinking that we are excusing ourselves".
43. What grounds did Paul have to fear that the Corinthians might be found in sinful practices upon his arrival?
44. What sins did he think he might find?
45. How would God humble him before them?

For Discussion

1. The providence of God as seen in His gracious dealing with His people.
2. How can the church prevent backsliding such as Paul feared might occur at Corinth?