

gave full notice to all that he would not stoop to such practices in order to gain power over his fellowmen.

not working in craftiness.—This is a reference to the methods of those who indulged in the hidden things of shame. See Eph. 5:12. Some of them would do anything to accomplish their own selfish ends, even if it meant handling the Word of God deceitfully. Paul had already mentioned those who were making merchandise of the Word of God. As a fisherman uses a lure to attract the unsuspecting fish, so the false teacher used deceit in order to capture his victim. Paul, however, had said to the Ephesian elders: "I am pure from the blood of all men, for I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

There are various ways to use the Word of God deceitfully. Using a Bible text to preach a "sermon" that has little or nothing to do with the Bible is one of the common ways of doing it. Teaching it accurately, but refusing to live by it is equally deceitful. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for this very thing. See Matt. 23:1-2. Paul wrote about some of the Jews who were doing the same thing, saying, "for this reason the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Rom. 2:23).

Both Jesus and Paul demonstrated the proper use of the Scriptures. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Himself. When He had finished reading He explained the meaning of the prophecy to the people. They wondered at the gracious words which He spoke. See Luke 4:16-21. Paul told Timothy that the inspired Scriptures were profitable for teaching, correction, instruction in righteousness, and that they completely equip the man of God for every good work. See II Tim. 3:16-17. Paul insisted on proclaiming the truth of God's Word and letting that truth be seen in his life. See Gal. 2:20 and I Cor. 11:1.

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—Paul's ministry was out in the open so that every man could see and know the truth for which he stood. And this is the thing that commended him to them. He was aware of the fact that as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ all that he said and did was done in the sight of God.

even if our gospel is veiled.—He was, no doubt, anticipating the reaction to his remarks about the veil that lies upon those who hear the Law of Moses read. He frankly admitted that the gospel is veiled in the case of those who were perishing. They were perishing because they had failed to turn to the Lord who is revealed in the

glorious New Covenant. The message of the gospel is about eternal life and also about eternal death. To reject the message of the Lord is to perish.

in whom the god of this world.—Satan is properly called the god of this age because he is worshipped by those who are perishing. Of course, there is only one true God, the Father, and one true Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. See I Cor. 8:6. When Gentile sacrificed to idols, Paul said that they were sacrificing to demons and not to God. Idolatry was demon worship. Satan is known as the prince of demons. See Matt. 12:44. Satan even dared to challenge the Son of God to fall down and worship him, offering to give Him all the kingdoms of the world if He would do so. See Matt. 4:8. Jesus made it clear that no one can serve two masters. He said, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Satan can be called the god of this age because of the time limit that is imposed upon his activities. At the close of this age, the devil will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone where are also the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. See Rev. 20:10.

Christ conquered Satan at the cross and provided the means whereby His followers may also overcome him, that is, by the blood of the Lamb, the Word of their testimony, and their dedication to the Lord that is indicated by the fact that they love not their lives even unto death. See Rev. 12:11 and Heb. 2:14.

blinded the minds of the unbelieving.—Belief in Christ rests solidly on the evidence of His resurrection. See Rom. 10:9-10. The sheer weight of that evidence compelled the apostles who had investigated every phase of it to believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead. The inspired writers have left us a reliable record of the evidence of that greatest fact of history.

Paul knew that many were blind because they did not want to believe. They were satisfied with the Old Covenant and proud of their own righteousness.

Jesus had found this same blindness among the people of His day. They did not understand what He said because they did not hear what He was really saying. Why? Because they were intent on doing the evil which their father, the devil, was suggesting to them. He was a liar and the father of liars. His offspring were not interested in the truth which the Son of God spoke. See John 8:42-46.

that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.—Unbelief had closed the minds of those who were perishing. They would not permit

the knowledge of the gospel which tells of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to enlighten their darkened minds. They "loved the darkness rather than the light" (John 3:19).

who is the image of God.—Paul pointed out the seriousness of this blindness. To reject Christ is to reject God, for He is the image of God, that is, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). John, also, says that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). Thus both John and Paul emphatically state their belief in the deity of Jesus. John says that "the Word was God" (John 1:1), and that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The Gospel of John unfolds the story of the Father as He is seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus declared, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He also said "no one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). When Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and do you not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:8-9). Indeed, if they had recognized Him, they would have known the Father. See John 14:7. The writer of Hebrews indicates that the Son is the exact representation of God. See Heb. 1:3. The veil of unbelief prevented many from seeing this truth.

Paul declared that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The most complete explanation of this profound truth of Christianity is found in Phil. 2:5-11. His deity and humanity are presented by Paul in terms similar to those used by John in his Gospel and his first epistle. See John 1:1-8 and I John 1:1-4.

for we preach not ourselves.—In no way did Paul preach himself. He always preached Christ Jesus as Lord. He was merely the agent through whom the knowledge of Christ had been made known in every place. He had no lordship over their faith; his task was to help them in their joyous relationship to the Lord.

Of himself he could say, "I am your servant for Jesus' sake." In so doing he was following the standard which the Lord had set for all who would serve Him. "Whosoever would be first among you," He said, "let him be servant of all." The Son of Man did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for the many. See Mark 10:44-45.

This attitude was the opposite of that of the false teachers who were troubling the Corinthians, for they were commending themselves and measuring themselves by their own standards. See II Cor. 10:12.

Seeing that it is God.—This is Paul's reason for preaching Christ. In contrast to what he had said about the god of this world who had blinded the minds of the unbelieving, Paul declared that it was God who caused light to shine out of darkness and who had shined in his heart to give the enlightenment that comes from the knowledge about the glory of God as it is seen in the face of Jesus. He wrote to the Galatians to say that God had revealed His Son in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. See Gal. 1:16.

Several contrasts are seen in these verses: (1) The god of this age is contrasted with God who created the world. (2) The blinded minds of the unbelievers are contrasted with the enlightened heart of Paul as a believer in Christ. (3) Unbelief which prevented the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ from dawning on the darkened minds is contrasted with the faith of the opened heart that allows the enlightenment that comes from the knowledge of the glory of God which is seen in the face of Christ to shine.

The shining brilliance on the face of Moses suggests the thought of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Moses' face shone as he spoke to Israel the message which God had given him. Christ is the One through whom God revealed His gospel to the apostles, and they preached Christ Jesus as Lord for the salvation of the believer.

Paul had been permitted to see the brilliant light and to hear the voice of Christ when He commissioned him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. See Acts 26:12-18. Jesus told him that through his preaching the Gentiles were to "open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ."

Since Paul has been discussing the Old Covenant in contrast to the New, it might be well to recall what the writer of Hebrews said about the mountain from which God spoke to Israel. That mountain "burned with fire and unto blackness and darkness, and tempest and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which they that heard entreated that no more should be spoken unto them" (Heb. 12:18-19). The message that came from Mount Zion, however, brought the good news of remission of sins that had been promised.

to all believers from the time of Abraham. See Gal. 3:6-14; Isa. 2:1-4.

John wrote of Christ saying "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (John 1:4-5). Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). All this seems to say the same thing that Paul did when he spoke of "the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Paul's View Of His Ministry

Scripture

4:7-18. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; 8 we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; 9 pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; 10 always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak; 14 knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

16 Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Comments

But we have this treasure.—Paul's ministry as an apostle in connection with the New Covenant had been obtained through the mercy of God. He, therefore, did not hesitate to declare that he was in no way

shrinking from the responsibilities involved in it. To him, it was a privilege to proclaim the gospel of the glory of Christ, for it is this gospel that gives enlightenment to the believer as he comes to know about the glory of God as it is seen in the Person of Christ. This gospel message is the treasure in such earthen vessels as the apostles. God had committed it to them as a trust. See I Tim. 1:11.

Paul wrote to Timothy telling him to guard that which had been committed to him—the gospel which was the precious treasure which had been given to him in trust for safe keeping—urging him to “turn away from profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (I Tim. 6:20-21). The human being is indeed a fragile vessel in which to entrust the precious message of eternal life, but such is the confidence that God had in Paul and others who dedicate themselves to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said to Timothy, “The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

the power may be of God and not from ourselves.—This is the secret of Paul's ministry. The power of his message was not in himself but in God. He had written to the Corinthians in the first letter saying, “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling: And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of men's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (I Cor. 2:4). To the Romans he wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

Paul's enemies at Corinth were evidently proud of their personal appearance, their ability as orators, and their power to persuade the Corinthians to believe them rather than the gospel which Paul had preached. Paul did not bother to defend himself against their insinuations that his bodily presence was weak. He took it as an occasion to point out that his power was from God, not from himself. This power could be seen in the miracles which the apostles performed. The miracles demonstrated that their message came from God. Its effect had been seen in the transformed lives of those whose sins had been washed away by the blood of Christ. They were living a life of separation from sin and dedication to the service of God. They had been pardoned in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God. See I Cor. 5:11.

There was another side to this ministry that had to do with life and death. It was that of human frailty facing the hardships of this ministry, facing them in such a manner that the power of God might be seen in His servants. Paul pointed out five examples of this human weakness. In none of them was he preaching about himself, for his faith and hope were in God throughout all his trials. The first four examples present contrasts between the hardships he faced and the relief that always came. The last explains his attitude toward all the hardships which he suffered in preaching the gospel.

pressed on every side, yet not straitened.—This begins the list of physical hardships which Paul suffered in his ministry. He had been in tight places, but always found the way out. The riot at Ephesus is a good example. See Acts 19:23-41. The town clerk quieted the mob that would have destroyed Paul and made it possible for him, after having exhorted the disciples, to go on to Macedonia. The arrest in Jerusalem was another tight spot in which Paul was saved from the violence of the angry crowd by the Roman soldiers that policed the temple area. See Acts 21:35. The pressures of his ministry finally resulted in his imprisonment. On the night following his arrest in Jerusalem, the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

perplexed, yet not unto despair.—The difficulties involved in communication between himself and the Corinthian church left him at his wits end. He was eager to help them and to prevent the false teachers from making havoc of the church of God. But he did not despair; he took the necessary action that finally led him to Macedonia where he found Titus and learned about the situation at Corinth.

pursued, yet not forsaken.—Paul's enemies pursued him wherever he went; but he was never left in the lurch, for the Lord was always with him. His enemies pursued him until they succeeded in having him arrested, but this led to his being sent to Rome where he presented his case—actually, the case for the gospel—before Caesar. In the stormy crossing of the sea that threatened the lives of all on board the ship, an angel of God said to Paul, "Fear not, Paul, thou must stand before Caesar. And lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:23-24). In the trial that followed, when all other had forsaken him, the Lord stood by Paul. See II Tim. 4:17. Out of confidence of victory, Paul wrote this message to Timothy, "Be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry. For I am already being offered, and

the time of my departure is come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at the last day; and not to me only, but to all that have loved the Lord's appearing" (II Tim. 4:5-8).

smitten down, yet not destroyed.—Paul knew what it meant to be struck down like a soldier on the battle field. At Lystra the enemy stoned him and dragged him out of the city thinking that he was dead. But as the disciples stood around him he rose up and entered into the city, and on the next day went on to Derbe. See Acts 14: 19-20.

always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus.—The Jews were constantly seeking to kill Jesus. See John 5:18; 7:1. When they could not meet the logic of His wisdom in open debate, they took up stones to cast at Him. See John 8:59; 10:31. They would have done it too, except for the fact that it was not His hour to die. He had the right to lay down His life and the right to take it again. See John 10:18; 7:30. But they were determined to put Him to death; their only problem was how to get it done. Judas gave them the opportunity they had been looking for when he offered to betray Him into their hands. Their charge of blasphemy on which they agreed that He was worthy of death meant nothing to Pilate, and they knew it. Therefore they brought such charges as insurrection against Caesar that they might force the governor to sentence Jesus to die on the Roman cross. But He arose in triumph from the dead and "ever lives to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25). As an apostle of Christ, Paul was always facing death at the hands of his persecutors. They finally succeeded; but for Paul, death simply meant being absent from the body and at home with the Lord. See also Col. 1:24 for further information on Paul's attitude toward suffering for Christ. *that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*—The life of Jesus is His life which survived the experience of death, for God raised Him up.

So then death worketh in us, but life in you.—The earthen vessel was subject to death and persecution. But it held the glorious message of eternal life for the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was their servant for the sake of Jesus Christ.

the same spirit of faith.—Defending his courage to speak even in face of death, Paul turned to the message of Psalms 116:8-11 to show that he had the same attitude of faith as the Psalmist who faced the threat of death. Paul's confidence was in God and in the

power of the gospel to save. He knew that God had raised Jesus Christ from the dead, for he had seen the risen Lord. He was also certain that God would raise him up from the dead and present him to Christ along with the saints at Corinth. See Eph. 5-25-27.

For all things are for your sakes.—All that God had done through the Lord Jesus Christ was for the sake of the believer. All that Paul had suffered in order to bring the gospel to them was for their sakes. God's grace multiplied by the many who were brought to life in Jesus Christ caused thanks to abound unto the glory of God.

Wherefore we faint not.—Paul declared again his courage to carry on the ministry of the gospel of Christ. He had faced hardships, even death itself, in fulfilling his ministry. He courageously continued on his course knowing death would overtake him some day. He develops this thought beginning in 4:16 and continuing through 5:10.

our outward man is decaying.—By "outward man" Paul meant the physical body in which he had endured so many hardships. See the list in 11:24-28. It leaves us wondering how any man could have endured all this. But it was a different story with the man who lived in that body, that is, "the inward man." While the body was subject to death, the inward man was being renewed day by day. Paul said, "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

our light affliction.—As we think of the affliction suffered by Paul, we wonder how he could have called it light. It was light as compared to the eternal weight of glory which he anticipated at the close of his faithful ministry. The affliction was for the moment, but the glory will be forever, eternal in the heavens. The afflictions could be seen, but the glory cannot be seen with the physical eye. The things that are not seen, however, are eternal. Paul discusses these things in 5:1-10.

Summary

Explaining his attitude toward the ministry of the New Covenant, Paul showed why he preached Christ, even though his gospel was obscured in the minds of some.

He had obtained this ministry through God's mercy, not by any merit of his own. He was determined not to act like a fainthearted coward in discharging his obligations to it. He renounced methods and motives not in harmony with the gospel and rested his case on the

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presentation of the truth. He refused to resort to the secret things that belonged to the shameful practices of false teachers. He did not resort to craftiness, nor did he deceitfully use the gospel. By making the truth clear to his hearers, he commended himself to the consciences of men before God.

Paul had said that some were blind to the true nature of the Old Covenant, and he readily admitted that the gospel might be obscured in the minds of those who were blinded by the god of this age. The sin of unbelief kept the glorious light of the gospel from dawning on them. Even so, Paul was determined not to preach himself, but Christ Jesus as Lord. He was their servant for Jesus' sake. God caused the light of the knowledge of His glory to shine through the preaching of the apostle that it might bring enlightenment to the believer.

This gospel was like a precious treasure which God kept in earthen vessels—his apostles and preachers of the Word. Paul trusted, not in himself, but in God for strength to endure the hardships of his ministry. He was hard pressed, but not to the extent that he could not move. He was perplexed, but never gave up. He was pursued by men, but never forsaken by God. He was struck down, but never left to die until his time to go home to be with the Lord. Paul, just as Jesus had done, faced death constantly at the hands of his persecutors. But he was delivered from death that he might continue to tell of the risen Lord; for this meant life for the Corinthians who believed.

As the Psalmist believed in God who delivered him from death, so Paul also believed that God would deliver him. He spoke with boldness and confidence about his hope that God who raised up Jesus would raise him also from the dead and present him in the resurrection with the faithful Corinthians. He reminded them that he had endured all these things for their sakes in order that God's grace which was multiplied by the many trials through which the faithful go might abound in thanksgiving on their part to the glory of God.

Paul was not afraid to face the hardships of his ministry, even the constant danger of death. He knew, of course, that his physical body was wearing out. But this was more than offset by the fact that his inward man was being renewed constantly. These afflictions were a momentary light load as compared to the eternal weight of glory to which he looked after patiently enduring the trials of this life. He did not look at these perils as one who keeps his eyes on things which can be seen, for he was thinking of things that cannot be

CHAPTER FOUR

seen with the physical eye, that is, the things that are eternal in the heavens.

Questions

1. Why did Paul again refer to his ministry at this point?
2. What merciful thing had God done for Paul in connection with his ministry?
3. In what way had Paul's conversion changed his Pharisaical views?
4. What might this suggest as to the teachers who were disturbing the church at Corinth?
5. What was Paul's attitude toward the hardships which he faced?
6. What were the hidden things of shame which Paul renounced?
7. What kind of a life had he lived as a Pharisee?
8. How do the practices of the false teachers in Galatia show what Paul meant by "hidden things of shame"?
9. What were some of the crafty, deceitful practices of some of the false teachers in Paul's day?
10. What did Paul say to the Ephesian elders about his own relation to the whole counsel of God?
11. How did Paul seek to commend his ministry?
12. Why did he speak of the possibility of the gospel being veiled?
13. Who is the god of this age?
14. How does he blind the minds of some to the truth of the gospel?
15. What will ultimately happen to the god of this age and to all who worship him?
16. On what does belief in Christ rest?
17. What experience did Jesus have with this kind of blindness?
18. What is the light of the gospel?
19. What did Paul mean when he spoke of Christ as the image of God?
20. What did Jesus say about His relation to the Father?
21. What did Paul mean when he said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord"?
22. Why did he speak of himself as their servant?
23. Why did Paul refer to the fact that God said, "Light shall shine out of darkness"?
24. How had God enlightened the heart of Paul? How does he enlighten hearts of others?

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25. What contrasts may be seen between the god of this world and God who sheds light on our minds through the gospel?
26. What did Paul mean by "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"?
27. What is the connection between this thought and that of the glory on the face of Moses?
28. What contrast may this suggest between the message that went forth from Sinai and the gospel that was preached on the Day of Pentecost?
29. What was the treasure in earthen vessels?
30. What were the earthen vessels?
31. What important view of Paul's ministry does this give?
32. Why did Paul mention the frailty of the human body at this point?
33. What experience of Paul had caused him to be pressed on every side, yet not straitened?
34. How did the failure to find Titus cause him to be perplexed, yet not unto despair?
35. How did Paul show that the Lord had never forsaken him?
36. When had he been smitten down, but not destroyed?
37. In what way was he always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus?
38. What was the purpose of this?
39. What did he mean by saying, "Death works in us, but life in you"?
40. To what spirit of faith did Paul refer? Why?
41. Why was Paul cheerful even though he knew that his physical body was wearing out?
42. With what did he compare his "light affliction"?
43. What is "the eternal weight of glory"?

For Discussion

1. What can be done to exalt the gospel today when so many are preoccupied with human systems of thought?
2. How can the unseen glories of heaven be made real to us?

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis

- A. Paul contrasted the earthly and heavenly dwelling places as he continued the explanation of his courageous outlook for the future (1-10).
1. He pointed out that we know that we will have a building from God (1).
 - a) This will be when the earthly, temporary dwelling—our physical body—is folded up like a tent when it is no longer needed (1a).
 - b) We have waiting for us a permanent dwelling place from God (b).
 - (1) It will be a permanent dwelling in contrast to the earthly, mortal body.
 - (2) It is eternal in contrast to the temporary body of this life.
 - (3) It is to be in heaven in contrast to the one that is for earth.
 2. He spoke of his longing to be in that heavenly dwelling place (2-5).
 - a) In this earthly body we have pain and distress which cause us to be deeply disturbed.
 - b) This makes us long for the heavenly dwelling.
 - c) The heavenly dwelling will replace the earthly one so that we will not be without a body.
 - d) He explained that we do not want to be without a body; rather, we want one that will take the place of this mortal body.
 - e) He who provided this very thing for us is God, and He guaranteed it through what is revealed by the Holy Spirit (5).
 3. He explained why he faced the future with such courage (6-10).
 - a) He was aware of the fact that as long as we make our home in this physical body we are away from home, that is, away from the Lord (6).
 - b) In this state we walk by faith, not by sight; we put our trust in the Lord because of the knowledge we have through the revelation by the Spirit (7).

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- c) Because we are confident of this, we wish to be away from this earthly home, the physical body, that we might be at home with the Lord. (8).
- d) Consequently, Paul made it his aim to be well-pleasing to the Lord (9-10).
 - (1) This was his aim whether at home in the body or absent from it.
 - (2) This was true because he faced the time when all will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. There each one will receive the verdict, based on what he has done in the body, whether good or bad.
- B. Because he knew the meaning of reverence for God, Paul explained his ministry of reconciliation (11-21).
 - 1. He explained the motivating forces of this ministry (11-17).
 - a) Since he was aware of the Judgment, he was endeavoring to persuade men to obey God so that they might be prepared for it (7-13).
 - (1) This was evident to God, and he hoped that they were aware of it too (11).
 - (2) He was not commending himself as he told about this ministry (12-13).
 - (a) He was giving them an opportunity to boast on his behalf.
 - (b) This gave them an answer to the ones who were boasting about appearance and not reality.
 - b) He told them of the love of Christ which was the compelling force in his ministry of reconciliation (14-17).
 - (1) He was held on this course by the force of Christ's Christ's love for him (14-15).
 - (a) It was the fact that Christ died for all sinners that made him aware of this love (14a).
 - (b) It is evident, then, that all sinners have died (14b).
 - (c) It is also true that Christ died for all sinners—that included Paul—so that they might no longer live for themselves but for Him who died and rose for their sakes.
 - (2) He explained the view he held because he had

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- come to understand the love of Christ for him (16-17).
- (a) He no longer considered any man as a mere human being, although he had once thought of Messiah from this point of view (16).
 - (b) He looked upon any man who was in Christ as a new creature; old thing had passed away; behold, they have become new.
2. He explained that he had received this ministry from God (18-19).
- a) God had reconciled Paul to Himself through Christ and had given him this ministry of reconciliation (18).
 - b) Paul explained what this meant (19).
 - (1) It meant that God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.
 - (2) It meant that He was not reckoning their trespasses against them, but through His ambassador He was offering them the way of reconciliation.
3. He explained what he was doing as an ambassador of Christ (20-21).
- a) God was pleading with them through the ambassador of Christ that they reconcile themselves to Him (20).
 - b) God had made this reconciliation possible through Christ (21).
 - (1) God made Christ, who was sinless, to represent sin when He died on the cross.
 - (2) This was done that we might become the representatives of the righteousness of God in Him.

The Building From God

Scripture

5:1-10 For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. 2 For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: 3 if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord 7 (for we walk by faith, not by sight); 8 we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. 10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Comments

For we know.—Paul continued to explain his courageous effort to preach the gospel of Christ. He had told of his awareness of the fact that this precious treasure was in earthen vessels. He was constantly aware of the weakness of the vessel. He did not despair, however, for he knew what lay ahead for the faithful servant of Christ. He knew that this life was only temporary, but beyond it there was eternal life with God. This information had been revealed to him through the Holy Spirit. See I Cor. 2:6-16. More than that, he had actually seen the risen Lord. This fact confirmed the testimony that had been made known to him and, through him, to all who are willing to accept the Word of God. The hope of heaven is based solidly upon the testimony of the Scriptures.

Two factors influence the interpreters of this chapter: (1) the assumption that Paul was anticipating the return of Christ in his own lifetime; and (2) the assumption that he had in mind the intermediate state of the dead as he discussed the issues of this chapter. But we raise the question: "Did Paul expect the return of Christ in his lifetime?" Jesus had made it clear to His disciples that no one knew the time of His coming, "not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son himself, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36). The information given orally to the apostles by Jesus was recalled to their minds by the Holy Spirit. See John 14:26. Paul, who was also an inspired apostle of Christ, surely had all the information that was given to the other apostles. In writing to the Thessalonians, he used the very expression that Jesus had used about the second coming: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thes. 5:2). In his second epistle to them, he corrected the false notion that was held by some of them that the day of the Lord was just at hand. He reminded them of certain things, such as the apostasy, that were to come before that day. See II Thes.

2:12. In I Cor. 15:51, Paul wrote "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall be changed." Some have understood this to mean that Paul was expecting the return of Christ before his death. It seems more likely that he was making a general statement in agreement with what he had said in I Thes. 4:13-18. Some will be alive at the time of the return of Christ, but there is no indication that Paul expected to be one of that number.

Paul did say to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ—magnified by my ministry of preaching His gospel—and for me to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Although he had a strong desire to be with Christ—what faithful Christian doesn't?—he added, "I know that I shall abide, yea and abide with you all for your progress and joy in the faith" (Phil. 1:25). But Paul, of course, was well aware of the fact that his physical body which was subject to death was wearing out. As he faced that eventuality, he wrote to Timothy saying, "I am already being offered and the time of my departure is come" (II Tim. 4:6). It seems idle, therefore, to speculate over the apostle's supposed expectation of being alive when Christ comes.

The saints of all ages should remember the words of Christ when He said, "Watch and be ready!" Paul made it his aim whether in this life or the heavenly state to be well-pleasing to God.

As to the matter of the intermediate state, there is a question whether or not Paul even hints at it in this context. For a discussion of the intermediate state of the dead, see *Studies in Luke*, pages 278-279.

if the earthly house.—This does not indicate that Paul had any doubt as to whether or not he might die before the coming of Christ. The only uncertain thing in his mind was the time of his death. The statement may be more properly rendered as follows. "For we know that whenever the earthly house of our tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." We have a similar statement in I John 3:2: "We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him." But there is no doubt in the mind of John about the fact that He will be manifested. It would, therefore, be better to translate—and correct, too—as follows: "We know that whenever he shall be manifested, we shall be like him."

For an illustration of the fact that "if" should sometimes be rendered "when," see Heb. 3:7. The American Standard has "if" but R S V has "when" and correctly so.

we have a building from God.—The contrast is between the physical

body and the resurrection body. The one is earthly and temporal; the other is eternal and heavenly. Some in Corinth had been doubting the fact of the resurrection. They had asked about the kind of body in which the dead were to be raised. See I Cor. 15:35. Paul said there is a natural body—one that is suited to this life—and there is also a spiritual body. See I Cor. 15:44. He described it as follows: "For our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able to subject all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). This agrees with John that the saints shall be like Him when they see Him as He is.

It is doubtful that the thought of a tabernacle that will give place to a permanent building in heaven was derived from the Tabernacle in the Wilderness that gave place to the permanent Temple in Jerusalem. People in Paul's day were thoroughly familiar with tents as well as permanent structures. It was natural for Paul to use the figure for he was a tentmaker. Peter uses the same figure referring to his physical body when he referred to his approaching death as "the putting off of his tabernacle" (II Pet. 1:14 and John 21:18-19). The reference in John is to the manner of Peter's death and not necessarily to the time of it. Paul spoke of "the time of his departure," using a phrase in common use. It referred among other things to the soldier who folded his tent as he prepared to leave for home.

a building from God.—This does not suggest that the body we have is not from God, for we are His creatures. Paul's thought was of the permanent abode of the saints of God as a creation of God, not a house that man makes. Abraham "looked for the city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Peter describes it as "an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed at the last time" (I Pet. 1:3-5). This is the Father's house in which, according to Jesus, there are many mansions. See John 14:2.

Paul spoke of the spiritual body and the permanent building in which the saints will dwell in heaven. Both concepts describe the contrast between heaven and the earthly, temporary, perishing body in which we live in this life. The terms do not contradict each other; neither do they necessarily refer to different phases of the life beyond the grave.

For verily in this we groan.—Whatever that suffering was that brought Paul near death in Asia, it was an experience that left a vivid impression on his mind. As he thought of it, he sighed the relief that heaven would bring. Like a soldier who longs for victory and the time to go home, Paul was eager for the battle to be over so that he might lay aside the temporary physical body and be clothed with the habitation which is from heaven.

not be found naked.—Those who assume that Paul had in mind the intermediate state of the dead—the Scriptures clearly teach that there is such a state—assume that he is speaking about it in this passage. But it seems more likely that he was only contrasting this life with the heavenly state. Then what does “not be found naked” mean? The Corinthians were thoroughly familiar with the philosophical view that taught that absence from the body meant freedom from trial and hardship. The goal was to have no body at all. But this was not Paul’s idea. Rather than this being a discussion of the intermediate state of the dead, it seems to be Paul’s answer to those who might have held false views of the resurrection. Some of the Corinthians had been denying the resurrection. Paul’s desire to be free from the body was based on what he knew by revelation concerning the resurrection body. No one with this knowledge would look forward to a time when he would be without a body that is, be found naked. The resurrection body will be like the glorious body of Christ. This explains why Paul said, “We that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened.” The afflictions, distresses, imprisonments, and hardships which he suffered were heaven burdens. But to Paul they were light when compared to the eternal weight of glory that awaits the faithful follower of Christ. He explained the expression, “not be found naked” by saying, “not that we would be unclothed but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up with life.”

the earnest of the Spirit.—See comment on 1:22. The earnest of the Spirit is the guarantee or pledge that God will provide a spiritual body for the saints in heaven. When we say that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee, we are using the well known figure of speech, metonymy, which puts the person for the thing he does. The Holy Spirit is the Person who gives the guarantee or reveals the pledge. It was revealed directly to the apostle, but written in the sacred Scriptures for us. It is proper, then, to say that the saints of God have a written guarantee that there is a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

for we walk by faith.—As to the heavenly home, we must depend on the information God has made known by His Spirit through the inspired apostles. We do not see heaven, but we hope for it because God says it is waiting for His people. This is the basis of Paul's undaunted courage in face of hardship. He was willing, of course, to be absent from the body that he might be at home with the Lord.

There are two thoughts expressed here: (1) At home in the body means absence from the Lord; and (2) absence from the body—death—means at home with the Lord. Since Paul, apparently, did not choose to discuss the intermediate state at this point but concentrate upon the goal of heaven, it seems unnecessary to consider it in the explanation of his remarks. When Christ comes at the end of the age, the dead will be raised and those that are alive will together with them be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with Him. See I Thes. 4:13-18.

That the righteous dead will be with the Lord in the intermediate state seems to be indicated by the words of Jesus to the dying thief: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. See comment on this passage in *Studies in Luke*, page 380.

Wherefore we make it our aim.—Paul's constant concern was that he be well-pleasing to the Lord. He seemed quite content to leave the matter of the time when he would be absent from the body and present with the Lord in His hands. This is in accord with what Jesus said about the unknown time of His coming. The faithful need to watch and be ready! Paul did not want to be like that unfaithful servant who, because his master had delayed his coming, began to mistreat his fellow-servants. See Matt. 24:45-51. Jesus said that the unfaithful servant would be cut asunder and have his portion appointed with the hypocrits. Paul knew of the judgment which all will face. His mission was to help others prepare for that Day.

For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ.—Paul uses the figure of a military tribunal to describe the Judgment. The judgment-seat is the elevated platform on which the judge sits. All will be gathered before the Judge.

Jesus used the figure of a royal throne to describe the same Judgment scene: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31-32). John describes the Judgment Day by using the figure of the great white throne: "And I saw a great

white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, before the throne; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books according to their works" (Rev. 20:11-12).

Some assume that these are three different judgments. Since all of them refer to the end of the world and the coming of Christ, it is clear that all of them describe the same Judgment Day.

God through Christ is the Judge. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30). Ecclesiastes closes with the same thought: "This is the end of the matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or evil" (Eccl. 12:13). Revelation indicates that the books will be opened on that day. One of them is the record of the deeds of men whether they be good or bad. Another of the books is the Book of Life. If any man's name is not found written in that book, he will be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. Still another book is the gospel which Paul preached: "God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). The Judgment Day is a strong motivating force leading to repentance.

Jesus said, "Marvel not at this for the hour cometh, when all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). Paul's ambition was to be well-pleasing to God so that in the Judgment Day he might be among those who have done good.

Motivating Forces

Scripture

5:11-17 Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves unto you, but speak as giving you occasion of glorying on our behalf, that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13 For whether we are beside our-

selves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you. 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. 16 Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know *him* so no more. 17 Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

Comments

Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord.—Paul turns from the thought of man's responsibility to God and the fact that all shall be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ to the responsibility that lay upon him in relation to his ministry of reconciliation. He discussed two basic motivating forces of that ministry: (1) the fear of the Lord and (2) the love of Christ.

A sense of reverence and awe arises from the fact that all must appear before the Judge of the universe to give account of the things done in the body. The guilty fear the punishment that is associated with wrong doing. The sincere servant of the Lord has a dread of doing that which is not pleasing to God. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). David prayed, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins" (Psa. 19:13). Paul mentioned his fear and trembling on coming to Corinth. See *Studies in First Corinthians*, page 34. Since children are to be like their fathers, Peter writes, "If ye call on him as father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers: but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (I Pet. 1:17-18). John explained the fear of the disobedient in contrast to the love of those who do the will of God. See I John 4:17-19. The disobedient fear punishment, but perfect love—love that is expressed in obedience to the commandments of God—casts out fear. Our love for God springs from the fact that He first loved us.

Adam was afraid of God because he knew that he was guilty of transgressing His command. Anxiety caused the guilty one to attempt

to cover his own sin. Adam used the fig leaf in a vain attempt to hide his disobedience from God. Ever since that day, man has been trying through his own schemes to blot out the effect of his sins, but the fact remains that only God can forgive sins.

The divine plan is to blot out sin by the blood of Christ. Paul was suddenly stopped in his mad effort to destroy the church of God when he accepted the mercy of God and got his sins washed away by submitting to baptism at the hand of Ananias. From that time forward, the love of Christ for him kept him aware of the need to obey His Lord as a faithful servant.

we persuade men.—Opinions differ over the meaning of this statement. Some assume that Paul was attempting to persuade men of his own sincerity. He had been reminding the Corinthians that he was not indulging in self-glory. As to the charge of the false teachers on this issue, he rested his case on the truth of the gospel message which he proclaimed and the evidence of Christian character which his converts displayed.

It seems more likely, then, that Paul was referring to his ministry in which he was persuading men to be reconciled to God. His converts at Corinth were proof of his effectiveness. He was persuading men to obey Christ that they might be prepared to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. At Corinth, Paul had "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4). At Thessalonica, he had gone into the synagogue of the Jews and "for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved Christ to suffer, and to arise from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you is the Christ" (Acts 17:2-3).

Paul consistently presented the facts about Jesus in persuading men to believe that He was the Christ. He told them of the goodness of God that was leading them to repentance. He told them of the love of God who gave His Son to die for us while we were sinners. He told them about the judgment that all face and appealed to them to repent in preparation for that day. He told of the command to be baptized for the remission of sins as he urged men to obey God.

Paul's own conversion had followed this same persuasive pattern. Stephen's message profoundly affected the young man named Saul. He knew well the history of his people, the Jews, as Stephen related it. He knew of their stubborn disobedience that led some to attempt to go back to Egypt. He knew that the temple had taken

the place of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and he was fully aware of the fact that God does not dwell in houses made with hands. He knew also that the fathers had persecuted the prophets and killed those who had showed beforehand the coming of the Righteous One. Stephen had burned this truth into the minds of his audience when he said, "You have now become murderers of that One." But Stephen also presented the evidence of the resurrection of Christ when he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

When Saul met the Lord on the Damascus Road, his question was: "What shall I do?" Stephen had impressed him with the mercy and love of God, for Saul had heard him when he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). See Paul's own comment in Acts 22:16-21 and I Tim. 1:12-14. The person who believes in the Lord Jesus and understands his love and mercy readily responds to the reasonable command to be baptized for the remission of sins. See Acts 9:17-19 and 22:16.

Immediately upon his conversion, Paul began to preach Christ, for he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. See Acts 26: 19-23. He urged Gentiles as well as Jews to repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.

we are made manifest unto God.—On the Judgment Day, God will judge the secrets of men according to the gospel, by Jesus Christ. See Rom. 2:16. Paul was aware of the fact that God knew his heart at all times and that no motive of his was hidden from Him. In this frame of mind he had carried on his ministry as an apostle of Christ. He had dealt frankly and sincerely with the Corinthians and believed that he had a right to hope that they were aware of his attitude. He had already called their attention to his sincerity in dealing with them in contrast to those who were corrupting the Word of God.

we are not again commending ourselves unto you.—It seemed necessary for Paul to defend his sincerity because of false charges that were being made against him continually. See 10:8-9. He was not commending himself by what he said about his ministry of persuading men, but giving the Corinthians a reason for being proud of the fact that the gospel had been brought to them by the apostle of Jesus Christ. This gave them a substantial answer to the claims of false apostles who were really deceitful workers of Satan. See 11:12-13. Such deceitful workers were proud of their external appearance, but Paul gloried in the fact that the secrets of his heart were known to God.

for whether we are beside ourselves.—If Paul were out of his mind, it would be evident to God, for God had placed His approval upon him in appointing him to the apostleship. Festus, listening to the defense that Paul made of the gospel before King Agrippa, cried out: "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad" (Acts 26:24). But Paul assured him that he was speaking only words of truth and soberness. He was sure that the king knew this too. The Corinthians had ample opportunity to know the mind of Paul for he had determined not to know anything among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. His appeal to them had been made on the basis of known facts of the gospel which were in accord with the Scriptures. See I Cor. 15:1-4. He had sincerely proclaimed the message of Christ to them. As one sent from God to do this task, he was aware that what he did was done in the sight of God.

for the love of Christ constraineth us.—Paul's reverence for God led him to a life of sincerity in his ministry of preaching the gospel. Christ's love for him became an irresistible force that held him on the true course. See Rom. 5:6-8.

that one died for all.—The doctrine of the vicarious or substitutionary atonement is based on the theory of a limited atonement. This doctrine of limited atonement springs from the doctrine of predestination which assumes that God predetermined that certain individuals would be saved and that others would be the objects of His wrath with no hope of salvation. According to the theory, those predetermined to be saved cannot resist the grace of God. They will persevere unto the final salvation of their souls—no chance of being lost! The doctrine of a limited atonement teaches that Christ died for these only, that is, He died in their stead and they will, therefore, be saved. The theory assumes that Paul's words, "He died for all," means for all who were predetermined to be saved. The argument, among other things, is based upon the translation of the preposition that is rendered "for," assuming that it means "instead of." But the same preposition is rendered "for their sake" in the last clause of verse fifteen. Christ "died and rose again for their sakes." This would seem to suggest that if He died instead of them, He also rose instead of them, which, of course, doesn't make sense. Since Paul uses the same preposition in the two phrases, consistency suggests that they be translated by the same words in each case. This leads to the conclusion that Christ's death and resurrection were *for the benefit* of all who believe on Him. In I Cor. 15:3, Paul says, "Christ died for—this is the same word which he used in II Cor. 5:14-15—our sins

according to the Scriptures." His death concerned our sins. It was for the benefit of all sinners, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life." No limited atonement here! "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Rather than a limited and substitutionary atonement, the Scriptures indicate that Christ's death was for all sinners, that they might hear the gospel and repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Mark 16: 15-16; Acts 2:38.

The standard by which Paul evaluated the death of Christ was the Scriptures. See I Cor. 15:3. But through the centuries men have been influenced by the doctrines of predestination and total depravity which have led them to the theories of limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of saints.

The Scriptures clearly indicate that God predetermined that believers would be saved, whether Jews or Gentiles. See Rom. 9:24, 30; Rom. 5:8; John 3:16. The Scriptures teach that as a result of Adam's sin physical death passed to all men. See Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22 and Heb. 9:27. Spiritual death, on the other hand, is the result of one's own personal sins. See John 8:21, 34; Eph. 2:1-6; Rom. 6:23. To assume that the human being, as a result of Adam's sin, is in a state of depravity which renders him incapable of doing or thinking anything good in the spiritual realm is to make the preaching of the gospel for the salvation of the lost a meaningless gesture. But Paul declared that it was the good pleasure of God through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. See I Cor. 1:21. If it requires a regenerating act of the Holy Spirit before man can believe, then the Word of the Cross truly is in vain. But Jesus clearly indicated that sinners for whom He died were to hear the Word through the inspired apostles and believe. See John 17:20-21.

Some assume that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is taught in Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45. Jesus gave His life as a ransom for, or on behalf of, the many. Some would translate, "instead of many" which is possible except for the fact that it does not harmonize with the whole teaching of Scripture on the subject. Paul's comment in I Tim. 2:6 explains the meaning of Matt. 20:28, for he says that "Christ gave himself a ransom for all."

Out of the references to ransom, two more closely related theories

of the atonement have come: (1) The ransom theory, and (2) the commercial theory. Based on the thought that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7) or "bought with a price" (I Cor. 6:20) some have taught that God paid the price of the blood of Christ to the devil to buy the release of the sinner. But the Scriptures simply state that we were bought with a price, the blood of Christ, without any assumption that it was paid to Satan. The commercial theory assumes that the death of Christ was exactly equal to the punishment that God would have inflicted on sinners, and that because of Christ's death He is just in forgiving them. The theory assumes that God in His purity and holiness was offended by the sinner and that only the death of Christ could change His attitude. The Scriptures state, however, that while we were yet sinners, God commended His own love toward us through the death of Christ. See Rom. 5:8.

The Scriptures present the death of Christ in various relationships: (1) In relation to God, it shows His love and His justice in passing over the sins done under the first covenant. See I John 4:9-10; Heb. 9:15; Rom. 3:35-36. (2) As to Christ, it was to destroy the works of the devil. See I John 3:8; Heb. 2:14. (3) As to the sinner, it was to save him from the wrath of God—punishment in the Day of Judgment—and restore him to fellowship with God. See Rom. 2:5-11; 5:9-11. (4) As to sin, it is the means of blotting out sin. Propitiation or expiation has to do with sin. The only way to escape the wrath of God is to obey the gospel. Under the New Covenant the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. See Heb. 9:14. God promises those who accept the terms of the New Covenant that He will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins He will remember no more. See Heb. 8:12.

This brief glimpse of the teaching of the Scriptures about the death of Christ enables us to see something of the motivating power of love in the life of Paul.

therefore all died.—In I Cor. 15:22, Paul says: "As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive." But this is a reference to the resurrection of the body which is to follow physical death. All who die physically will be raised from the dead, some to the resurrection of condemnation and some to the resurrection of life. See John 5:28-29. But in II Cor. 5:14, Paul is dealing with spiritual death. Since he says that Christ died for all—that is, for all sinners—

it is evident that all who have sinned have died spiritually. See Rom. 5:16-18.

and he died for all.—This does not teach universal salvation. It does indicate that an opportunity to be saved is provided for all men. See I Tim. 2:3-4. Paul speaks of God who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. See I Tim. 4:10. God has made it possible for all men to be saved through the death of Christ; those who accept His offer through belief expressed in obedience to His commands are saved. Those who are saved are no longer to live in selfishness; they are to commit themselves to Christ who for their sakes died and rose again.

no man after the flesh.—The standard by which Paul recognized the value of a man was his relation to Christ. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Paul said, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27-28).

have known Christ after the flesh.—Paul, speaking of his kinsmen according to the flesh, recognized the fact that Christ was of the Jews according to flesh. See Rom. 9:3-5. He may have in mind the same concept here. In common with most Jews, he had probably expected Messiah to set up a political kingdom. He, as most Jews, had been unable to reconcile this view with the claims of Jesus of Nazareth who said He was Son of God. See John 10:34-35; Luke 22:66-71. When the apostles, however, on the Day of Pentecost preached the fact of the resurrection of Christ and His exaltation to the right hand of God, three thousand Jews were convinced and got themselves baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. See Acts 2:36-40. After Paul had seen the risen Lord, he argued with the Jews on the basis of the Scriptures that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and rise from the dead and that this Jesus whom he proclaimed was the Christ. See Acts 17:3.

There is no way of knowing whether or not Paul had seen Jesus before He appeared to him on the Damascus Road. Paul's relation to Christ was based on the gospel which he heard from Stephen and Ananias and the fact that he had actually seen the risen Lord.

The Ministry of Reconciliation *Scripture*

5:18-21. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; 19

to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. 21 Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Comments

But all things are of God.—For Paul, the old things had passed away. He had suffered the loss of all things that he might gain Christ. See Phil. 3:1-16. Once he had thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. See Acts 26:9. He had actually tried to destroy the church of God. See Gal. 1:13. But God reconciled him unto Himself and gave him the ministry of reconciliation. He had become a new creature in Christ. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.*—This sentence should, in all probability be punctuated as follows: "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." It was through Christ that God created the world; it was through Him that God was reconciling the world unto Himself. Paul was the ambassador of Christ working together with God. This in no way contradicts the plain teaching of Scripture as to the deity of Jesus. His mission was to reveal the Father and save the lost. See Col. 2:9; John 1:1-2, 14; 14:7-8. Paul said that Jesus existed in the form of God on an equality with God. See Phil. 2:5-11. The Gospel of John was written to show how Christ revealed the Father. See John 1:18. At the height of His ministry, Philip said to Jesus, "Show us the Father, and it will suffice us." Jesus answered, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for my very works sake" (John 14:10-11). If they had only recognized Him, they would have known the Father. See John 14:7. The ministry of Christ shows the Father's effort to bring men into fellowship with Himself again. Sin which caused the separation is blotted out by the blood of Christ. Paul had accepted this profound truth and had gotten himself baptized by Ananias that his sins might be washed away. *not reckoning unto them their trespasses.*—See Paul's comment in Rom. 4:6-8. The blood of Christ covers the sin of the one who be-

believes in Christ; for that reason, the Lord will not reckon his sin against him. As an apostle of Christ, Paul told sinners how to be saved that they might be reconciled to God.

we are ambassadors.—This term refers to the apostles of Christ whom He equipped by the baptism in the Holy Spirit to speak for Him. See John 16:8-14; I Cor. 2:6-16. The wisdom of God had been revealed to them through the Spirit of God. They were ambassadors on behalf of Christ, that is, they were acting on His authority when they revealed the terms on which sinners could be reconciled to God. Instead of reckoning their trespasses against them, God was urging sinners to accept His terms and be brought into fellowship with Him again.

Him who knew no sin.—The sinlessness of Jesus is determined by the fact that He was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin. See Heb. 4:15. God made Him represent sin when He died on the cross for our sakes. This made it possible for us to become representatives of the righteous standard of conduct which God approves. The words of Christ on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" show what it meant to represent sin. The cross shows what it means to be lost. The life of dedication to Christ shows what it means to become a representative of the kind of life God approves. Paul put it this way: "I have been crucified with Christ; Christ lives in me." See Gal. 2:20. What was true of Paul is also true of those who belong to Christ, for they have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof. See Gal. 5:24.

The sin offering under the Old Covenant sheds light on the meaning of the cross. The sacrificial animal had to be physically perfect. After the priest had confessed the sins of the people, the animal was slain to symbolize the fact that death is the penalty for sin. The perfection of the sacrifice symbolized the purity of the worshipper whose sins had been covered by the blood.

the righteousness of God in him.—With his sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb, the believer becomes the representative of the kind of life God expects His people to live. Christ set the perfect example of this righteous conduct, for He did not sin. Peter, commenting on this, said, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin" (I Pet. 2:21-22).

Paul, speaking of the grace of God which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ, asks: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.

We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" (Rom. 5:21-6:2). To those who have been buried with Christ through baptism into death and have been raised together with Him to walk in the new life, Paul adds, "Even so reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God! (Rom. 6:11-13).

Summary

Paul faced the future with undaunted courage because he knew that although his body was growing weak under the load he was carrying there was a home for him in heaven. His physical body was like a tent in which he was living temporarily, but the heavenly building would be a permanent dwelling place with the Lord.

Pain and hardship made Paul long for the time when he would be in that heavenly house not made with hands. He was not anticipating a condition without a body. Pagan philosophers thought such a state would be heavenly, because they would then be free from pain and suffering associated with the physical body. Paul looked to the time when the Lord would fashion anew this mortal body that it might conform to the body of His glory. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him in His glorious body.

Paul was sure of this because of the guarantee God had given through the revelation from God by the Holy Spirit. We can read about it in the Bible. In this confidence, Paul longed for the time when he would be able to leave this earthly home and be at home with the Lord in that permanent, heavenly dwelling.

Therefore, Paul made it his aim to be well-pleasing to the Lord in this life and in the heavenly state. The verdict that will be rendered on the Judgment Day will depend on what we have done in the body in this life, whether it is good or evil.

Because of this solemn thought, Paul had committed himself to the ministry of reconciliation which he had received from God. He was endeavoring to persuade men to obey God and be prepared for the Judgment Day. He knew that this was evident to God and he hoped that the Corinthians were aware of it too. Their own response to this message of reconciliation would allow them to boast of the fact that they had received it from God's apostle. This differs from

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the situation of those who were boasting in false hopes instead of the real hope that comes from obedience to the gospel.

Christ's love for him was the compelling force that kept Paul on this true course. He knew that Christ had died for him, for He died for all sinners. Paul knew that he had died through his trespasses and sins; the greatest of these was his attempt to destroy the church of God. But Christ died for sinners so that they might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sakes died and rose again.

Since he had come to understand what the love of Christ had done for him, he no longer looked at any man as a mere human being but as one who could become a new creature through obedience to Christ. Once he had looked upon Messiah—indeed, most Jews had done the same thing—as a human Christ. But His death and resurrection changed all this for Paul. Old things had passed away, behold, they had become new!

Thus God had reconciled Paul to Himself through Christ and had given him the ministry of reconciliation. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. He was not entering their trespasses in the record against them, but through His ambassador He was pleading that they reconcile themselves to Him. This was possible because He made the sinless Christ to represent sin as He died on the cross that they might become the representatives of righteousness which God approves by their relation to Christ.

Questions

1. Why did Paul speak of his confidence in the future?
2. On what did he base his confidence?
3. What is to be said in the light of Scripture about the assumption that Paul was anticipating the return of Christ in his own lifetime?
4. What had Jesus said to the apostles about the time of His second coming?
5. What bearing does this problem have on the fact that Paul wrote as an inspired apostle?
6. What had he written to the Thessalonians about this issue?
7. What did Paul mean when he wrote: "We all shall not sleep, but we shall be changed"?
8. What did he write to the Philippians about the necessity of carrying on his ministry for their sakes?
9. As he faced death, what did he write to Timothy about it?

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10. What warning did Christ give in connection with His coming?
11. What is taught in the Scriptures about the intermediate state.
12. Did Paul discuss the intermediate state of the dead, or did he have in mind the permanent dwelling with the Lord in heaven?
13. How did Paul contrast the physical body with the permanent home in heaven?
14. How does he describe the building from God?
15. What had been the attitude of some toward the resurrection?
16. What had Paul written to the Corinthians in his first epistle about the kind of body they were to have in the resurrection?
17. How had he described the resurrection body to the Philippians?
18. What did the apostle John say about it?
19. What did Paul have in mind when he spoke of the physical body as a tabernacle or tent?
20. How had Peter referred to his physical body as he anticipated death?
21. Why did Paul say that the building from God is not made with hands?
22. What kind of a city was Abraham looking for?
23. How did Peter describe the salvation which will be revealed at the close of this age?
24. How explain Paul's deep emotions arising from the things he suffered in the body?
25. What does "not be found naked" mean?
26. What was the attitude of the Greeks about being free from the body?
27. How did Paul expect that which is mortal to be swallowed by life?
28. What did he mean by the earnest of the Spirit? Why did he mention it here? Where may we read about it?
29. What does it mean to walk by faith?
30. Why did he speak of being at home with the Lord?
31. What did Paul write to the Thessalonians about the things that will happen when Christ comes again?
32. Why did Paul make it his aim to be well-pleasing to God?
32. Why was he trying to persuade men to obey God?
34. What is the judgment-seat of Christ? By what other figures is the Judgment described?
35. What did Paul tell the men of Athens about the Judgment?
36. What did the writer of Ecclesiastes say about it?

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37. What does the Book of Revelation say about it?
38. What did Paul write to the Romans about it?
39. What did Jesus say about the Judgment?
40. What were the controlling forces in Paul's ministry?
41. What place does fear—reverence for God—have in the life of the Christian?
42. What was Paul persuading men to do?
43. How is this illustrated by his efforts at Thessalonica?
44. What pattern did Paul follow in his work of persuading men?
45. How had Paul been influenced by the effort of Stephen to persuade men of the truth of the gospel?
46. Why did Paul say, "We are made manifest to God"?
47. Why did he again raise the issue of self-commendation?
48. What answer was given to those who insinuated that Paul was out of his mind?
49. What caused Paul to realize the compelling force of the love of Christ?
50. What is meant by "one died for all"?
51. On what is the doctrine of "substitutionary atonement" based?
52. On what is the doctrine of "limited atonement" based?
53. How does Paul's statement about the death of Christ in I Cor. 15:3 help to understand what he wrote about it in II Cor. 5:14-15?
54. What is the doctrine of "irresistible grace"?
55. What is its bearing on the doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints"?
56. What are some of the things involved in the doctrine of predestination?
57. What is the "commercial theory" of the atonement?
58. What do the Scriptures teach about the death of Christ in its various relationships?
59. What did Paul mean by, "therefore all died"?
60. Why did Christ die for all sinners?
61. Why did the death of Christ change Paul's views about men and Christ?
62. Why does Paul speak of the fact that God gave him the ministry of reconciliation?
63. What is meant by: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"?
64. What do the Scriptures teach about the deity of Jesus? About the unity of the Father and the Son?

CHAPTER FIVE

65. Why is it stated that God did not reckon their trespasses unto men?
66. What is an ambassador? How does this describe Paul's ministry?
67. What do the Scriptures say about the sinlessness of Jesus?
68. What do the words, "he made sin on our behalf" mean?
69. What is meant by: "that we might become the righteousness of God in him"?

For Discussion

1. What is the place of punishment as a motivating force to obedience in the home? the school? the state? to God?
2. How does it compare with love in these areas?

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis

- A. Paul told how he had endeavored to keep his ministry of reconciliation blameless (1-10).
1. He gave some additional information about the ministry of reconciliation (1-2).
 - a) He was working together with God (1a).
 - b) He strongly urged the Corinthians not to receive the gracious favor of God in vain (b).
 - c) He gave his reasons for this exhortation (2).
 - (1) It was based on the Scripture that told how the Lord had listened to the cry of His people and had helped them when they needed salvation.
 - (2) He explained that the acceptable time, the day of salvation, is now.
 2. He explained how he had kept his ministry blameless (3-4a).
 - a) He gave no occasion for anyone to stumble because of him.
 - b) He followed this course that his ministry might be blameless.
 3. He listed the areas in which his ministry was blameless (4b-7a).
 - a) He had patiently endured in (1) afflictions, (2) necessities (3) distresses, (4) stripes, (5) imprisonments, (6) tumults, (7) labors, (8) watchings, and (9) fastings.
 - b) He listed eight more areas in which his ministry was blameless. They were in (1) pureness, (2) knowledge, (3) longsuffering, (4) kindness, (5) holy spirit, (6) love unfeigned, (7) word of truth, and (8) power of God.
 4. He told of the means by which he had carried on his blameless ministry (7b-8a). They were (1) weapons of righteousness, (2) glory and dishonor, and (3) evil report and good report.
 5. He explained the manner in which he had served (8b-10). He had done so (1) as unknown, yet well known; (2) as dying, and behold we live; (3) as chastened, and not

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killed; (4) as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; and (5) as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

B. Based on his blameless ministry, Paul made a strong appeal to be accepted by the Corinthians (11-18).

1. He plead for reciprocal affections (11-13).
 - a) In doing so, he spoke openly to them.
 - b) He reminded them of his enlarged affection, for there was room in his heart for all of them.
 - c) The only limit was on their part, not his.
 - d) He urged them to enlarge their hearts for him, for they were his children in the Lord.
2. He plead for complete separation from unbelievers and their contaminating practices (14-18).
 - a) What this meant to their lives (14-16a).
 - (1) They were not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers.
 - (2) Righteousness and iniquity cannot be partners.
 - (3) Light and darkness cannot mix.
 - (4) Christ and Belial cannot be in agreement.
 - (5) Faith has no part with unbelief.
 - (6) The temple of God cannot be based on the same foundation as an idol's temple.
 - b) Why he plead for this separation (16b-17a).
 - (1) God said, "I will dwell in them and walk in their midst."
 - (2) He also said, "I will be their God and they my people."
 - (3) The Lord also said, "Come out from among them and be ye separate; touch no unclean thing."
 - c) The promise of the Lord God Almighty to those who respond (17b-18).
 - (1) I will receive you.
 - (2) I will be your Father.
 - (3) You will be My sons and daughters.

The Blameless Ministry

Scripture

6:1-10. And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain 2 (for he saith,

At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee,

And in a day of salvation did I succor thee:

behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation): 3 giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed; 4 but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; 6 in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Comments

And working together with him.—While the words "with him" do not appear in the Greek, the context makes it clear that Paul as an ambassador on behalf of Christ was working together with God. He had spoken of himself and Apollos as God's fellow-workers in his first epistle. See I Cor. 3:9. Each of them had his own work to do, but God gave the increase. Paul and Apollos were fellow-workers who belonged to God.

Those who teach and preach the gospel must work together to present the message of reconciliation effectively. But they should also remember that they are privileged to work with God in this ministry, for God through this means is reconciling the world unto Himself.

receive not the grace of God in vain.—This was no idle warning. The Corinthians were in constant danger of forsaking the truth which Paul had delivered to them because of the presence of false teachers in their midst.

This was also true of almost every church that had been taught the gospel by Paul. False teachers came to Antioch and caused even Peter and Barnabas to be influenced by their claims. They went so far as to refuse to eat with Gentile Christians. Paul had to set the matter straight and resist Peter to the face. Paul showed him that he had been crucified with Christ and that Christ was living in him. Therefore he was not making the grace of God a meaningless thing. See Gal. 2:11-21.

There is a serious question about much of the program of the church today: Does it make the grace of God meaningless? Is the Word of the Cross foolishness to those who should count it, as Paul did, the very power to save the believer? Too often the church resembles a club composed of nice people, but with little to remind one of the body of Christ. Is the first business of the church being neglected? Is the church actually seeking to save the lost?

The church, in altogether too many cases, has become a tree without fruit. It should be called upon to repent and do its first work, just as Jesus called on Ephesus to do. It needs to be like the disciples in Jerusalem who "went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4).

The grace of God is made meaningless when we fail to live in such a manner that it becomes evident that Christ lives in us. It is made meaningless when we fail to share the gospel of His grace with others. The driving force in the life of Paul was this: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). *for he saith.*—The pronoun is inferred from the context and suggests that God is speaking through the Scriptures. The quotation is from Isa. 49:8 where it is introduced with the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord."

In the absence of the pronoun in our text, it would be equally correct to say, "The Scripture says," for God is the Author of the sacred writings. See Heb. 3:7-11 where the quotation from Psalm 95:8-11 is introduced with the statement, "The Holy Spirit saith." These statements all say one thing: The Bible is the Word of God. It is His message of reconciliation, for He heard the cry of His people and came to their rescue in "the day of salvation."

behold, now is the acceptable time.—The whole gospel age is the time of salvation. It began on Pentecost and will end when Christ comes again. It is the time during which God welcomes home sinners who repent.

Men should welcome the opportunity to be saved while it is here. They should be like prisoners who welcome release; like the blind who welcome sight; like the lost who welcome the Savior. See Luke 4:16-22.

No one knows when the longsuffering of God will end and the day of salvation will be over. See II Pet. 3:8-13; Matt. 25: 10-13. We do know that death closes the door for every man. See Luke 16:31; John 8:21. But now is the day of salvation!

giving no occasion of stumbling.—Since God was entreating men

through Paul, the apostle carried out his ministry in a blameless manner. This involved two things: (1) preaching the Word, and (2) living the Christlike life. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. To him, the Word of the Cross was not an empty thing. He determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He knew that God saves the believer through the foolishness of the thing preached by His inspired apostles. He lived so that he could say, "Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20).

Paul was not like the Jewish religionists who had caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. See Rom. 2:24. They failed to practice what they taught. They abhorred idols, but robbed pagan temples for the gold and precious stones of which their idols were made. They gloried in the law, but dishonored it by their transgressions. See Rom. 2:17-24.

The way of salvation is strewn with stumbling blocks left by those who fail to preach the truth and live by its standard. The preacher should be able to say with Paul, "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ."

False teachers were real stumbling blocks in the pathway of the Corinthians. Paul had good reason to warn against them. See 6:14-7:1. Such protruding rocks in the pathway of salvation can cause many to be lost.

There were, of course, those who without cause found fault with Paul's ministry. They criticized his message because they preferred the wisdom of men to the wisdom that came down from above. They impugned his motives, implying that he preached for the sake of money. See II Cor. 11:6-15.

Every faithful gospel minister is subject to the same attacks. When they come, he should remember the word of Paul to Timothy, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3).

in much patience.—Paul developed the thought of his blameless ministry, he told of the areas in which he served God. He listed nine of them.

Patience is the first of these areas. It is the ability to endure trials. It is represented by the soldier who withstands the attack of the enemy and remains in his position after the wave of battle has rolled on. It is genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that produces this ability to stand up under the trials of this life. Such patient endurance leads to God's approval which is represented by the crown of life. See James 1:2-4, 12.

Paul wrote to the Romans saying, "We also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness, and steadfastness approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

in afflictions.—Trials, distresses, and afflictions beset the way of those who journey toward the heavenly home. The writer of Hebrews listed some of the trials through which men of faith have passed. See Heb. 11:32-12:2. Those who run the race set before them find encouragement in the example of those who have endured the trials.

Jesus reminded His disciples that in this world they were to expect tribulation. But He said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Paul told the churches of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch that through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of God. See Acts 14:21-22. Peter wrote to the early Christians saying, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials among you which cometh upon you to prove you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice: that at the revelation of his glory ye may rejoice with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:12-13). John wrote to the seven churches of Asia reminding them that he was a partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Christ Jesus. See Rev. 1:9.

in necessities.—Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his first epistle using this word to describe the distress, whatever it was, that they were facing at that time. Depressions, wars, and the like are all accompanied with distress. Paul said, "I take pleasure in weakness, in injuries, in necessities in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Cor. 12:10).

In this context, necessities seem to be those circumstances in which the Christian may be compelled to undergo various hardships. Patience would certainly be needed in necessities. Paul needed it in his blameless ministry.

in distresses.—The term suggests narrow confinement produced by pressures. Paul had experienced it while waiting to learn about the situation at Corinth. That pressure had prevented his carrying on an evangelistic effort at Troas. But his patience in the distress brought ultimate triumph.

in stripes.—This is a reference to the many beating which Paul endured for the sake of Christ. He had been beaten at Philippi and barely escaped one at Corinth. See Acts 16:23, 37. The Jews had

dragged him before Gallio, the proconsul, and charged him with the guilt of persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. Gallio dismissed the matter for he was not minded to be a judge of such things. Thwarted in their attempt to have Paul punished, the Jews seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and gave him the beating. See Acts 18:12-17. Paul ran into mob violence at Jerusalem at the close of his third missionary journey. Roman soldiers came to his rescue and prevented the mob from killing him. See Acts 21:30-32. Looking back upon such experiences, Paul wrote of his being in "stripes above measure" (II Cor. 12:23). As the servant of God he endured them and fulfilled his ministry blamelessly.

in imprisonments.—On his second journey, even before he reached Corinth, Paul had been unjustly imprisoned. See Acts 16:37. At the close of his third journey as he was about to be torn in pieces by a confused mob, Paul was arrested and put in jail. See Acts 23:10. But "the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer; for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). Paul was taken to Caesarea where he remained in prison for about two years while awaiting settlement of his case before Felix. Festus succeeded Felix and, desiring to keep favor with the Jews, asked Paul if he would be willing to go back to Jerusalem and be tried there. But Paul appealed his case to Caesar, taking advantage of his Roman citizenship and was sent to Rome. Although he entered Rome in chains, he was given certain freedoms which allowed him to continue his ministry of reconciliation. Luke closes the account in these words: "And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all men that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31). During that imprisonment the whole praetorian guard came to know Christ whom Paul preached. See Phil. 1:13. What an example of patient endurance that was!

in tumults.—Riotous mobs set upon Paul on his very first missionary journey. They convinced the people that Paul should be put to death. At Lystra, they stoned him and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. See Acts 14:19. It is significant that out of Lystra, there came one of Paul's most trusted and best loved fellow-workers, Timothy. On his second missionary journey, this young man joined Paul to suffer hardship with him as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. See Acts 16:1-5.

in labors.—Not just ordinary work, but toil that meant pain and suffering. Those who suppose that the ministry is an easy life should read the story of Paul's activities in his blameless ministry.

Paul listed the hardships he suffered without so much as a hint of complaint. He patiently endured them as a servant of God. See Col. 1:24-29.

in watchings.—This may have been one of those occasions when Paul had stood guard over one who was wrestling with his problems that involved his being reconciled to God.

in fastings.—Paul and Barnabas had been set aside to this ministry after the church at Antioch, acting upon the instructions from the Holy Spirit, had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them. See Acts 13:1-3. Fasting was not merely depriving one's self of food; it was abstaining from food in order to give one's entire thought to his relationship to God. This exercise, also, required patience on the part of the servant of God.

in pureness.—Pureness like patience was an area in which Paul was blameless. Purity in mind and heart characterized his ministry.

in knowledge.—Paul's knowledge was based solidly on the divinely revealed wisdom of God rather than on the speculative theories of men. Jesus said, "If ye had recognized me, ye would have known the Father also" (John 14:7). Paul's knowledge centered in Christ. He said, "I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). Such knowledge is necessary if the servant of God is to have a blameless ministry.

in longsuffering.—This term emphasizes the long periods of time during which one is able to hold up under trials. Paul said, "Love suffers long and is kind" (I Cor. 13:4). Longsuffering is a mark of those who belong to Jesus Christ. See Gal. 5:22-24.

in kindness.—Love expresses itself in kindness. Paul said, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). Unkind words or deeds have no place in a blameless ministry.

in the Holy Spirit.—As an apostle, Paul was under the control of the Holy Spirit when he spoke and wrote. The Spirit directed him in specific instances as he went about his work for the Lord. He had all the powers of an apostle. He performed miracles, even raising the dead. He spoke in foreign languages under the power of the Holy Spirit. He and the other apostles were, of course, responsible for

their response to the revealed truth of God just as any Christian is. See Gal. 2:11-21.

Since this is one of the areas in which Paul carried on a blameless ministry, it is quite possible that he was referring to his own spirit which was holy, for he had separated himself from all defilement of flesh and spirit when he became a Christian.

in love unfeigned.—Writing to the Romans, Paul said, "Let love be without hypocrisy" (Rom. 12:9). John writes, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

in word of truth.—This is the message of reconciliation that told the truth about God's love and grace that made it possible for sinners to be saved.

in the power of God.—Paul, of course, was fully aware of the fact that the message which had been revealed to him was the gospel. He was convinced that the gospel was the power of God to save the believer. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they might be strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inward man. This was the same power that the Lord used in the wilderness temptation as He defeated the devil with the Word of God. In each temptation, He answered the challenge of Satan with a "Thus it is written." The Christian can also defeat Satan by following the example of Christ. See Eph. 3:16-17; 6:10-18.

This is the armor which is on the right hand and on the left, suggesting both the offensive and defensive aspects of the whole armor of God. For example, the sword of the Spirit would be in the right hand, but the shield of faith on the left.

by glory and dishonor.—There were those who sought to discredit every work of Paul and bring dishonor upon him. But there were many who approved his efforts to proclaim the gospel to save them. The converts to Christ at Corinth were like a monument to his faithfulness in teaching them the truth that had reconciled them to God.

Our Lord faced a similar situation in His ministry. Many glorified Him as they listened to the gracious words that fell from His lips. Many even of the rulers believed on Him, but they did not acknowledge Him openly because they loved the glory—approval—of men more than the glory of God. See John 12:43. But there were some who sought constantly for an excuse to discredit Him in the eyes of the people and finally succeeded on having Him crucified.

by evil report and good report.—Paul carried on this ministry in a blameless manner despite the fact that his enemies sought to destroy it by evil reports. See II Cor. 10:10-12. Paul's defense against all such reports was this: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (II Cor. 10:17).

There are those who attempt to vilify preachers of the gospel by vicious gossip. Paul pointed out the only protection in such cases: His message and his life were blameless in the sight of the Lord.

as deceivers, and yet true.—This is the beginning of a series of clauses by which Paul shows the manner in which he conducted himself as a servant of God. Some said that he was leading men astray. Some believed he opposed the Law of Moses. But this was not true, for he "had done nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). The Jews had made similar charges against Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees, appearing before Pilate after the crucifixion, referred to Him as "that deceiver." His resurrection showed how wrong they were.

as unknown, and yet well known.—At one time Paul had been well known as a persecutor of the church. He had actually tried to destroy the church of God. See Gal. 1:13-14; Acts 9:1-2. At Athens, however, Greek philosophers thought of him as an unknown babbler. He was preaching Jesus and the resurrection, but they thought he was speaking about some foreign god. Nothing he said resembled any system of philosophy worthy of their attention. See Acts 17:18. He had no standing among the professional of that day. See II Cor. 11:6. He was like Peter and John who were called ignorant and unlearned. See Acts 4:13. But Paul's credentials which the Lord furnished him established him as an ambassador of Christ working with God in his blameless ministry of reconciliation.

as dying, and behold, we live.—As the servant of God he was "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in his own body" (II Cor. 4:10). They thought he was dead at Lystra, but as sorrowing disciples stood about him he rose up and went into the city and on the next day proceeded on his journey. See Acts 14:20.

as chastened, and not killed.—Some assume that this is chastening from the Lord and cite such passages as Psalms 118:17-18 and Proverbs 3:11-12 (quoted in Hebrews 12:3-5) to support their view.

It is hard to see how "chastened, and not killed" could refer to

God's treatment of His apostle. But because he was a servant of God, he was punished by men on many occasions. Although men sought to kill him, the providence of God watched over him and prevented them from doing so.

as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.—The Corinthians knew very well the sorrow they had caused him. See 2:1-11. Despite that sorrow he was able to rejoice over those who were faithful. See also Phil. 4:1; I Pet. 1:8; James 1:2-3.

as poor, yet making many rich.—When Paul wrote to the Philippians to thank them for the many times they had helped him, he said "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am in, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want" (Phil. 4:11-12). Then he told his secret: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Paul had come to Corinth in want and for a time had supported himself by working as a tentmaker. See II Cor. 11:9; Acts 18:1-4. But the Corinthians knew how rich they had been made in spiritual things through the gospel ministry of Paul. See I Cor. 9:11; II Cor. 8:9.

as having nothing, yet possessing all things.—In connection with the incident of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus, Peter said, "Lo, we have left our own, and followed thee. And he said to them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come eternal life" (Luke 18: 28-30). And to the Philippians Paul wrote, "I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God, and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:18-19). Jesus told about the man who filled his barns to bursting. When he had done so, God said to him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20-21).

All the issues which Paul mentioned in this list can be illustrated from his own ministry, and many of them from the ministry of Christ. In a very real sense Christ lived in him.

*Scripture**The Plea For Acceptance*

6:11-18 Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections. 13 Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged.

14 Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore

Come ye out from among
them, and be ye separate,

saith the Lord,

And touch no unclean thing;
And I will receive you,
18 And will be to you a Father,
And ye shall be to me sons and daughters,

Comments

Our mouth is open unto you.—Paul had urged the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. He continued the appeal by urging them to accept him as the servant of God through whom the message of grace and reconciliation had been preached to them. With a clear message, a pure heart, and sincere motives he urged them to understand his great love for them.

Ye are not straitened in us.—The place the Corinthians occupied in the affections of Paul was not limited. His deep concern for them had led him to do more for them than for any other congregation among the many he had established. If there was any limitation, it was in their love for him. Some of them had come under the influence of false teachers and were failing to show proper respect for him as the one who had taught them to love the Lord. See I Cor. 4:14-21.

Now for a recompense in like kind.—Since Paul had boldly declared

his love for them, he appealed to them as his children in Christ to demonstrate the same love for him.

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.—Some have assumed that it would have been impossible for Paul to have written these words immediately after the fervent declaration of his deep love for them. They seem to think that the contrast is too great and that he could not have changed from the expression of love to one of criticism which they assume characterizes this passage. See 6:14-7:1.

On these assumptions they build still another: That this section must have been taken from some other letter which he had written at another time. The absence of manuscript evidence to support the theory argues strongly against it. It also fails on two other counts: (1) This section, rather than being a rebuke is a continuation of Paul's earnest appeal for the Corinthians to rid themselves of whatever thing that had caused them to limit their love for the one who had led them to Christ and whose love for them was like that of a father. (2) Paul's writings abound in such sharp contrasts. For example, see his condemnation of the works of the flesh in contrast to his praise of the fruit of the spirit in Gal. 5:16-24. He did not hesitate to speak freely about his deep sorrow over someone who had fallen away from Christ and in the next moment tell of his joy as he contemplated the victory through Christ for all those who remain faithful to Him.

with unbelievers.—This passage is invariably interpreted as having to do with marriage. But there is no evidence in the context to show that Paul had this subject in mind at all. He had discussed that subject at length in the first epistle. See I Cor. 7:1-40. There, he indicated that marriage should be within the regulation of the Lord. He also gave instruction for the believer who was married to an unbeliever. The life of the believer was to be such that the unbelieving partner might be led to salvation in Christ. See also I Pet. 3:1-2. There is no question, of course, that it would be better for both husband and wife to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this context, Paul seems to be referring to those unbelievers who were disturbing the church and keeping them from the proper attitude of Christian love toward him. The series of questions that follow shows the utter incompatibility of belief and unbelief.

what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity?—Can righteousness and lawlessness be partners? Some at Corinth seemed to think that these opposites could be yoked together. See I Cor. 5:1-13 for an attempt to do so.

The Corinthians were not the only ones who have tried to do this. Some church people today excuse their "bent to sinning" by blaming Adam for their "sinful nature" and insist that John said that "we sin every day." They miss the message of I John 1:8 by failing to read what he wrote in I John 3:1-10. They miss Paul's point in Rom. 7:17 by failing to read Rom. 6:16-18.

light with darkness?—These opposites cannot be yoked together as one team. John says, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). Then he adds, "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:6-7).

Still some argue that there are "no such absolutes" in the Christian life. They insist that there must be some mixing of light and darkness, for "we all sin; nobody is perfect." Nobody is perfect in the sense that he cannot commit an act of sin. See I John 2:1-2. But the fact remains that the Bible allows no such mixing of light and darkness. James says that God is the "Father of lights, with whom there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17). Then he adds, "wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:21-22).

Christ with Belial?—Belial is Satan. Yoking a believer with an unbeliever is like attempting to yoke Christ with Satan. Could there possibly be any accord between Christ and the devil? What is there that belongs to the believer and at the same time to the unbeliever? Not Christ, nor salvation, nor heaven!

temple of God with idols?—How could there possibly be any agreement between the temple where the Spirit of God dwells and a pagan temple where idols are kept? This is the climax of Paul's argument showing that the believers at Corinth were not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Paul had warned them of the punishment for destroying the temple of God. See I Cor. 3:16-17. Were they willing to risk destruction of the temple of God by attempting to mix unbelievers and believers in the church?

God had promised Israel that He would be in them and dwell in their midst and be their God. They were to be His people, but on the condition that they separate themselves from every unclean thing.

Then He would be like a father to them and they would be like sons and daughters to Him. Will God tolerate anything less in the church?

Summary

As an ambassador of Christ, working together with God, Paul urged the Corinthians not to receive the gracious gift of righteousness as if it were an empty, meaningless thing. He reminded them of the prophetic word in which God had said to Israel, "At an acceptable time, I heard you, and in a day of salvation I came to help you." Paul explained it by saying that the acceptable time is now, and the day of salvation is now. The whole Christian age that began on Pentecost and will end when Christ comes again is the day of salvation. But no individual has more than a lifetime in which to accept it. The Corinthians were in danger of failing to respond to the urgent plea to be reconciled to God. Paul had been careful not to give offense to anyone, so that no one could blame him if one should fail to respond to God's plea to be reconciled to Him.

Paul's ministry was blameless in areas ranging from patience to power of God. He carried it on by weapons of righteousness, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report. He served as one who was unknown, yet well known; as one who was dying, but to the amazement of the disciples, he lived; as one severely punished, but not killed; as one who knew the meaning of sorrow, yet he always rejoiced; as having nothing, yet he possessed all things, for he was a child of the heavenly Father.

Looking back on this frank explanation of his motives and experiences of his ministry in their behalf, Paul plead with the Corinthians to make room for him in their affections. His mouth was open, for he had been speaking openly and freely of his love for them. In his heart there was ample space for all the Christians at Corinth. Any restriction of affection was on their part, not his. He urged them to make room for him in their hearts.

Evidently the attack of false teachers on Paul had caused some of the Corinthians to have an improper regard for him. It became necessary for him to follow his declaration of love for them with a sharp warning: "Stop becoming unequally yoked with unbelievers." The Old Testament regulation forbade yoking animals of different species together. See Deut. 22:10. Putting an unbeliever in the same yoke with a believer was as bad as yoking an ox and an ass together. Believers in Christ are not in the same class with unbelievers.

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To assume that this was a reference to the marriage of the Christian and an unbeliever is to miss the main import of the lesson. Some Christians at Corinth were married to unbelievers, and Paul had reminded them of their opportunity to win the unbelieving partner to Christ.

Paul ordered them to stop the practice of being yoked with unbelievers without saying who the unbelievers were. We know he had ordered them to deliver the immoral person to Satan. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." Those who were denying the resurrection were like "evil companionships that corrupt good morals." False apostles were ministers of Satan; they were to quit associating with such unbelievers.

Paul used a series of contrasts to illustrate what he meant. Righteousness and lawlessness are opposites and cannot be mixed. The same is true of light and darkness. Christ has nothing in common with the devil. God's temple cannot rest on the same foundation as that of the temple of an idol. Believers cannot be linked with unbelievers.

Christians are to be separated from the defilements of sin so that God may dwell in their midst. Then He can be as a father to them, and they as sons and daughters to Him.

Questions

1. What are the two topics discussed in this chapter? How are they related?
2. With whom was Paul working in his ministry of reconciliation?
3. How had he described the relationship between himself and Apollos?
4. What was their relationship to God?
5. What danger did the church at Corinth face that caused Paul to urge them not to receive the grace of God in vain?
6. To what favor from did he refer?
7. How could it be made vain?
8. How does the conduct of Peter and Barnabas at Antioch illustrate Paul's meaning in this context?
9. How had Paul conducted himself so as to avoid making the grace of God vain? See Gal. 2:20.
10. What was the real motivating force in the life and ministry of Paul?
11. What is the first business of the church?
12. Why may the following expressions be considered synonymous:

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"Thus saith the Lord," "The Scripture says," and "The Holy Spirit says"?

13. What is the meaning of the text which Paul quoted from Isaiah?
14. How did he apply it to the situation at Corinth?
15. What is the Day of Salvation?
16. When did it begin and when will it end?
17. What did Peter say about the longsuffering of God?
18. Why was Paul eager to have a blameless ministry?
19. How did he accomplish his goal?
20. How had some Jews caused the name of God to be blasphemed?
21. What were some of the stumbling blocks in the pathway of the Corinthian Christians?
22. How harmonize Paul's view of a blameless ministry with the constant criticism brought against him?
23. In what areas was Paul's blameless ministry carried on?
24. By what means did he carry it on?
25. In what manner was it done?
26. What does "patience" mean?
27. In what things did he exercise patience?
28. What does Hebrews say about the trials of the faithful?
29. What did Jesus say about the trials of His disciples?
30. What did Peter say about the trials that were coming upon the brethren?
31. What did Paul mean by "necessities"?
32. What are some of the distressing situations in which he exercised patience?
33. What are some of the situations in which Paul showed patience in stripes?
34. What is the history of Paul's imprisonments?
35. When and how did Paul meet the violence of riotous mobs?
36. How did Paul patiently endure his labors?
37. What were those occasions which Paul called "watchings"?
38. What place did fasting have in the consecration of Saul and Barnabas to their ministry?
39. Why did Paul abstain from food in his blameless ministry?
40. What was the source of Paul's knowledge? How did it help in a blameless ministry?
41. What does longsuffering mean? How does it differ from patience?
42. What place did kindness have in the ministry of Paul?

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43. What are two ways to understand the expression "in the Holy Spirit" as it is used in this context?
44. Why did Paul speak of love as being "unfeigned"?
45. What is the message of the word of truth as Paul delivered it?
46. How was Paul's ministry carried on in the power of God?
47. What is the armor of righteousness?
48. Why did he say, "on the right hand and on the left"?
49. How did he use glory and dishonor in his blameless ministry?
50. How did he make use of good and evil reports?
51. How did Paul react when some looked upon him as a deceiver?
52. Who had used the same term with reference to Jesus?
53. Who had considered Paul an unknown?
54. What credentials did he have to prove that he was well known to God?
55. To what incident may Paul have referred when he spoke of himself "as dying, and behold, we live"?
56. Why was Paul subjected to chastening? By whom?
57. How did he face sorrow?
58. In view of his own poverty, how was he making many rich?
59. As one who had nothing, how could he possess all things?
60. How did Paul express his frankness in speaking to the Corinthians?
61. What did he mean when he said, "You are not restricted in us"?
62. What did he ask of them in return?
63. What did he mean by: "Be no unequally yoked with unbelievers"?
64. Why did he mention the absolute contrast between righteousness and lawlessness?
65. How does the lesson to light and darkness teach the same thing?
66. What promise had God made to Israel?
67. What bearing did this have on the issue at Corinth?

For Discussion

1. What are some of the ways in which we may work together to serve God?
2. What are some of the things in the church today that may cause some to stumble?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Analysis

- A. Paul appealed to the Corinthians to separate themselves completely from the defilement of the sinful practices of their times, that they might be holy before God (1-3).
1. He based his appeal on promises of God which he had just quoted (1).
 2. Then he made a strong appeal for them to accept him (2-3).
 - a) He asked them to make room for him in their hearts—receive him as a guest in their lives (2a).
 - b) He gave his reasons for asking them to do this (2b).
 - (1) He had wronged no one.
 - (2) He had corrupted no one.
 - (3) He had taken advantage of no one.
 - c) He explained why he said this: It was not to condemn them, for they were in his heart to live and to die (3).
- B. Paul reminded them of his frankness in speaking to them about his comfort and joy (4-13a).
1. He told them about his great frankness and his pride in them that had resulted in overflowing joy in all his afflictions (4).
 2. He explained about the afflictions which he had suffered (5-7).
 - a) In Macedonia, there was no rest for his flesh, but affliction on every side. Without, there were fightings; within, there were fears.
 - b) He had received relief and comfort through the presence of Titus, after meeting him in Macedonia (6-7).
 - (1) His affliction in Macedonia: No rest for his flesh.
 - (2) The comfort from God who comforts the depressed:
 - (a) Through the presence of Titus.
 - (b) Through the report of Titus about their longing, mourning and zeal.
 3. He explained his attitude toward the letter which he had written, that is, First Corinthians (8-13a).
 - a) He did not regret sending the letter, but he did regret that he had caused them sorrow for a while (8).
 - b) But he rejoiced in the outcome of the matter (9-11).
 - (1) Their sorrow which was according to God had pro-

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duced repentance, but resulted in no loss for them.

(2) He explained sorrow and repentance (10-11).

(a) Sorrow according to God produces repentance that leads to salvation.

(b) Sorrow of the world—sorrow that is involved in sin—leads to death.

(c) Sorrow according to God had produced (11):

i) Vindication of themselves.

ii) Indignation toward the sinner.

iii) Fear or reverence for God.

iv) Longing for a life of righteousness.

v) Zeal for a life of purity in Christ.

vi) Avenging of wrong by reproving the sinner.

vii) Innocence of further wrongdoing demonstrated by following the instruction of Paul had given them.

c) He explained why he wrote the letter (12-13a).

(1) It was not for the sake of the offender nor the one offended, but for their earnest care in the sight of God for the things He had caused to be written by the apostle Paul.

(2) It was for this reason that he was comforted (13a).

C. Paul told them about his joy and comfort over the way they had received Titus (13b-16).

1. In addition to being comforted over the response to his letter, he rejoiced over the way they had welcomed Titus (13b).

2. Paul had not been put to shame for his boasting to Titus about their obedience (14).

3. Titus' feeling for them overflowed as he remembered their obedience, for they had received him in fear and trembling (15).

4. Paul rejoiced in the fact that he had been able to depend on them (16).

Appeal for Purity

Scripture

7:1-3. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse our-

selves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we corrupted no man, we took advantage of no man. 3 I say it not to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together.

Comments

Having therefore these promises.—Paul now draws his conclusion from the argument which proved the absolute incompatibility between righteousness and iniquity. There follows a two-fold appeal: (1) That which involved cleansing and purity with reverence for God; (2) the appeal for the Corinthians to accept Paul.

The promises as indicated in this context are: (1) that the living God would dwell in them and walk in them; and that He would be their God and they would be His people; (2) that the living God would be their Father and that they would be His sons and daughters. These promises conditioned upon the separation from the defilement of sin were first made to the nation of Israel. The history of that nation shows how God in a remarkable way was in the midst of His people, giving them victories and blessing when they consecrated themselves to Him, but bringing affliction and punishment upon them when they failed to walk according to their agreement with Him. Because that nation, with the exception of a small number of faithful ones, ultimately failed to appreciate the promises that God had made to them, He made a new covenant that involved believers whether Jews or Gentiles. And to this new nation He said, "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10). Then He promised, "I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12). These blessings were involved in the promise that God had made to Abraham. See Gal. 3:8-14, 29. This was made known on the Day of Pentecost to those who repented of their sins and got themselves baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Peter said, "To you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (Acts 2:39). Peter speaks of these precious and exceeding great promises by which the Christians have escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust that they may become partakers of Deity. II Pet. 1:4.

let us cleanse ourselves for all defilement of flesh and spirit.—Are

we to assume when Paul says "Let us" that he was guilty of the same defiling sins which the Corinthians had been practicing? This could scarcely harmonize with the appeal that he had made for the Corinthians to imitate him even as he imitated Christ. I Cor. 11:1. Nor does it harmonize with the fact that he had buffeted his body and brought it into bondage lest after having preached to others he should become disqualified. I Cor. 9:27. Neither does it harmonize with his claim that Christ lived in him. Gal. 2:20. Those who hold that he was defiled just as the Corinthians are fond of quoting his remarks: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" Rom. 7:18. But Paul had said in Rom. 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your body, that you should obey the lust thereof." The only possible way to harmonize these two statements is to regard the first one as a reference to Paul before he became a Christian. At one time he like the Romans before they became Christians had been a servant of sin, but they became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto they were delivered and were made free from sin that they might become servants of righteousness. Rom. 6:17-18. Why then does Paul say, "Let us cleanse ourselves?" Two reasons: (1) because such a thing was possible since he himself had done so; (2) Paul was aware that it was necessary for him as well as the Corinthians to be constantly on guard lest he should fall. He had written to them saying "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). But he also indicated that there is no temptation which they could not endure by following the way which God has provided. With the shield of faith the Christian can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. Eph. 6:16. Not even the apostle Paul could afford to lay down the armor of God until he had fought the good fight of the faith, being faithful unto death.

from all defilement of flesh and spirit.—By flesh and spirit Paul meant the whole life, body and mind. While he used "flesh and spirit" in a figurative sense as he discussed the works of the flesh in Gal. 5:16-24, here he is using it in the literal sense referring to the physical body. The Corinthians lived in an environment of immorality. He had written to them that they should in no way get themselves mixed up with those who practiced such things. I Cor. 5:8. He had reminded them that their bodies were to be considered as a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20). Those who hold that there is inherent sin in the body are at variance with what

Paul teaches on the subject, for one can, and many do, give their bodies to God as instruments of righteousness. Rom. 6:13. In the list of the works of the flesh, Paul not only mentions immorality which defiles the body, but he also lists such things as strife, faction, jealousy, division and the like which defile the spirit. Those who belong to Christ, however, are to be characterized by love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Gal. 5:22-24. To the Colossians, he said, "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." (Col. 3:2). To the Philippians, he wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

How can the Christian who has become defiled cleanse himself? Is he to be baptized again for the remission of his sins? The case of Simon answers the problem. Along with the other Samaritans, he had been baptized into Christ; but he fell into serious sin when he thought that he could obtain the gift of God with money. Peter said to him, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). John, writing to Christians, says "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7-2:2). We have an obligation to one another in this matter. Paul wrote to the Galatians saying, "Brethren, if man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). James wrote to his brethren to say, "If any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—Holiness as used in this context is the state of the one who separates himself from sin and its defilement, touching no unclean thing. It clearly means the life of purity that follows the cleansing from sin. The object of the cleansing is a life of purity. Paul urges the Corinthians to make their life complete by conducting themselves in God's sight as His children who refuse to be defiled by sinful practices.

"Perfecting holiness" does not mean perfectionism, for that as-

sumes that it is possible for the individual to reach the state in which it is impossible for him to commit an act of sin. While John makes it clear that it is impossible for a man to go on sinning while he is conducting himself in harmony with the Word of God, he also recognizes the possibility of a sin being committed by any man who does not walk in the light of God's Word (I John 3:9; 2:1).

In this day of low moral standards, the church must not only return to the truth of God's Word but also to the purity of genuine Christian living. In this day it is imperative that Christians present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1). Peter said, "As God is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (I Pet. 1:15). Then he explained it, "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as new born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Pet. 2:1-2).

Open your hearts to us.—Paul asked the Corinthians to open their hearts to him and welcome him as a guest. He wanted them to let him come in and abide in their affections. There are certain types of people who cannot be welcomed as guests in one's home. Those who would injure, destroy, or cheat cannot be admitted. But Paul declared that he had accused no one unjustly; he had injured no one; he had not corrupted or destroyed anyone; he had not taken advantage of or cheated anyone. There was, therefore, no reason why they should not receive him into their hearts. Some of Paul's enemies may have been making such charges against him, but it is probably better to consider this as a general characterization of unwanted guests which in no way applied to him.

I say it not to condemn you.—This could mean that some had brought these charges against Paul, but, more likely, he was simply showing that he was not the type of individual that would be excluded from the home and heart of a Christian. He had reminded them (6:11) that his heart was enlarged—there was room in it for all the Corinthians. Now he urges them to make room for him in their hearts and affections. He considered the Corinthians as permanent guests in his affections, for they were in his heart to die together and to live together. This was no temporary thing; they were in his heart to stay.

Remembering all that he had done for them as their spiritual father, how could they refuse to open their hearts and welcome him into their lives?

*Paul's Frankness**Scripture*

7:4-13a. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.

5 For even when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. 6 Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more. 8 For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret it (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season), 9 I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. 12 So although I wrote unto you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God. 13 Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all.

Comments

Great is my boldness of speech.—Some assume that Paul is referring to the great confidence which he had in the Corinthians. While the expression may be translated "confidence" it really refers to one's frankness in speaking out boldly. Paul did speak frankly when he boasted about the willingness of the Corinthians to follow his instructions. See verse 14. Frankness is seen in two issues: (1) he was filled with comfort and (2) he was overflowing with joy in all his afflictions. Paul suffered as anyone else would when he was afflicted. The sting of the lash hurt him as much as it did anyone else. He felt

the pain of hunger and cold as anyone else did. But the joy of knowing that he was the servant of God, bearing the message of reconciliation to all who would accept it, caused his joy to overflow like a river out of its banks and cover the ground as far as one could see. *for even when we were come into Macedonia.*—Paul now describes his distress and shows how God had comforted him in it all.

His anxiety over the situation in Corinth had caused him to go to Troas where he was hoping to find Titus and learn from him about conditions in Corinth. But when he got there, "he had no relief for his spirit," so he went on to Macedonia. There, he says, "Our flesh had no relief." In the first instance it was anxiety of mind and heart as he waited for the report of the action of the church on the instruction he had written them in First Corinthians, particularly in chapter five about the sin of the one who had taken his father's wife thus bringing the whole church into disrepute before the pagans. I Cor. 5:1-13. But his distress in Macedonia seems to have been the result of physical hardships which he suffered. He describes them as *afflictions, fightings and fears*, but gives no details as to their nature. We may assume that those who had been opposing him kept up their steady bombardment of criticism by every means that would bring him distress. Conflicts that were without produced fears within, fears, perhaps, as to whether or not he would be able to complete his mission of reconciling the sinners at Corinth to their God, for this would require repentance and a change of conduct on their part. *He that comforteth the lowly.*—Paul had faced enough to cause him to be depressed, but God who had led him in triumph in Christ in every place had not forsaken him. Although long delayed, God had comforted him by the presence of Titus who he met in Macedonia.

Some have assumed that the section from 2:14-7:6 is a long digression. Paul began it with the reference to his trip to Macedonia to look for Titus without saying whether or not he had found him until he reached 7:6. But we should remember that Paul's meeting Titus and learning from him about the repentance of the Corinthians had filled him to overflowing with joy in all the suffering which he had undergone. It was perfectly logical for him to treat at length his hope and joy and frankness as he told of his love and longing for the Corinthians and urged them to make room for him in their hearts. This, of course, involved their repentance and change of conduct about which he was now ready to write.

and not by his coming only.—It was not the presence of Titus only that brought comfort to Paul, for two other factors were involved:

(1) the fact that Titus himself had been comforted by the Corinthians, and (2) the report Titus made of the attitude of the Corinthians toward Paul. Paul alluded again to their attitude toward Titus in verses 14-15.

while he told us your longing.—The Corinthians had their hearts set on seeing Paul again. While it is true that at one time some arrogant ones among them had suggested that Paul would not come to see them again, every trace of this seems to have been wiped out by the report of Titus. I Cor. 4:18. Titus told him about their lamentation, deep personal mourning, for the things that they had permitted to go on in their midst that had brought the church of God into disrepute before the pagans of their community and caused sorrow to Paul as their father in the gospel. The wrong had been done by disregarding the instruction of the apostle. The Corinthians had shown great zeal for him as their spiritual father by correcting the situation. So while Paul rejoiced at the coming of Titus, he rejoiced even more over the report of their attitude toward him, for that meant their reconciliation to God.

for though I made you sorry with my epistle.—See comment on 2:3-4 as to the identity of this epistle. In the absence of any manuscript evidence to the contrary I assume that this is a reference to First Corinthians. That epistle is full of sharp rebuke for various sins that were being practiced by the church in Corinth. Paul seems now to return to what he had written in 2:5-11 which appears to be a clear reference to the one who was living with his father's wife. See I Cor. 5:1-13. See *Studies in First Corinthians* for comments on that situation.

I do not regret it.—After hearing Titus' report of their reaction to that epistle, Paul writes, "I do not regret it." Then he hastens to add that he had regretted it, that is, not the writing of the epistle but the effect of it for it brought them temporary sorrow. Paul, as their spiritual father, did not take pleasure in causing them sorrow, even though he had to reprove them for their sin with the hope that they might be restored to the life of purity and righteousness in Christ.

I now rejoice.—Again he makes it clear that he was not rejoicing that it had become necessary for him to write so as to bring them sorrow, for his rejoicing was in that which resulted from their sorrow, that is, their repentance. At one point they seem to have been indifferent toward the sin of the one who was living with his father's wife. The instruction which Paul had given had caused them to reverse their attitude and carry out the punishment which had

been ordered by the apostle. Repentance is the change of the mind or the reversal of a decision which is brought about through godly sorrow and results in changed conduct. Two other motivating forces are mentioned in the Scriptures which lead to repentance: (1) the goodness of God (Rom. 2:4) and (2) the impending judgment (Acts 17:30-31).

for ye were made sorry after a godly sort.—Literally, "according to God." This means sorrow as God would have it turn out, for it would lead to repentance. Consequently nothing that Paul had written in his epistle had caused them loss. They had corrected the wrong; they were to forgive the sinner; they were not to allow Satan to have the advantage over them. II Cor. 2:11.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation.—In accord with God's purpose, their sorrow had produced a reversal of their decision about sin. That, in turn, brought about their salvation, and there was no regret in it.

but the sorrow of the world worketh death.—This bold contrast between godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world justifies Paul's rejoicing over the outcome of his epistle. The sorrow of the world involved shame and disgrace and led ultimately to death, for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

For behold, this self-same thing.—Paul now calls upon the Corinthians to observe for themselves what had happened as a result of the sorrow that was according to God: (1) *what earnest care it produced in you*, that is, their eagerness to correct the sin that they had so carelessly allowed to go on in their midst; (2) *clearing of yourselves*, that is, the action they had taken under the instruction of the apostle to clear themselves of involvement in such sins as fornication, covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, extortion and the like. See I Cor. 5:11; (3) *what indignation*, that is, they were indignant that they had allowed one of their members to bring them such disgrace; (4) *what fear*, that is, reverence for God and the word delivered to them through His apostle, lest they be punished with the wrongdoer; (5) *what longing*, that is, their earnest desire for the purity of life to which they had been called in Christ; (6) *what zeal*, that is, their eager response to the directions Paul had written to them, for they had purged out the old leaven that they might no longer be characterized by malice and wickedness; (7) *what avenging*, that is, they had taken the necessary steps to punish the wrongdoer for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. See I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 2:8-11.

Paul was generous on his commendation of the Corinthians, reminding them that in all these things by their swift action they had proved themselves to be innocent of any further wrongdoing.

I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong.—The attitude of the Corinthians which Paul had just described explained his purpose in writing First Corinthians, particularly, chapter five. His purpose was not primarily for the benefit of the one who had done the wrong, nor was it for the one who had suffered the wrong. It was for their concern for the apostle's instruction that had led them to take the necessary steps to clear themselves from guilt of carelessly allowing such practices to go on in their midst. What they had accomplished had been done in the sight of God as they demonstrated their earnest care for Paul.

Another view of this verse assumes that the one who was wronged was Paul, not the father of the man who was living with the father's wife. It assumes that the one who did the wrong was one of his detractors who had sought to discredit him before the Corinthians. This is based on the supposition that the epistle that had caused them sorrow was some other than our First Corinthians. See *Studies in First Corinthians* on chapter five.

Therefore we have been comforted.—Thus Paul closes his remarkable explanation of the effect of Titus' report about conditions in Corinth.

The Joy of Titus

Scripture

7:13a-16. and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit had been refreshed by you all. 14 For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf, I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also which I made before Titus was found to be truth. 15 And his affection is more abundantly toward you, while he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 16 I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you.

Comments

for the joy of Titus.—The magnanimous spirit of Paul is shown in the attitude that he had toward his fellow-workers such as Titus and Timothy. Not only did he write of his own joy at the outcome of the

situation in Corinth, but pointed out that he was particularly happy over the joy of Titus because of the manner in which the Corinthians had received him. They had joined in refreshing his spirit. He may have had some misgiving as to the effect of his mission, but the Corinthians had dispelled all doubt about it by the manner in which they received him.

For if in anything I have gloried to him.—The unselfishness of Paul is manifested in his attitude toward the Corinthians for he did not hesitate to boast about their willingness to respond to the inspired instruction which he had written to them. After receiving the report of Titus he could say, "I was not put to shame." What he had said about them to Titus had been found to be the truth.

And his affection.—The generous affection which Paul had for the Corinthians was shared also by Titus. He remembered how they had obeyed the instruction of Paul. They had received him with utmost concern lest they fall short of complete obedience to it.

I am of good courage concerning you.—The battle had been won. Paul had suffered great anxiety over the situation at Corinth. He had rebuked sin. He had plead earnestly that they make room for him in their affections. Now triumphantly, having achieved the victory, he could say, "I am of good courage concerning you." '

Summary

In the opening verses of this chapter, Paul draws a conclusion from the principles he had just stated in the preceding one. God had called upon His people to separate themselves from every unclean thing and had promised those who did so that He would be their God and they His people. He would be their Father and they His sons and daughters. While Isaiah had written this to Israel, Paul clearly indicates that the same would be true of the Christians at Corinth if they cleansed themselves from those things that were besmearing their lives and defiling their souls. They were to separate themselves from everything that defiles their flesh and spirit—the whole being. Nothing short of complete separation from sin and dedication to a life of purity before God would satisfy the conditions upon which God was to be their Father and they His children.

Paul's concern for the church at Corinth led him to a deep and stirring appeal for them to accept him into their hearts and lives as a guest who was to remain with them. He was the kind of person as their father in the gospel whom they could receive in this manner. They were in his heart to live and to die.

II CORINTHIANS

Paul unhesitatingly spoke of his pride in the church at Corinth. In times of distress, the memory of Corinth brought him comfort; in times of sorrow, the thought of them brought him overflowing joy. He suffered in Macedonia, for he had not rest for his flesh. What hardships these were, he does not say, but they were in all probability the results of persecutions from those who everywhere sought to undermine his work of Christ. There were conflicts accompanied by fears. But when he found Titus in Macedonia and learned of their obedient response to the epistle he had written, he was comforted. God who always led him in triumph also comforted him when he was depressed.

This brought him to the discussion of the effect of the letter he had written (First Corinthians). He did not regret writing it, but he did regret that their sins had led to the rebuke that caused them to be made sorry for a while. But he rejoiced that this sorrow had led to repentance, and repentance to salvation. How different the sorrow of the world, for it led to death. Paul could rejoice that they had been saved from such a death. God's purpose in sorrow had led them to change their ways and punish the sinner in their midst. Respect and reverence for God led them to refuse to be mixed up with sinners who practiced things which the Father would not tolerate. They longed for the purity that He praised and zealously sought the life of righteousness in Christ. Paul could give them a clean bill of health, for they were innocent of any further wrongdoing. This was the very purpose of the letter, for it was not for the sake of the offender nor offended, but that they might all show their earnest concern for the things of God.

Titus had told Paul of the wonderful welcome he had received in Corinth. Paul had boasted to him about the kind of people he would find in the church at Corinth, basically good and willing to obey the Word of God. He had not been put to shame, for Titus had found them to be just what Paul had said. Titus had been deeply moved by the warmth of their welcome. Paul rejoiced that he had been able to depend on them.

Questions

1. What promises had God made to His people through Isaiah?
2. On what conditions were the promises made?
3. What were the Corinthians doing that were like the things practiced by Israel? See I Cor. 5:9-13; 6:12-20.
4. What is meant by "defilement of flesh and spirit"?

CHAPTER SEVEN

5. How were they to cleanse themselves from this defilement?
6. Who are the people of God today?
7. To whom does the promise that God made to Abraham refer?
8. What did Peter say about it as reported in Acts 2:39?
9. What did Paul say about it in Gal. 3:8-14 and 29?
10. Why did Paul say, "Let us cleanse ourselves"?
11. How had Paul avoided defilement? See I Cor. 9:27.
12. Can others do so? See I Cor. 10:13.
13. How, then, can we harmonize this with Paul's statement that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing"?
14. What did Paul say about separation from a life of sin in Rom. 6:17-18?
15. What did Paul say about the shield of faith and the fiery darts of the evil one? See Eph. 6:16.
16. What are the "works of the flesh" as listed in Gal. 5:16-21?
17. What is the fruit of the spirit as listed in Gal. 5:22-24?
18. What obligation do Christians have toward their brethren who may be overtaken in a trespass? See Gal. 6:1.
19. What is holiness? How can it be brought to a state of completion?
20. How did Peter explain the holy life of the children of God?
21. How were the Corinthians to open their hearts to Paul?
22. Why did Paul mention those who injure, destroy and cheat?
23. Is it possible that some may have accused him of these things?
24. Why did Paul speak with great frankness to the Corinthians?
25. On what two issues did he speak frankly at this point?
26. How had Paul become depressed in Macedonia?
27. How had God comforted him at that time?
28. Why did Paul delay mentioning the fact that he had met Titus in Macedonia until 7:6?
29. What in addition to the presence of Titus had brought comfort to Paul?
30. What had been the first effect of Paul's epistle (First Corinthians) on the Corinthians?
31. What did Paul regret about having written the letter?
32. Why did he now rejoice that he had done so?
33. What is "sorrow after a godly sort"?
34. What are the motivating forces that lead to repentance?
35. In what ways is repentance to be shown?
36. To what does repentance lead?

II CORINTHIANS

37. What is the difference between the sorrow of the world and godly sorrow?
38. How had the Corinthians cleared themselves?
39. Against what did they show indignation?
40. What had fear led them to do? What is this fear?
41. How had their zeal been shown?
42. What had they done about the wrongdoer in their midst?
43. How had they proved themselves innocent of further wrongdoing?
44. Who is the one who had done the wrong? Who had been wronged?
45. For whose sake, then, had Paul written to them?
46. How did Paul sum up his attitude toward the report that Titus had given of the situation in Corinth?
47. What had happened to Titus while he was at Corinth?
48. What had Paul told him about the church at Corinth?
49. In what ways did Titus share Paul's views of the Corinthians?
50. Why did Paul say, "I am of good courage concerning you"?

For Discussion

1. What is the relation of "perfectionism" to Paul's teaching about the necessity of a pure life?
2. What are some of the sordid things from which church people must separate themselves in order that they may be sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Analysis

- A. Paul told about the gracious privilege God had given the Macedonian churches, permitting them to share in helping the saints in Judea (1-6).
 - 1. The result of God's grace (1-2).
 - a) The gracious privilege of sharing had been given by God and was still operating in the churches of Macedonia (1).
 - b) Their great joy over this gift, even though they were being put to the test by much affliction and deep poverty, resulted in single-minded devotion expressed in the overflowing wealth of their liberality (2).
 - 2. Paul's testimony as to their response to God's grace (3-5).
 - a) It was according to their ability, even beyond their ability.
 - b) It was of their own accord—they chose to do it.
 - c) It was with great urgency that they begged for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints.
 - d) It was a response beyond anything Paul had hoped for.
 - e) It was the result of having first given themselves to the Lord and to Paul by the will of God.
 - 3. Paul's exhortation to Titus to complete the task he had already begun at Corinth (6).
- B. He gave instruction to enable them to determine the amount of their giving (7-15).
 - 1. Giving in relation to other gracious privileges in which they had abounded (7).
 - a) The principle: They abounded in (1) faith, (2) utterance, (3) knowledge, (4) earnestness, and (5) love.
 - b) The exhortation: Abound in this gracious privilege also.
 - 2. Love as the motivating force in giving (8-9).
 - a) Paul did not issue a command for them to be generous, but appealed to them to show the sincerity of their love (8).
 - b) He reminded them of the example of Christ who, although he was rich, became poor for their sakes that they might become rich (9).

II CORINTHIANS

3. Advice about completing the work which they had already begun (10-15).
 - a) The advice: Since they were the first to begin, Paul's opinion was that they should complete the task according to their ability (10-11).
 - b) The measure:
 - (1) Willingness to give makes the gift acceptable, not the amount (12).
 - (2) Equality (13-15).
 - (a) Not that one should be distressed and another eased (13).
 - (b) Equality that balances want and abundance (14).
 - (c) Example: Scriptural reference to the manna (15).
- C. Paul told them of the mission of Titus and his associates whom he had urged to go to Corinth to assist in this gracious privilege of giving (16-24).
 1. His thanks to God for the concern of Titus for them (16-17).
 - a) God had put the same earnest care in the heart of Titus (16).
 - b) Titus had accepted the task because of his earnest desire to help them (17).
 2. His commendation of Titus and his associates (18-23).
 - a) The first brother (18-21).
 - (1) He had been praised for his work in the gospel throughout all the churches (18).
 - (2) He had been appointed by the churches to go on this mission (19).
 - (3) Paul was thus avoiding any criticism of his handling of the funds (20-21).
 - b) The other brother: With Titus and the first associate, Paul also sent another proven brother who had great confidence in the Corinthians (22).
 - c) Paul's commendation of Titus and the others (23).
 - (1) Titus was his partner and fellow-worker.
 - (2) The other brethren were ones who had been sent by the churches to do a work for the glory of Christ!
 3. His plea for them to give a demonstration of the love and justification of his boasting about them (24).

*The Privilege of Giving**Scripture*

8:1-6. Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: 5 and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. 6 Inasmuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.

Comments

Moreover, brethren.—Paul had written with utmost frankness in defense of his ministry in behalf of the Corinthians and of his deep affection for them. He had reminded them of his unbounded joy in learning from Titus that they had complied with the directions which he had given them in First Corinthians for the correction of certain sinful practices which they had allowed to go on in their congregation.

He was now prepared to take up another matter which he had barely mentioned in the first letter. He had called attention to the "collection for the saints" and had given them the order, as he had also done to the churches in Galatia, to begin gathering the funds. See I Cor. 16:1-2. Chapters eight and nine complete his instruction on the matter. They constitute a logical progression of thought when the background of First Corinthians is taken into consideration. The deep emotional tone of the first section of Second Corinthians is in perfect harmony with the subject matter with which he dealt. He had spent so much time with the church at Corinth for it was a strategic post in the campaign to spread the gospel through the known world. The threat against the very life of that church occasioned by the sinful practices about which he wrote in First Corinthians was a serious threat to the progress of the gospel in that whole area. This plus his deep love for those people led him naturally to write in the deep emotional tone that characterizes so much of the first seven chapters of the epistle. The mood naturally changes when he reaches a less personal and far more encouraging situation in

connection with the offering for the saints in Judea, for he knew that the Corinthians had already made a beginning in this matter following the instruction which he had given them. His mood changes again with the defense of his apostleship against the false claims and unfair charges being made by false teachers. They had come to Corinth and were seeking to establish themselves in the life and affection of the people of God whose very existence as Christians had depended upon the ministry of Paul who was the first to bring the gospel to them.

the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia.—In the various shades of meaning of the term "grace" the central idea is unmerited favor. The thought that this is some mystical power from God producing unusual liberality in giving is not in harmony with the principles of giving which Paul set forth in these two chapters. But God had been gracious in giving the Macedonian churches the privilege of sharing with those who were in need despite their own deep poverty.

God had miraculously fed the children of Israel on manna from heaven while they were on the wilderness journey. Jesus had miraculously fed the multitudes on the loaves and fishes. In His providence God continually causes the earth to produce an abundance of food, despite the fact that famine has always been common in some areas. Rather than miraculously supplying the needs of the saints in Judea God gave the Gentile Christians the privilege of demonstrating their love for Him by sharing with the saints in Judea.

The earth today produces abundantly. There are many economic and political factors that affect distribution of food in areas where famine strikes. But if men everywhere would respond to the gospel of Christ and recognize the privilege which God had given to men to share with others, the abundance of food which He continually provides could be distributed to the needy by intelligent, Christian people.

This is in no way to suggest any sort of communism or socialism. It is the grace of God functioning in the hearts of men who appreciate the privilege of demonstrating their love for Him by helping the needy. This principle was clearly seen in the church at Jerusalem where the members "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need" (Acts 2:45). The key word in this passage is "need," for there isn't the slightest indication that this action was taken so that every member in the church might be equal in the possession of material things. No where is this

made clearer than in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. See Acts 5:1-11. Swift punishment came upon them because Satan filled their heart and caused them to lie to the Holy Spirit about the price of the land which they had sold. But Peter said to them "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" Very clearly, then, the right of private ownership was upheld by the inspired apostle. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not the lack of generosity but of their attempt to lie to the Holy Spirit as they misrepresented their giving before the apostle Peter. It was the widows in the church who were in need of assistance (Acts 6:1). Because some of them were being neglected, the apostles instructed the church to seek out seven men who were given the responsibility of taking care of this ministry. At one time, Agabus, a prophet, speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit foretold the coming of a famine over all the world. It came to pass in the days of Claudius. The disciples, each one of them according to his ability, decided to send relief to those who dwelt in Judea. They selected Barnabas and Saul—later to be known as the apostle Paul—to carry this relief to the elders in Jerusalem. Acts 11:27-30.

Sometime later when Paul met with the apostles in Jerusalem, he was asked to remember the poor in Judea and he continued his ministry among the Gentiles. But this had always been a matter of deep concern to him. Gal. 2:1-10. His concern that Macedonia and Achaia help the saints in Judea was in accord with his long-standing practice. According to Acts, these churches were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. See Acts 16:12; 17:1, 10.

in much proof of affliction.—The many hardships which Macedonia had endured proved beyond doubt that they understood the situation of the saints in Judea. This and the overflowing of their grace despite their own deep poverty resulted in the wealth of their singleminded devotion and love for God as seen in their liberal contribution to this important cause.

Famines, economic depressions and political oppressions were the common lot of many of the colonies of the Roman Empire. Macedonia's situation was not only known to Paul but, in all probability, to their neighboring province of Achaia also.

Too frequently in this day, Christian people, fall back on their own limited means as an excuse for not sharing with others less fortunate than they. This robs themselves of sharing in the grace of God. Lest Paul be misunderstood, he adds several significant statements govern-

ing the thinking and action of those whom he directed to participate in this privilege of sharing with others.

Paul did not hesitate to recognize the poverty of the brethren in Macedonia. It was their single-minded devotion to Christ that made their giving look like a river at floodtide spreading even as far as Judea. Our word "liberality" seems to lose something of its power to describe Paul's view of the generosity of the Macedonian Christians. *according to their power.*—The Macedonians had given according to their ability and, paradoxically, even beyond their ability. Single-minded devotion to God and trust in Him were the underlying causes of this astonishing affect.

their own accord.—Thus Paul makes it clear that the generous giving of the Macedonian Christians was their own gracious response to the favor which God had extended to them to have a share in helping the needy.

beseeking us with much entreaty.—These dedicated Christian people actually had been begging Paul for the privilege of graciously sharing in this ministry to the saints of God.

Too frequently this principle is reversed. Those in charge of the financial program of the church resort to begging the people to give for the support of the work of the church. They often appeal to the legal aspect of giving to break loose portions of the lump with which the supposed parsimonious people grudgingly part. The love of God in the hearts of His people is the most powerful force known in producing generous participation in the program of the church.

the fellowship in the ministering to the saints.—One of the basic issues of Christianity is fellowship or sharing. The apostle John who was an eye-witness of the evidence that established the basic facts of Christianity wrote his first epistle that others might share with him this foundation of their faith, saying, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." See I John 1:1-4. Since Christianity is rooted deeply in fellowship, it should naturally find expression through Christian sharing in service to the saints of God. *not as we had hoped.*—Paul, knowing of the deep poverty of the Macedonians, had not hoped for the response which came from them. The secret of their generous response was their dedication to the Lord.

first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.—What they did was through the will of God. Paul had made known through his preaching the will of God that had given them the privilege of dedicating themselves to the Lord and of sharing

with Him in the propagation of the gospel and the care of His saints. Without such dedication churches most likely will always be struggling to raise the budget. They limp along half-heartedly carrying "the load," but seldom knowing the real joy of generous giving that springs from devotion to the Lord.

and to us.—Paul did not say that they first gave themselves to the Lord and then money to him. Rather, they gave themselves to the Lord and they also gave themselves to Paul. Evidently they volunteered to go with Paul on this mission in behalf of the saints. Luke gives the list of some who were with Paul on the trip to Jerusalem. Among them were Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus who were Thessalonians. See Acts 20:4. Paul also mentions the brother who was selected by the churches to go with him on this mission. See II Cor. 8:18-19.

we exhorted Titus.—Titus had been Paul's messenger to Corinth to learn their response to his first letter. Now he reminds them, after having learned from Titus what their response was, that Titus was being sent to them again in connection with this ministry to the saints. Just what Titus at this time had already done in getting them started on this project is not stated, but Paul indicated that he was the logical man to help them since he had already begun to do so.

Principles Regulating Giving

Scripture

8:7-15. But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 10 And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. 11 But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not. 13 For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality:

15 as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.

Comments

But as ye abound in everything.—Having commended the Macedonians for their abundant response to the gracious privilege that God had given them to share in the service for His saints, Paul urged the Corinthians to abound in this grace also. He placed this privilege which God had graciously given them on a par with other manifestations of God's grace which they enjoyed and to which they had responded.

faith, and utterance, and knowledge.—Paul had reminded the Corinthians of the grace of God that had been given to them in their relationship to Jesus Christ for they had been enriched in Him in everything and lacked in no gift that would help them as they patiently waited for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:4-8). Among those gifts, he mentions utterance and knowledge. He also gave a list of nine spiritual powers through the laying on of the apostles' hands that enabled the church to function effectively in the absence of the completed New Testament (I Cor. 12:8-10).

Since Paul lists faith with utterance and knowledge he is in all probability using it in its relationship to the performance of miracles, rather than in its usual sense as belief in the gospel or belief in the Lord Jesus Christ or trust in God. On the other hand, faith in connection with miracles was a tangible demonstration of God's gracious bestowal of power on those on whom the apostles laid their hands. The word of wisdom enabled them to utter the message which God revealed through them. The word of knowledge enabled them to understand this divinely revealed message which we now have in the New Testament.

Paul urged the Corinthians that just as they had an abundant supply of these gracious gifts—faith and utterance and knowledge—so they were to "abound in this grace also."

I speak not by way of commandment.—Paul had reminded the Corinthians that as he had given order for the churches of Galatia so he was also ordering the Corinthians to prepare themselves to make the collection for the relief of the saints. Why does he now say that this was not by way of commandment? The answer seems to lie in the fact that he is here discussing the issue of generosity in giving. As an apostle he did issue the order for the churches to give, but

liberality or generosity cannot be ordered; it springs from the single-minded devotion to the Lord of those who first dedicate themselves to Him. He had cited the eagerness of the Macedonians as a standard by which to test the sincerity of the love of the Corinthians. Thus the example of sincere, earnest response to the order to give becomes a strong motivating force to help others to do likewise. Those who fear lest others learn about their giving usually have cause to be ashamed of it themselves. On the other hand, those who give simply to appear generous violate the basic teaching of Our Lord (Matt. 6:2-4; 15:3-9; Luke 21:1-4).

The difference between the command and the motivating force that brings it to reality is seen in the words of Our Lord when He said, "If you love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Those who really love the Lord have only to be told of the need. They have proven their awareness of the command to give by their own dedication to the Lord. How much giving is pointless because of some vague, general appeal! Paul reminded the Macedonians and the Corinthians that what they were giving was to help the poor in Judea. Those who give to the local budget should also be informed as to the items of that budget. Support of missionary projects is lifted to a higher level when the congregation knows the missionary to whom they are giving.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The sincere expression of their love for which Paul was calling found an example in that which had been graciously done by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, yet became poor. No better comment can be found on this issue than Paul's in Phil. 2:5-11. He existed in the form of God and was on equality with God. He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. He was found in the fashion as a man and humbled Himself, obediently submitting to the death of the cross. He was crucified through weakness, yet lived through the power of God. See II Cor. 13:4. This does not imply that He lost His deity during His earthly ministry, for there are many examples in the Gospels clearly showing both His deity and His humanity. See *Studies in Luke*, pp. 58-59. The saints are made rich in Him through the salvation which He has so graciously provided. See Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 2:11-14.

And herein I give my judgement.—Another strong motivating force in this matter of giving is the expressed opinion of the inspired apostle. Since the Corinthians were the first to make a beginning in this project,

thus showing their willingness to have a share in it Paul urged them to complete the task according to their ability.

if the readiness is there.—God knows the heart of man as well as the size of his bank account. He looks upon the readiness of those whose love leads them to share in relieving the needs of the saints. If this eagerness is present, the amount given is acceptable according to one's ability. It is not determined by what he does not have.

This verse is as much a part of the inspired teaching about giving as the order to give or the appeal based on dedication and love for the Lord. Public appeals overlooking this fact embarrass and often discourage those present who may not be able to give. It was not Paul's intention to do such a thing at Corinth. Jesus' comment about the widow who gave all her living does have some bearing on this issue. See Luke 21:1-4. But it in no way excuses the parsimonious person whose love for money outweighs his love for God.

not that others may be eased.—Paul was not intending to place a burden on the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia in order that the churches in Judea with Jewish background might live in ease. The saints in Judea were in real need. Paul with his Jewish background labored among the Gentiles as the apostle of Christ and everywhere taught that in Christ such distinctions as Jew and Gentile had been removed. But he also recognized the debt which he had to preach the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. He also recognized an obligation toward his Jewish kinsmen, for the faithful among them he said "are Israelites: whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 9:4-5). Not all Jews could claim this honor but only those who, following in the footsteps of Abraham, had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. See Rom. 9:6-7; 4:23-25.

but by equality.—The gifts of the Gentile Christians would ease the distress of the saints of Judea.

In the reference to equality, some assume that Paul is indicating that Gentiles who then had the ability to contribute to the relief of the saints of Judea might at some future time suffer distress and be relieved by the saints in Judea, thus bring about equality.

Paul, however, had written to the Corinthians about another phase of equality. He had balanced spiritual things when he had sown for their benefit with his right to reap from their material things. See