

## 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 hypocrites. 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?

## CHAPTER FIVE

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?