

## CHAPTER II

# THE DIFFERENCES: LOVE

We have been examining similarities, but we discovered that even within the context of similarities there are differences. Now we continue with the focus explicitly on the differences between the two men. Just as with the similarities, there is no attempt here to examine all of the differences, for they are a multitude. Instead, I have selected for examination only four major themes from Paul. It is not my purpose to pick at every gritty little detail. I only aim to show that Paul's gospel is fundamentally flawed and can in no way be reconciled with that of Jesus. These themes are love, reconciliation (of the world), eternal life and the law. This chapter will discuss their differences on the topic of love.

## Paul's Heavy Emphasis on Love

Love is a major element in the Gospel of Jesus, a fact that Paul did not fail to notice. He took it up so that it became perhaps the *summum bonum* of his gospel. The Colossian letter surely represents the thinking of Paul where we read,

Above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony (Colossians 3:1,4).

His love hymn in I Corinthians 13 posits love as the one essential, even more so than faith or hope or miraculous works. It is this binding together in the unity of love that renders all distinctions of class, sex or nation void, there being neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free person in Christ (Colossians 3:11). Love is for Paul the first fruit of the Spirit, which is to be put on together with the many other fruits — joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Galatians 5:22). When we read passages such as this, and Paul's letters are packed with them, we must respond with a sense of great appreciation for the spirit of love that seemed to infuse his being. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22), he concluded, and this emphasis goes far to account for the broad popularity of his message. We are all attracted to it. The man surely knew how to talk the talk!

## Paul's Omission of the First Commandment

But look carefully. Jesus condensed all the law and the prophets to only two, the Great and First Commandment and the Second Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). Under these two, the command to love God and the command to love our neighbors as ourselves, he said, depend all the law and the prophets. But Paul's condensation is as follows:

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, **and any other commandment**, are summed up in this sentence, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:8-10, see also Galatians 5:14).

## PAUL: THE STRANGER

This wonderful passage seems perfectly in step with Jesus – but be careful! Which group of five virgins are we seeing here? Is it not the foolish virgins? Paul has omitted the oil! He has omitted the Great and First Commandment! Indeed, in all his letters, Paul never so much as mentions the Great Commandment – the command to love God. Not once. In discussing the teachings of Jesus above, I have defined the Great Correlate, which is the correlation of the Great Commandment with the Great Principle that Jesus also enunciated, as fundamental to the true gospel. It is obvious, therefore, that Paul has not understood this concept which comes straight from the lips of Jesus.

I do not imply that Paul utterly ignores man's love for God. (I should emphasize here that I am referring to man's love for God, not to God's love for man.) In at least three passages Paul alludes to the love of man for God:

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him .(Romans 8:28).

But, as it is written,

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9,10).

And,

But if one loves God, one is known by him (I Corinthians 8:3).

One can debate that other passages refer to man's love for God, but my reading of them is that they all refer to God's love for man. Typical is Romans 5:5, where,

. . . God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

What cannot be debated is the fact that Paul never mentions our love for God except in brief allusions; he never focuses on it as a key component of his Gospel, and he never mentioned either the First and Great Commandment or the Great Principle, which are the cardinal doctrines of Christ. He has no oil for his lamp!

It is not only that he has made a glaring omission, but also he has by the omission made the Second Commandment to be the First Commandment. Referring back to Romans 13:8-10 above, some scholars have sought to minimize this by pushing the thought that Paul was not intending to replace the first with the second. He meant to say that the second subsumes only the commandments dealing with our relations with our neighbors as ruled by Commandments VI - X of the Decalogue. He did not intend to include Commandments I-IV, or so they say. This cannot be, however, for he plainly stated that Commandments VI - X, *and any other commandment*, are summed up in this sentence,

You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Romans 13:9).

After many years of cowering under the wrath of God, he was deeply impressed with the wonderful discovery of God's love for us and of the necessary response on our behalf to love our neighbors. Consequently he generally failed to see that nothing happens in this post resurrection period of human history until we love God! He has no oil for his lamp!

## Love for the Enemy

So, Jesus exalted our love for God together with our love for each other (our neighbors), and he made these two commandments equivalent to all the law and the prophets. Then he went on to

## THE DIFFERENCES: LOVE

command yet another love - for the enemy!

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48).

This came from Jesus, and to my knowledge has no precedent in human history. This is a new command, a new application of love, and only Jesus calls for it. I know of no one else before or after, independently of him, who has dared to command such a thing. With this law, Jesus went beyond the Law and the Prophets to define a new dimension of ethical action.

Paul does not extend his love to his enemy but was content to focus on love for neighbor as indicated above. It is evident from Jesus' language that to love the enemy was something more than loving a neighbor, who was equated with "your brethren" (v. 47). The original commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." comes from Leviticus 19:17,18):

You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The neighbor is thus clearly equated with "the sons of your own people." The Jews therefore applied this command only to fellow Jews, in a culture in which the enemy, someone of another tribe, probably not of the sons of Abraham, would not be found living nearby in the midst of one's own people, but remotely, in another district, city, or kingdom. They have generally always applied this commandment after this fashion and to this day, as displayed by the violent wars of the modern state of Israel, history bears them witness that they are free to hate, war against and kill non Jews without breaking the Mosaic Law of love for neighbor. So when Paul applied this commandment that was designated by Jesus as the second, he did not consider that it was a command to love one's enemy, no matter how near the enemy may have approached.

Yet, in Romans 12 Paul does have instructions as to how to deal with an enemy, but it is nothing new. Quoting from Proverbs 25, he wrote,

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head (Proverbs 25:21,22, Romans 12:20).

Then Paul continued,

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

This is hardly loving your enemy when your motive is to heap fire on his head! It sounds good; it is the nearest that Paul could come to Jesus' command to "resist not one who is evil." His advice is fine within its limits—but it doesn't equate with love for the enemy.

Comparison with the teaching of Jesus, quoted above, demonstrates a vast difference in motive. Jesus urged us to love our enemies in imitation of God the Father, as we must if we are to be children of the Father. The Father treats all the same, and so we are to love the enemy just as we love our neighbors, our friends, and our countrymen and fellow disciples of Jesus. Paul wants to heap coals of fire on his head! In the final analysis, then, the scope of Paul's ethical view coincides precisely with that of the Law and the Prophets and not with that of Jesus.

## PAUL: THE STRANGER

I believe that it is utterly unrealistic to expect any human being to abide by the command of Jesus to love one's enemy apart from a commitment to Jesus' Great Principle of the hatred of life. Only then can one go on to love the foe and to also take seriously Jesus' related command,

Do not resist one who is evil (Matthew 5:39).

Paul never understood this and so omitted it – this vital element – from his gospel. He shows so much familiarity with the Jesus Tradition that he must undoubtedly have been exposed to Jesus' Great Principle. The fact that he never, in his epistles, put it forth as central to his gospel shows that he failed to understand it and therefore ignored it. Otherwise, when he came to instruct the Roman church on how to deal with their enemies, he would have resorted to the commandment of Jesus, not to an old precept from Proverbs. He could only move in the direction of Jesus, but he fell short. His lamp runs out of oil, flickers, and fades. As with every one of the hard sayings of Jesus, Paul dealt with this one by ignoring it entirely.

## The Reasons for Paul's Failure to Include the Great Commandment

Next we have to ask, "Why did Paul fail to find a place in his gospel for the Great Commandment, the one Jesus designated as first of all?" Discerning the answer is not easy and it is not likely that a sure one can be provided. Paul, not realizing any failure, certainly did not bother to answer it for us and there may not be adequate clues in his epistles to provide full assurance as to any answer that we may prescribe. Nevertheless I suggest an answer, not to prove anything, but only to show that my reading of Paul in this context is reasonable.

Paul may have failed to realize the supreme import of the Great Commandment because of complex influences growing out of the combination of his understanding of the character of God combined with his subsequent, faulty interpretation of the work of Jesus. He saw God first of all as a person of great wrath, as evidenced by such passages as Romans 1:18f:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

He then continues in Romans to develop a theme in which God has predestined some for wrath and some for mercy in such a fashion that the distinction does not depend upon man's will or exertion but upon God's mercy (Romans 9:16). This mercy is manifest only in Christ, Whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood to be received by faith (Romans 3:25). Paul's point here is that God's wrath rested upon all men because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This was particularly true of Paul himself, whose depiction of his unregenerate condition, and the resultant despair, is expressed thusly:

The good that I would do, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death (Romans 7:24)?

Beginning thusly with the conviction that sees the wrath of God hanging above the head of the miserable and helpless sinner, who seeks deliverance from this terrible condemnation, Paul would hardly have been motivated to reach out in love to this almighty wrath. But then he found Christ, or at least he thought he did, and in the ensuing development of his faith, he saw the mercy of God manifest – but this was last, after the terrible wrath and after he had already begun to form his understanding of the work of Jesus. So what does Paul have Jesus do? He expiated the sinners (Paul's) guilt by taking upon himself, on the cross, the very wrath of God that had been hovering over all mankind. So, in Paul's experience, there could be no mercy until the wrath had been satisfied. Not until then does God's love for us become manifest for Paul:

God shows his love for us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Since,

## THE DIFFERENCES: LOVE

therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8,9).

It is only at this point that Paul can acknowledge God's love for him so as to experience the reconciliation that loves God in return. But now it is too late, for he has already, under the impress of his long struggle with the wrath of God, formed his fatal misconception of the work of Christ, which is, in essence, that Christ has borne God's wrath in Paul's stead (1 Corinthians 15:3, Romans 4:25). Hence we have the fallacious doctrine of substitutionary atonement. This all took place without any assist from Paul – indeed it was against all his zealous efforts to suppress the Truth. Consequently, in his amazement, Paul could see it only as a gift, absolutely free and requiring no input from man, and he went back to his roots in the Old Testament for a new conception to explain it: grace. The condemnation issuing from wrath is always first and foremost in Paul's thought, only followed by the recognition of the grace that issues from the love of God – yet, incongruously, only after the wrath has been fully sated on an innocent victim.

### Jesus' Emphasis is Opposite to that of Paul

But when we turn to Jesus, we find his view of the character of God has the very reverse emphasis to that of Paul. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus is the merciful father of the Prodigal Son. Far from hovering over the rebellious sinner in foreboding wrath, he looks upon him in suffering grief for the dead and lost offspring, desiring only to receive him again unto himself. When it happens, there is joy in heaven! For Jesus, the Father's first concern for the sinner can only be described as love and mercy driven; for Paul, it was wrath driven. When we look at the Father of the Lord Jesus, what we see first is the very opposite of that seen by Paul. We see love, compassion, concern, and mercy, where Paul saw wrath and condemnation on all men.

Unlike the God of Paul, this God and Father of the Lord Jesus is one we sinners can love from the outset, and who can therefore command us to love him from the outset, for he has first loved us and continues to do so. Jesus' God is the merciful master who readily forgives the debt of his servant on the sole condition that he have mercy on his fellow servant (Matthew 18:23-35) and only resorts to wrath, justly, when that mercy is lacking. He is the king who first openly invites all to share in the royal banquet and only resorts to condemnation when they have refused his invitation (Matthew 22:1-10). He is the householder who patiently and mercifully restrains his hand while the tenants repeatedly rebuke all his efforts at a reconciliation, who finally resorts to wrath, justly, only after they have slain his son (Matthew 21:33-46). He is the God who resorts to wrath on all men only after a long period of human history (Oh, how long!) and long after they have slain his Son and resisted all the efforts of his servants to move them to repent of their evil.

Paul's zeal for God must first have been motivated by his great fear of a wrathful deity, a fear in the grips of which it was impossible for him to conceive of loving God. Then he discovered, or thought he did, that an innocent man by the name of Jesus, from Nazareth, had been willingly slain in order to satisfy God's wrath toward all sinners. This was, to him, at last an act of love that turned him from the fear of God to the love of God – but it was misconceived. Paul's God does not require one to love him as a qualification for salvation as does the Father of our Lord Jesus. How else can we explain the absence of the First Commandment from his thought?

I leave it to you, my friends, to judge whether this is an adequate explanation for Paul's blindness to the Great Commandment as the prime component of the gospel. But it is reasonable to me. It is an especially strong explanation when we add to the above the two simple facts of the words with which we have to deal.

- First, Jesus had little use for the word *grace* that Paul brought forth to explain the free gift of salvation, and

## PAUL: THE STRANGER

- Second, Paul had little use for the word *mercy* that Jesus brought forth to describe the foremost attribute of God, his undying love for all people. I do not mean that Paul did not use the word, for it appears many times in his epistles, but that Paul meant by it something other than what Jesus meant and therefore Paul had no use for the word as Jesus used it. With Jesus, it is the inmost quality of the character of God the Father, a fundamental attribute that is eternally God. With Paul it is only an arbitrary quality that the wrathful deity expresses at his pleasure, having no relevance to any man's will or to any human response. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy . . . so then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. So, it depends **not upon man's will** or exertion, but on God's mercy (Romans 9:15-18).

But for Jesus, God has only mercy to display to man – **a mercy that awaits only what man wills**: "I will arise and go to my Father!"

There is therefore a radical contradiction here between Jesus and Paul. With Jesus, the mercy of God is poured out upon the man who is merciful. This is a principle enshrined in the Beatitude,

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7).

God's mercy is never arbitrary but depends upon the mercifulness of the human individual. If you wish to obtain mercy from God, then show mercy to others and God's mercy toward you is assured. But for Paul, God is the wrathful deity who arbitrarily expresses his mercy, without reference to the character of the man: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy!

## Love for the Self

This comparison of love in Jesus and Paul has considered our love for God and God's love for us, our love for our neighbors, and for our enemies. Yet two other applications of love must be considered for our comparison to be complete: love for the world (the *cosmos*), and love for self. We must say something about the self and then about the world.

Both Jesus and Paul apparently took love for self as a given, one that required little or no explanation. Jesus did this when he directed us to his Second Commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is, it seems to me, the only basis we have for comprehending the true significance of love. We can understand love for our neighbors only because we know about love for ourselves. Then, when we feel about our neighbors as we feel about ourselves, we understand that we truly love our neighbors. In the same way we must understand our love for God if indeed we do love him. Paul had a similar appreciation for self love, and apart from his use of Jesus' Second Commandment to sum the law, it comes forward most clearly in the Ephesian letter, in the discussion about loving one's wife:

Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body (Ephesians 28-30).

But in saying this (if Paul wrote the Ephesian Letter) he is inconsistent with his overall attitude to the flesh, and he mistakenly identifies the flesh with the self that we love. This, Jesus would never have done. Paul is inconsistent here because elsewhere he tends to despise the flesh as sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), or as that in which dwelleth no good thing (Romans 7:18). This is hardly consistent with extolling the nourishing and cherishing of the flesh. I believe that Jesus understood the self to be the "person," a spiritual entity that exists apart from the flesh and which one loves as being created in the image of the Father. Jesus could therefore say,

The flesh profits nothing (John 6:63),

## THE DIFFERENCES: LOVE

and also call for us to hate our lives in this world (in the flesh) while assuming that we will continue to love ourselves, without extolling any positive attitude toward the flesh. It is significant that Paul uses our assumed love of the self (our own bodies, Ephesians 5:25) to teach that husbands should love their wives, whereas Jesus, beginning with the hatred of life in this world, teaches that one cannot be his disciple apart from the hatred of . . . one's wife (Luke 14:26). Therefore, while it is true, as stated above, that both Paul and Jesus take the love of self as a given, Paul does not understand it correctly, and uses it to reach invalid conclusions that are inconsistent, not only with Jesus, but with his own doctrines from different contexts.

### Love of the World

Finally, let us see what Jesus and Paul had to say about love for the world. The Greek New Testament has primarily two words that are frequently translated into the English "world." These are *aeon*, or age, and *kosmos*, the orderly arrangement that defines the universe or its human inhabitants. In this segment we draw our conclusions considering only those references that come from the latter Greek word, *kosmos*, so as to leave no confusion that might result from using different words from the original text.

Paul was correct when he urged us to put on love, which binds all things together in perfect harmony (Colossians 3:14). We love the world when we are bound to it. In that case, we are of the world and the world loves us in return. This love of the world for us is manifest when men of the world honor us, praise us and hold us in high esteem. We see all this working out in our daily experience in the world, and it is perfectly consistent with Jesus' related sayings.

He said, for example,

If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:19).

Without a doubt, Jesus' use of the word 'world' here defines the people who inhabit the world, for only they are capable of hatred or love. The world can love its own, or hate Jesus and his disciples, only because it consists of persons. While the most fundamental definition equates the world to the ordered arrangement of the physical creation, it very reasonably applies also to its human inhabitants. That this is the way that Jesus uses the word here is confirmed as he goes on immediately to say to the disciples:

If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me (John 15:20,21).

I have explained above how Jesus views mankind as a general category that is fundamentally hostile to him and to his disciples, and we are seeing here a kind of explanation as to why this is so. So his basic attitude toward the world is the same as his basic attitude to mankind (usually called "men"), and for the same reasons, because they are identical in these sayings of Jesus.

One of the best ways of comparing the views of Jesus and Paul on loving the world is therefore to compare their views on the category, "men." When we do this we find a marked difference, one that is adequate to explain their differences in world-attitude. Jesus warns his disciples to beware of men (Matthew 10:17). He calls them blessed when men shall hate you (Luke 6:22), but pronounces woe unto you when all men speak well of you (Luke 6:26). Perhaps most revealing is his terse statement,

That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination unto God (Luke 16:15).

Paul has a very different view and it comes forth especially in Romans 12 & 13 where he is giving

## PAUL: THE STRANGER

ethical counsel to the church at Rome.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all men (Romans 12:17).

This counsel to Christians, to give heed to what is noble in the sight of all men is certainly contrary to Jesus' view, where that which men esteem highly (comparable to consider noble) is an abomination to God! He continues by encouraging Christians to be subject to the authorities in the world, for rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good (Romans 13:3,4).

Jesus, who was constantly afoul of the Jewish authorities and never received either their approval or that of the Roman rulers, who finally killed him, disagrees with Paul on this count also. We find the same sentiments in II Corinthians, which reflects Paul's views in this regard perfectly:

For we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight, but also in the sight of men (II Corinthians 8:21).

What is honorable among men is also honorable to the Lord? No, but what men esteem highly is God's abomination! This same sentiment shows up again in I Thessalonians:

. . .the Jews, who . . . displease God and oppose all men . . . (I Thessalonians 2:15).

This theme, that couples God to men, is too well represented in the Pauline literature to have been a thoughtless choice of words. It represents a continuing sense of his identity with men – an identity that Jesus carefully avoided. His stance here was diametrically opposed to that of Jesus. I am not denying that Paul distinguished between redeemed men and true followers of Jesus. He certainly did so, speaking of men as spiritual or unspiritual, as children of God or servants of God. But it is evident that he did not recognize the radical nature of the hostility that men as a general category must, by nature, exhibit towards those who follow in the way of Jesus.

That hostility grows out of their differing attitudes toward life in this world. Men love life, and exhibit this love in many ways, not the least of which is their careful bonding with it. If they see a man who is near the point of death after some long struggle with illness or injury, they can think of nothing higher to say of such a one than that he or she is a fighter, one who loves life and is determined to hang on. This devotion to life and attachment to it is almost universal. It is a hallmark of the race so that when an exception comes by he or she tends to be hated and despised and otherwise greeted with all hostility as though he were a traitor to all they hold dear – and so he or she is!

I have carefully defined a distinction between the attitudes of Jesus and Paul toward the world of humanity because this is necessary to recognize that they also exhibited differences in their love for it. Remembering that love binds all things together, as Paul clearly perceived, we can with some confidence draw the following conclusions:

- 1) God loves the world (John 3:16), and so Jesus loves the world and gives himself for it. It is this love that reaches out to every individual woman and man in the world, so as to draw him or her to himself, and out of the world. This love is at work in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where the Father yearns to see the wayward one departing the world (the far country, as depicted in the parable) and returning home. The Father reaches out to us and binds us to himself, one by one, but only when we have become not of this world.
- 2) Men love the world but their perspective differs from that of God. Theirs is a love that



## THE DIFFERENCES: LOVE

binds them to the world, and so holds them apart from the Father such that whoever loves the world, hates God. So the Prodigal Son at first loved his "far country," for which he had deserted his father's house. The love of man for the world is therefore vastly different from the love of God for the world. God's love does not bind him to the world, but nevertheless it is a binding love – for it reaches into the world to bind individuals to himself and draw them out of the world.

- 3) Paul loved the world. While he made many distinctions between men of the world and the people of God, he nevertheless remained bound to it. He was so much a part of the category of mankind that he could not recognize the radical evil that moves men and women to strive to maintain their worldly attachments, all in consequence of the love of life. He failed, therefore, to recognize or witness to the radical hostility that inheres in the relationship between God and the men and women who make up the world. This shows up in his penchant for saving his life whenever it was endangered. For example, he appealed to Caesar rather than return from Caesarea to Jerusalem to face his accusers who would almost certainly have killed him. Unlike Jesus, and unlike the Prodigal Son, he did not really want to go to his Father! Jesus would have insisted on Jerusalem – in fact, he did (Luke 13:22). I must conclude, therefore, that Paul was not being thoroughly honest when he wrote,

I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23),

I do not count my life of any value or as precious to myself (Acts 20:24),

. . . so we speak, not to please men, but to please God (I Thessalonians 2:4), and

. . . nor did we seek glory from men (I Thessalonians 2:6).

These statements do suggest that he had familiarity with the Jesus Tradition relative to the hatred of life but his penchant for saving his neck shows that he did not understand it.

- 4) Jesus, as a man, did not love the world. He hated his life in this world and it is in that sense that he hated the world and did not love it. He was not bound to it and so he journeyed to Jerusalem where he knew he would be killed because he wanted to go to his Father (John 16:28). Yet Jesus, as the savior, loves the world and seeks to draw human beings out of the world and bind them to himself. His was the attitude of the Prodigal Son after he had come to himself, looked about on his miserable plight, at last hated the far country and his life in it and looked with loving eyes toward his father's house.

## Summary and Conclusions

I must say that Paul talked the talk and wrote the writ of love. His many passages extolling love as the first fruit of the Holy Spirit and the supreme spiritual fruit have meant much to me as I labored to comprehend the life that Jesus would have us to live in this world. That has made it very difficult to finally come to the only correct conclusion, which is that on this subject Paul after all fails. He fails in three very important points.

- First, he did not know God; to know Him is to know Him first as divine Love, but Paul saw Him first as divine Wrath.
- Second, he did not understand that there is a First Commandment to which the love of neighbor is second, and
- Third, he does not understand and could not accept that Jesus would actually expect

## PAUL: THE STRANGER

him, and us, to love our enemies or hate our lives. These three failings are interdependent, for had he understood what Jesus meant when he spoke of loving God, in the Great and First Commandment, he would have understood loving his enemy and hating his life because both entail the hatred of life in this world. On the other hand, to love one's friends and neighbors and brethren is a human trait, one that all understand and can apply. Therefore Jesus said,

For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same (Matthew 5:46,47)?

Yet this tax collector love appears to be all that Paul was teaching his churches.