

YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT
Inter-American Division



8100 SW 117 Avenue
Miami, Florida 33183

Phone: (305) 403-4700
Fax: (305) 403-4567

www.interamerica.org

Bible Boom 2012

**INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF
ROMANS – GALATIANS**



Bible Boom

**MORE THAN A BIBLE CONTEST,
A REVELATION**

of Jesus Christ, it is supreme joy and happiness to order his life in harmony with the expressed will of God (see on Matt. 7:21–27; see EGW Supplementary Material on Gal. 3:24).

The pre-eminent lesson of the book of Galatians for the church today is the same as it was in the days of Paul—that salvation can be obtained in no other way than by simple faith in the merits of Christ (chs. 2:16; 3:2; 5:1), and that nothing a man may do can in the least degree enhance his standing

...salvation can be obtained in no other way than by simple faith in the merits of Christ...

before God or increase his chances of obtaining forgiveness and redemption.

Law, whether moral or ceremonial, has no power to set men free from the state of sin in which they find themselves (see on Rom. 3:20 7:7). This is Paul's "gospel," in contrast with the perverted "gospel" of the Judaizers (Gal. 1:6–12; 2:2, 5, 7, 14).

The letter concludes with an appeal not to abuse the new-found liberty of the gospel, but to live a holy life (ch. 6). Christian love should lead the Galatians to guard against a sanctimonious spirit, and to deal kindly with those who fall into error. The church should be known for its good works—the fruitage of the Spirit—but should not attempt to make good works a substitute for faith in the saving merits of Jesus Christ.



Dear participant.

Congratulations for accepting the invitation to participate in the study of the Bible and later this year in the 2012 "Bible Boom"!

We will be studying the first 4 letters from the Apostol Paul—Romans to Galatians.

In this pamphlet you will find additional information to Paul's letters that will give you a historic, literary, and thematic context about each book. The information has been taken from the *SDA Bible Commentary*. Therefore take into account that the "Bible Boom" will now base its questions on the books of the Bible as well as this additional material.

May God grant you His wisdom as you prepare for Bible Boom 2012!

Benjamin Carballo, Director

Louise Nocandy, Associate

**Youth Ministries Department
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own strength they could give perfect obedience to these laws, and that by such obedience they could earn their own salvation. Galatians is concerned, not so much with any of these laws as such, but with the erroneous idea that a man can earn his own salvation by rigorous adherence to various legal requirements. The issue is one of salvation by faith versus salvation by works.

Paul explains that the gospel promises were confirmed to Abraham in the covenant, and that the revelation of

The issue is one of salvation by faith versus salvation by works.

God's law 430 years later did not alter the provisions of that covenant (ch. 3:6–9, 14–18). "The law" was not designed to replace the covenant or to provide another means of salvation, but to help men understand and appropriate the covenant's provisions of divine grace. "The law" was not intended to be an end in itself, as the Jews came to think, but a means—a "schoolmaster"—to lead men to salvation in Christ according to the promises of the covenant. The purpose of "the law," its "end," or objective, was to lead men to Christ (see on Rom. 10:4), not to open for them another pathway to salvation. For the most part, however, the Jews willingly remained in ignorance of God's plan for making men righteous by faith in Christ, and went about to establish their own righteousness by "the works of the law" (Gal. 2:16; see Rom. 10:3).

Paul explains further that the covenant with Abraham provided for the salvation of the Gentiles, whereas "the law" did not do so; and that Gentiles are therefore to find salvation through faith in the promise made to Abraham, not through "the law" (Gal. 3:8, 9, 14, 27–29). The error and grave problem introduced into the Galatian churches by the

Judaizers consisted of attempts to impose upon Gentile converts ceremonial forms, such as circumcision and the ritual observance of "days, and months, and times, and years" (chs. 4:10; 5:2). That specific problem no longer exists, for Christians today are in no danger of reverting to the ritual requirements of Judaism.

This is not to say, however, that the book of Galatians is only of historical interest and without instructional value for modern Christians. Inclusion of the epistle in the Sacred Canon makes certain that it has lessons of value and importance for our day fall into the error of attempting to save themselves by their human endeavors to keep the Decalogue, they fall from grace and become "entangled" in "the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1, 4). For all such, Christ died in vain (ch. 2:21). The warning of the book of Galatians applies to them. The Christian keeps the Decalogue, not to gain salvation, but because he is saved. Indeed only a saved man can keep it, for Christ dwells within him.

That warning applies also to those who think to attain to a higher level of righteousness before God by meticulous adherence to man-made regulations regarding standards of Christian living, such as dress and diet. Thus they make the same mistake as the Jews of Christ's day (see Rom. 14:17; see on Mark 7:1–14). Others pay

The Christian keeps the Decalogue, not to gain salvation, but because he is saved.

tithe, attend church, even observe the Sabbath, under the delusion that they thereby earn merit in the sight of God. True, the Christian will faithfully abide by all divine requirements. But he will do so, not in the hope of earning favor in the sight of God, but because, as a son of God by faith in the saving grace

with those of the leaders who had been associated with Jesus and had received their message from Him.

4. Theme.

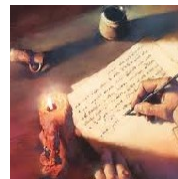
The theme of the Epistle to the Galatians is righteousness attained by faith in Jesus Christ. This is set in contrast with the Jewish concept of righteousness attained by compliance with the "works" prescribed by the Jewish legal system. This letter exalts what God has done through Christ for man's salvation and summarily dismisses the idea that man can be justified by his own merits. It extols the free gift of God in contrast with man's attempts to save himself.

The specific question at issue between Paul and the heretical teachers in Galatia was, Does compliance with the prescribed forms and requirements of Judaism entitle a man to divine favor and acceptance? The categorical answer was No, "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (see on ch. 2:16). Indeed, the Christian who attempts to earn sal-

vation by the "works of the law" thereby forfeits the grace of Christ (chs. 2:21; 5:4).

As "the children of promise" (ch. 4:28) Christians are "heirs" (ch. 3:6, 7, 14, 29). Having become new creatures in Christ (chs. 4:7; 6:15), "led of the Spirit" (ch. 5:18), and with Christ abiding in their hearts by faith, and God's moral law written therein (Gal. 2:20; Heb. 8:10), they are no longer, like immature children, in need of a "schoolmaster" to guide them (Gal. 3:23–26; 4:1–7). Whereas the Jews boasted of righteousness they supposed they earned by their own efforts to keep God's laws (Rom. 2:17; 9:4), Christians acknowledge that they have nothing whatever of which to boast except the saving power of "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (see Gal. 6:14).

The term "law" in Galatians stands for the entire revelation, at Sinai, of God's rules for His children—moral laws, civil statutes, and ceremonial ritual. To these the Jews later added a ponderous array of man-made laws. They mistakenly thought that by their



Paul the Apostle to the ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title

When Paul wrote this epistle he probably gave it no title. It was simply a letter he wrote to the believers in Rome. But subsequently the epistle came to be known as "To the Romans," Gr. *pros Rhomaious*, the title given to it in the earliest manuscripts. Later manuscripts enlarged the title to a descriptive. "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans," and this title is still used in some English versions.

2. Authorship

That Paul the apostle is the author of this epistle has never been seriously questioned. Some scholars have suggested that ch. 16 may not have been a part of the original epistle sent to Rome but that it was rather a separate letter sent to Ephesus, where Paul had labored for some time (Acts 19). This theory is based largely on the length of the list of names in Rom. 16 and upon the assumption that Paul could hardly have known so many friends in a city that he had as yet not visited. However, since people naturally drifted toward Rome from all parts of the empire, it is not impossible that the apostle could have had many friends in that capital city. Moreover, all the earliest manuscripts include ch. 16 as an integral part of the epistle. Consequently, conservative modern scholarship leaves the epistle intact.

3. Historical Setting

It seems evident that the Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth during Paul's three-month stay in that

city on his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 20:1–3).

Many scholars date this visit in the winter of 57–58, but some prefer an earlier date.

That the epistle was written from Corinth is indicated by his references to Gaius (Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14) and Erastus (Rom. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20) and by his commendation of Phoebe, whom Paul describes as rendering special service to the church at Cenchreae, the eastern seaport of Corinth (Rom. 16:1).

At the time of writing the epistle, Paul was about to return to Palestine, bearing from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia a contribution for the poor among the Christians in Jerusalem

The theme of the epistle is the universal sinfulness of man and the universal grace of God

(Rom. 15:25, 26; Acts 19:21; 20:3; 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1–5; 2 Cor. 8:1–4; 2 Cor. 9:1, 2). He intended, after completing this mission, to visit Rome, and from there travel on to Spain (Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:24, 28). As yet he had never been able to visit the Christian church in the capital city of the Roman Empire, though he had often desired to do so (Rom. 1:13; 15:22).

But now he believed that he had completed his missionary labors in Asia and Greece (ch. 15:19, 23), and was eager to move westward to strengthen the work in Italy and to introduce Christianity in Spain (see AA 373). In order to accomplish this latter purpose Paul desired to secure the blessing and cooperation of the believers in Rome.

Therefore, in anticipation of his visit, he wrote them this epistle, outlining to them in strong, clear terms the great principles of his gospel (chapters 1:15; 2:16). See pp. 104, 105.



4. Theme

The theme of the epistle is the universal sinfulness of man and the universal grace of God in providing a way by

which sinners may not only pardoned but also restored to perfection and holiness. This "way" is faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died, rose again, and ever lives to reconcile and to restore. As Paul writes this epistle his mind is full of the issues raised in his controversies with the Judaizers. He takes up the basic questions, and answers them in a broad presentation of the whole problem of sin and God's plan to meet the emergency. First Paul shows that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, have sinned and continue to fall short of God's glorious ideal (ch. 3:23). There is no excuse for this, for all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, have received some revelation of the will of God (ch. 1:20). Therefore, all men are justly under condemnation. Moreover, sinful men are now hopelessly incapable of extra-

ating themselves from this predicament, for in their depraved condition it is wholly impossible for them to obey God's will (ch. 8:7). Legalistic attempts to obey the divine law are not only doomed to failure but may also be evidence of an arrogant and self-righteous refusal to recognize man's weakness and his need of a Saviour. Only God Himself can provide a remedy. And this He has done—by the sacrifice of His Son. All that is asked of fallen man is that he exercise faith, faith to accept the provisions made to cover his sinful past, and faith to accept the power offered to lead him into a life of righteousness. This is Paul's gospel, as developed in the first part of the epistle. The remaining chapters deal with the practical application of the gospel to certain problems dealing with the chosen people and with the members of the Christian church.

All that is asked of fallen man is that he exercise faith...



ney. If the North Galatian theory is accepted, the letter to the Galatians must have been written after the third journey, for Paul had not visited the North Galatian churches on his first journey. Accordingly the time of writing could be the winter of A.D. 57/58.

One argument advanced in favor of Corinth as the place of writing is the close resemblance in subject matter between this epistle and that to the Romans, which was written during Paul's third visit to Corinth. Justification by faith is the theme of both epistles, and both deal at length with the distinction between "the law" and the gospel.

If the South Galatian theory is accepted, a date as early as A.D. 45 is possible. Some think it may have been written even before the Jerusalem Council, immediately upon Paul's return to Antioch from his first journey. The reason given for this conclusion is that the epistle contains no specific mention of the council or of the decision there agreed upon. To the objection that Paul had already visited the South Galatian churches twice, those who hold the South Galatian theory reply that his return to them on the first journey is to be considered a second visit (see Acts 14:21-23)

The purpose of the letter is evident from its contents. Apostasy is threatening, if not already begun, and as a result the letter is naturally controversial. The apostasy came as the result of the activities of Judaizing teachers, possibly of the same group that stirred up trouble in the church at Antioch in Syria over the same question (see Acts 15:1).

It was the discord caused by these men at Antioch that precipitated the council at Jerusalem. At that council Paul was again opposed by the Judaizers, who contended that Christian converts must observe Jewish legal requirements. They demanded the circumcision of Titus (see Gal. 2:3, 4). In this epistle Paul is not so much concerned with circumcision or any other feature of the

ceremonial law, in particular, as he is with the false teaching that man may save himself by observing the requirements of "the law." This is evident from the fact that Paul, on occasion, had participated in some of the ritual procedures (Acts 18:18; 21:20-27). He also had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

These false teachers had apparently met with great success in their efforts, and seem to have deceived a large segment of the membership in the churches of Galatia by their teachings (see Gal. 1:6). It is not clear how far the deceived churches had gone in the actual practice of legalism before they received Paul's epistle, but it is evident from the general tone of the letter that there was imminent danger of a general apostasy. These teachers were working in direct opposition to the decision of the council. They not only repudiated Paul's gospel but challenged his authority as an apostle. They made much of the fact that Paul was not one of the Twelve chosen and ordained by Christ.

The theme of the Epistle to the Galatians is righteousness attained by faith in Jesus Christ.

In order to make clear to the Galatians the error into which they had fallen, Paul restated the great principles of the gospel as he had expounded it to them. But since they charged Paul with preaching a false gospel, and since this involved their further claim that he was not qualified to teach, Paul felt compelled to present evidence that would vindicate his apostleship. This accounts for the autobiographical portion of the letter (chs. 1:11 to 2:14). His purpose in giving so detailed an account of personal experiences related to the problem was to prove the validity of his gospel. He also stressed the fact that his teachings, which he explained to the apostles at the council, were in harmony



The Epistle of Paul
the Apostle to the

GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title.

This letter was addressed to the churches of Galatia. It is not known whether these were in Northern Galatia, in such cities as Tavium, Pessinus, and Ancyra (the modern Ankara) or in Southern Galatia, at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and other cities (see The Journeys of Paul). The former view is called the North Galatian theory, and the latter the South Galatian theory. For a discussion of these two theories see Additional Note on Acts 16. The name Galatia is derived from certain Gallic tribes who invaded Asia Minor about 278 B.C. and settled in the northern part of what became, in 25 B.C., the Roman province of Galatia.

2. Authorship.

The Pauline authorship of this epistle has not been seriously challenged. The internal evidence of the epistle itself is convincing. In its entirety it is consistent with the character of Paul as portrayed in the Acts and in other letters attributed to him. Postapostolic Christian writers were acquainted with the epistle and considered that it came from his hand. It appears in the earliest lists of NT books.

3. Historical Setting.

On their first journey, about A.D. 45–47, Paul and Barnabas founded the churches of Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (see Acts 13:14 to 14:23). After their return to Antioch they were sent to Jerusalem with the question as to whether Gentile converts to Christianity should be re-

quired to practice the rites and ceremonies of Judaism (see Acts 15).

The Jerusalem Council, which was convened about A.D. 49, decided against making this requirement of non-Jews. Soon after the council Paul began his Second Missionary Journey, accompanied by Silas. They first revisited the churches of Southern Galatia which Paul had organized on his first journey, three of the four being specifically mentioned—Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium (see Acts 16:1–5) They next carried the gospel to Phrygia and Galatia (see v. 6).

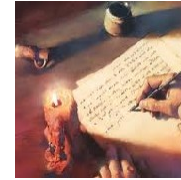
Those who hold the North Galatian theory (see Additional Note on Acts 16) note that it was after this visit to Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium that Paul and Silas went through what Luke speaks of as Galatia. From this it may be inferred that Luke is thinking of the region settled by the Gauls rather than of the Roman province of Galatia, which included other areas to the south (see The Journeys of Paul). Paul returned

The name Galatia is derived from certain Gallic tribes who invaded Asia Minor...

once more to Galatia early on his Third Missionary Journey, about A.D. 53 and 54.

Obviously the Epistle to the Galatians must have been written after the events recorded in Gal. 2:1–14. If the council at Jerusalem described in Acts 15 is here alluded to, the letter must have been written after the close of the first journey, for that council was held between the first and second journeys (see Acts 15:36–41).

Furthermore, according to Gal. 4:13, it seems that Paul had already visited the churches of Galatia twice, and if so the letter must have been written after the close of his second jour-



The First Epistle of
Paul the Apostle to the

CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title

Textual evidence attests the title Pros Korinthious A, literally, "To the Corinthians A [or "I"]". This shorter title is found in the manuscript on 1 Corinthians in the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri (see Vol. V, p. 116), the oldest extant manuscript of the epistle, written about the 3d century A.D. The title was not a part of the original document.

2. Authorship

Except for some ultraradical critics who go so far as to question whether Paul ever existed, the Pauline authorship of the epistle has been generally accepted. In fact it, along with 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, is believed to be the best attested of all of Paul's letters. The name of the author appears at both the beginning and the end of this epistle (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; 16:21). The letter was dictated to an amanuensis, or secretary, with the exception of the salutation at the close of the book, which Paul states he wrote with his "own hand" (ch. 16:21). The exact reason for his use of secretaries is not known, but it appears to have been customary with him (see Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). One suggestion is that the apostle had poor eyesight (see on Gal. 6:11).

3. Historical Setting

First Corinthians was written from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). This city was the scene of Paul's labors for "three years" (Acts 20:31) and the chief center of his activities during his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19; 20:1). He was

about to depart for Greece and Macedonia when the letter was written, but hoped to remain at Ephesus "until Pentecost" (1 Cor. 16:5–8). However, circumstances hastened his departure (Acts 19:21 to 20:3). These observations enable us to date the letter in the spring of A.D. 57 (see p. 103).

The church at Corinth was established during Paul's Second Missionary Journey. The apostle had spent at least 18 months in that center. His work had been arduous but successful, and a thriving church was established (Acts 18:1–11).

The ancient city of Corinth was situated on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the mainland of Greece. It was at the southern end of the isthmus, on a low plateau at the northern foot of the mountain known as Acro-Corinthus, on the summit of which stood a citadel and a temple. The city was thus strategically placed, with the

The church at Corinth was established during Paul's Second Missionary Journey.

overland traffic between the Peloponnesus and Attica passing through the town. Its convenient location between the Saronic Gulf on the east and the Gulf of Corinth on the west of the isthmus made it a market for much of the commerce that flowed from Asia to Europe, and vice versa. Some Phoenicians settled in the city and carried on their trade of making purple dye from the Murex trunculus of the neighboring seas. They also introduced other arts, and set up the impure worship of the Phoenician deities.

An important mercantile city, and situated at the passage of the seas, Corinth was cursed with licentiousness to such an extent that the very name of the city became a byword for sensuality. The expression "to Corinthianize" signi-

fied luxurious profligacy.

An understanding of the religion of Corinth serves to highlight the wonderful grace of God in overcoming the forces of evil and in planting a church of regenerated saints in this notorious city. By its wealth, luxury, trade, and mixed population, Corinth well merited the title given to it by Barnes, "the Paris of antiquity". The principal deity was Aphrodite, the goddess of love in its lowest form, licentious passion, and it is not hard to imagine the effect of this deification of sensuality. The temple of Apollo was built on the north slope of the Acro-Corinthus. According to legal requirement 1,000 beautiful young women officiated as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. They were supported chiefly by foreigners, and from the proceeds of their vice the city derived a steady income.

The task confronting the messenger of the gospel in the ancient city of Corinth is well set forth in these words: "If the Gospel could triumph in Corinth, it can win under any circumstances" (W. D. Chamberlain). During Paul's absence since the founding of the church some three years before, numerous problems had arisen that demanded the apostle's attention. We learn of these from the epistle itself. First of all, factions had disrupted the church. Because of his eloquence and learning, Apollos was exalted above Paul by many in the church (see 1 Cor. 1:12;

3:4; Acts 18:24 to 19:1). Others boasted that they were followers of neither Paul nor Apollos, but of Peter, one of the original apostles (1 Cor. 1:12). Still others disclaimed adherence to any human leader and professed to be followers of Christ (ch. 1:12).

Furthermore, living as did the members of the Corinthian church in the midst of the profligate people of Corinth, many who had renounced their wicked ways slipped back into their old habits of life (ch. 5). Further, disrepute had come upon the church by Christians settling their quarrels in the secular courts. The Lord's Supper had been made an occasion for feasting (ch. 11:17-34). Questions had also arisen regarding marriage and related social problems (ch. 7), the eating of foods sacrificed to idols (ch. 8), the proper conduct of women in public worship (ch. 11:2-16). There was misunderstanding also regarding the proper function of spiritual gifts (chs. 12-14). Some were skeptical regarding the fact and manner of the resurrection (ch. 15).

Paul received information regarding the state of the Corinthian church from Apollos, who, when factions arose in the church, had left the scene (see AA 280). Apollos was with Paul at Ephesus. Paul urged him to return to Corinth, but without success (see on 1 Cor. 1:12). Other information came from "them which are of the house of Chloe" (ch. 1:11) and from what was probably a delegation, consisting of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (ch. 16:17). The situation was such as to cause Paul serious apprehension. He had already written a letter to the church (see on ch. 5:9), and there is the possibility that he had briefly visited Corinth during his stay at Ephesus (see on 2 Cor. 13:1). He had also sent Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17; cf. ch. 16:10) and Titus to Corinth (see on 2 Cor. 2:13). In addition, he composed the letter now known as 1 Corinthians, in which he dealt with the various problems that had arisen.

Corinthians are characterized by gratitude and appreciation; the last four, by marked severity and self-defense. It has been suggested that the former chapters were addressed to the majority, who had accepted Paul's counsel and reproof, and the latter to a minority who persisted in opposing his efforts to restore the church to a spirit of harmony.

At length, and in various ways, Paul essays to prove his authority and vindicate his conduct among them. For proof of his apostleship he appeals to his visions and revelations from the Lord, to his unparalleled sufferings for the Lord Jesus, and to the seal of divine approval evident in the fruitfulness of his labors. The severity of Paul's words, addressed to the Corinthian church concerning certain false apostles and possi-

bly a minority of its members still under their influence, is without parallel in his epistles to other churches.

This epistle differs materially from 1 Corinthians. The first epistle is objective and practical; the second, largely subjective and personal. The first is more calm and measured in tone; the second reflects Paul's anxiety for news from Corinth, his relief and joy when Titus finally arrived, and his firm purpose to deal effectively with those who still troubled the church. The first reflects conditions in the Corinthian church; the second, the passion of the apostle himself for the church. Although the main concern of this second epistle is not doctrinal, as with Galatians and Romans, it does set forth important doctrinal truths.



conduct in many ways, but he also rebukes it for its strife and party spirit. This is the last information we have concerning the church at Corinth during the apostolic age.

4. Theme.

The immediate occasion for the epistle was the encouraging report Titus had brought from Corinth. The first part of the letter deals with the reception the Corinthians had given Paul's former epistle, and reviews some of the problems dealt with in it. Following Paul's instructions the church had disfellowshipped the immoral offender of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:1-5; cf. 2 Cor. 2:6). Paul now advises how to win back the offender.

The contributions gathered among the churches of Macedonia and Greece for the poor are given special emphasis. This project lay close to Paul's heart, for it would bind the hearts of Jewish and Gentile Christians together in a bond of fellowship and unity. On their part, the Gentile believers would be led to appreciate the sacrifices of Jewish Christians in bringing them a knowledge of the gospel. In turn, the Jews would be led to appreciate the spirit of fellowship to which the gifts

bore mute, yet eloquent witness. But the church at Corinth had been delinquent in collecting their contribution, and far behind the churches of Macedonia, probably as a result of the strife and vice that had absorbed its attention. In this letter Paul makes a final appeal for promptness and diligence.

It seems that a majority of the Corinthian church members heartily accepted the counsel given by Paul and his collaborators. They had received Titus with open arms. Almost from the first there had been factions in the church, some favoring one leader and some another. Much of the trouble occasioned by this division of loyalty had been allayed, but open and malignant opposition, probably by a Judaizing faction similar to the one in Galatia, persisted. Its objective was to undermine Paul's work, authority, and apostleship. Opponents charged Paul with fickleness for not coming to Corinth as he had originally promised.

They argued that he lacked apostolic authority. They branded him a coward for attempting to control the church at a distance, by letter. This proved, they said, that he was afraid to appear in person.

The first nine chapters of 2 Co-

4. Theme

The main burden of this epistle is twofold: first, reproof for the backsliding, which had resulted in the introduction into the church of practices that corrupted the teachings of the gospel; and second, instruction, or explanation, regarding the points of belief and practice concerning which the believers had sought for clarification.

Paul did not condone or show indulgence to sin. He was impartial in his condemnation, and did not seek to flatter any or to cloak transgression in any way. He firmly and severely denounced departures from the path of rectitude. Along with the exposure of the disorders, and rebuke for the growing irregularities in the church, there is seen the compassionate pity and tender mercy that is always found in the heart

of true co-laborers with Christ, a love that ever seeks to lift up the fallen, restore the wandering one, and bind up the wounded soul. Paul knew that love, not force and harshness, is the converting, heart-conquering power, therefore his spiritual surgery upon the church at Corinth was followed by the soothing balm of gentle love. This is particularly seen in the masterly exposition of Christian love found in ch. 13. From the standpoint of instruction the epistle deals with several practical matters, such as marriage, the use of food offered to idols, behavior in church services, the Lord's Supper, and the proper exercise of spiritual gifts.

The book has been described as "one of the richest, most instructive, most powerful" of all Paul's letters (AA 301).





The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title.

Textual evidence attests the brief title *Pros Korinthios B*, literally, "To the Corinthians 2." This is the title that appears in the oldest extant manuscript of the epistle, dating from about the 3d century A.D. The longer title, "The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," is not found until much later. For a discussion of this epistle as the "second" one to the Corinthians, and for the use of the word "second" in the title, see below under "3. Historical Setting." Obviously the title was not a part of the original document.

2. Authorship.

External and internal evidence conclusively attest Pauline authorship. The external evidence reaches back to the generation immediately following that of the apostles themselves. Quotations from, and references to, this epistle by many of the early Church Fathers and writers provide abundant testimony to its genuineness and integrity. In his letter to the Corinthians (c. A.D. 95), about 35 years after this epistle, Clement of Rome deals with the same conditions at Corinth as those here considered by Paul (First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians 46). The Corinthian church had apparently not changed to any great extent, for many of the old problems still persisted. Writing to the Philippians, Polycarp (d. c. A.D. 155), bishop of Smyrna, quotes 2 Cor. 8:21 (Epistle 6). In his treatise *Against Heresies* ii. 30. 7 (c. A.D. 180), Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, quotes and comments upon Paul's account of his rapture to the

third heaven in 2 Cor. 12:2–4. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200) quotes from 2 Corinthians not less than 20 times (see Stromata i. 1, 11; ii. 19, 20; etc.). Tertullian, of Carthage (c. A.D. 220), the so-called father of Latin theology, quotes frequently from it (*Scorpiace* 13; *Against Marcion* v. 11, 12 *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 40, 43, 44).

Internal evidence points unmistakably to Paul as the author. Its style is that of Paul. The epistle abounds with references to Paul, to his experiences at Corinth, and to his first epistle to the church there. Many Biblical scholars consider that this epistle gives the clearest and most complete picture of Paul's nature, personality, and disposition. The historical spontaneity of the experiences recorded in this epistle can be none other than genuine.

3. Historical Setting.

Paul made at least three visits, and wrote three, perhaps four, epistles to the church at Corinth. The first visit, about A.D. 51, during the course of his Second Missionary Journey, continued

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for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). At this time Paul founded and organized the church. He continued to keep in touch with it from time to time through representatives (2 Cor. 12:17). His first written contact with it is mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:9. This document is now presumed lost. Toward the close of more than two years spent at Ephesus, on the third journey, he wrote what by the fact is now known as First Corinthians (ch. 16:8; see p. 103).

It is generally accepted that a period of several weeks probably elapsed between the writing of the two

Corinthian epistles, the first from Ephesus and the second from Macedonia. Paul had intended to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, and then to journey to Corinth by way of Macedonia (Acts 19:21). But he left Ephesus sooner than he had intended. This may have been due, in part at least, to the popular uprising that nearly cost him his life (vs. 24–41). The opposition he experienced while at Ephesus placed a great strain upon him. He referred to the opponents of truth as "beasts" (1 Cor. 15:32), and observed that he had been "pressed out of measure, above strength" and had "despaired even of life" (2 Cor. 1:8). It was in this condition that Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia.

He journeyed to Troas, the port of embarkation for Macedonia. Here he expected the return of Titus with a report of the response of the Corinthians to his previous epistle. But Titus did not arrive within the time expected, and Paul, finding no rest of spirit because of anxiety for the church at Corinth (ch. 2:13), was unable to take advantage of the open door to the preaching of the gospel at Troas. Pressing on into Macedonia, he met Titus at Philippi. With relief and joy Paul listened to the good news Titus brought from Corinth.

Some think that Paul had returned to Corinth for a second visit. He speaks of a previous visit that had been distressing and disappointing (see on chs. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1, 2). Probably following such a visit and the receipt of further disconcerting news from Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11), he dispatched a letter of reprimand and counsel (1 Corinthians), and sent Titus to prepare the way for a further visit he planned to make (2 Cor. 8:6; 13:1, 2; cf. AA 301).

In ch. 2:4 Paul refers to a former letter he had written to Corinth "out of much affliction and anguish of heart," and which had made them "sorry" (ch. 7:8). Many scholars think that in these and others passages Paul can hardly refer to 1 Corinthians, since—as they affirm—these statements do not proper-

ly describe the spirit and nature of that epistle. Accordingly, they argue that he must have written a letter between the two that appear in the NT. Some who hold this view consider that this letter has been lost, but others think that it is preserved as chs. 10–13 of 2 Corinthians. Plausible reasons can be presented both for and against this theory, but objective proof is lacking for either. This commentary therefore assumes that 1 Corinthians is the letter to which Paul refers in 2 Corinthians. From chs. 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2, 4, it appears that Paul wrote this second epistle while in Macedonia. The date was about A.D. 57.

Temporarily, at least, Paul's letters and visits seem to have accomplished their purpose. It is evident from Rom. 16:23 that Paul was hospitably received and entertained by one of the chief members of the church. The change in the church at Corinth is further corroborated that in the epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, which

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were written during the course of his stay at Corinth, he gives evidence of having recovered from the state of restless anxiety and solicitude for the Corinthian church that distressed his ardent soul at Troas (2 Cor. 2:13; cf. ch. 7:6, 13, 14). Also, the collection in Corinth for the saints at Jerusalem came to a successful conclusion (Rom. 15:26).

After the writing of this second epistle and his next visit, we find only scattered references to the Corinthian church. However, an epistle to the Corinthians by Clement of Rome about A.D. 95 reveals that at least some of the old evils had reappeared. Clement does compliment the church for its exemplary