

THE
EXALTATION
OF THE
SONS OF GOD
LESSONS
ON
EPHESIANS
BY
A.S. COPLEY

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” (*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”* *KJV*)—Chap. 1:3.

Publisher:
Grace Assembly
4660 Zion Ave.
San Diego, California 92120
(619) 280-4646
www.graceassembliesandiego.com

Prefatory

Our Ephesians' bin is empty. We must reprint. In answer to prayer, the God of all grace is making this possible, in spite of hard times. Encouraged by the help, which the saints have derived from these notes heretofore, we most gladly send them forth again. Being in larger type, they will be the more appreciated, we trust.

You will not always find our scripture quotations verbatim in any other book. In all our citations, in these notes, or others, we seek to express the exact meaning of the original Greek. Our dependence is upon the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writings. Our prayer is, that these studies will be deeply instructive, and help believers to realize who they are and what their calling really is in Christ.

—The Author

Note from Publisher:

Grace Assembly is privileged to publish and post this commentary on our Web Site, www.graceassembliesandiego.com. We believe these commentaries rank among the best for Bible students who desire to learn about the Word of God and the Pauline Revelation. These commentaries were written during the early days of the latter rain outpour of God's Spirit and they continue to provide enlightenment to the reader. These are the original writings of the authors. Grace Assembly has not made any changes or additions to these writings other than format changes for the convenience of the Bible student. In the left hand column we have added the King James Bible version as it applies to the commentary on that page. Where the authors have referred to scripture references without quoting the scripture in the text, we have added the scripture as a footnote. In some places the authors have referred to Bible versions other than the King James. Since Grace Assembly holds to the King James Version as the preserved text, we, therefore, have added in the text the same scripture from the King James Version. We trust these ancillary changes will be helpful to the Bible student.

The Introductory

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”—1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

This letter to the Assembly in Ephesus wonderfully couples God’s eternal purpose of the past with His eternal fulfillment of that purpose in the future. The place where the divine pendulum is let swing determines its landing-place on the opposite sine. Hence in chapter one; we read of “will,” “predestination,” “good pleasure,” “purpose,” “love,” and “grace,” all “in Christ,” before the foundation of the world. Then, for the future, we read of “the fulness of the times,” “the ages to come,” “the riches of glory,” etc., also all “in Christ.” The fact of “fulness” regarding the Church is peculiar to Ephesians—“Fulness of the times,” “fulness of Him that filleth all;” “filled into all the fulness of God,” “a full-grown man,” and “the fulness of Christ.” The phrase, “in the heavenlies,” occurs five times, and is found in no other Epistle. It expresses the glorious destiny of the Church of Christ, whose calling is “an upward, or high calling, of God in Christ.” It is most fitting therefore, that we should call our lessons all this Epistle, The Exultation of the Sons of God.

Paul’s Epistle to the Church in Rome stands related to his other epistles as a solid hub to a great wheel. All the essential features of The GOSPEL are concentrated in that Letter. From it, radiate all the burning spokes of church teaching. The arrangement, or order of his letters, as we have them in the King James’ version, doubtless are correct, beginning with Romans and ending with Hebrews. Hence, Ephesians is the fourth spoke. 1 Corinthians sets the Assembly in order. 2 Corinthians sets its members in motion, as a spiritual priesthood (*Rev. 5:10). Galatians ousts legality and sets its victims eternally free. Ephesians sets the Assembly in heaven, her eternal home.

In Romans, The GOSPEL is distinctly termed, “The Gospel of God,” because the triune God is its Author and Source. It is called “The Gospel of His Son,” because Jesus is the chief figure therein—Rom. 1:1, 9. Twice Paul calls it “My Gospel,” because it was revealed to him and he was the first and chief promulgator thereof—Rom. 2:16 and 16:25. In 1 Corinthians, it is especially termed “The Gospel” or the Gospel of Christ. In 2 Cor., it is known as “the glorious Gospel,” or more correctly, “the Gospel of the glory,” because its priestly ministry fits the Assembly for her heavenly destiny. The phrase, “the truth of the Gospel,” is peculiar to Galatians, because of its corrective purpose. Finally, in Ephesians (6:19), we read of “the mystery of the Gospel.”

*Revelation 5:10 “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Seven Peas In A Pod
Or
The Chapter Outline

1. The Divine Purpose—Chapter One.
2. The Divine Provision—Chapter Two.
3. The Divine Power—Chapter Three.
4. The Divine Procedure—Chapter Four.
5. The Divine Product—Chapter Five.
6. The Divine Panoply—Chapter Six.
7. The Divine Perfection—Rom. 16:1-20 with Rev. 3:12.

Studies in Ephesians

Ephesians KJV

1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

1:2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians Commentary

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Anointed thru the will of God, unto the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in the Anointed Jesus; grace unto you and peace from the Lord Jesus Anointed” (*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” KJV*)—V. 1-2.

Paul alone writes this epistle, as he did also Romans and Hebrews, because to him alone was given “the mystery,” herein unfolded, and he alone was made “the administrator, or steward, or house-keeper of the mystery” (*“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words)” Chap. 3:3, KJV*)—Chap. 3:1-4. Paul only received the Gospel by direct revelation from God. Timothy, Titus, and all others, tho’ called apostles, received the Gospel by the Spirit’s illumination of the Word revealed to him. And just so we receive it today. Religious fog is sure to follow if men do not give Paul’s writings the place that God intends.

Some men are apostles, or preachers, or teachers by their own will, or by the organized will of others. Most of them ought to be in the counting room, or out digging turnips. Not so with Paul. He was indeed “an apostle thru the will of God.” (*“an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,”—V. 1 KJV*) The Lord said of him to Ananias, “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” This divine choice of him was revealed to the Church in Antioch. Jesus had spoken to him at his conversion, saying, “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose; to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will appear unto thee”—Acts 9:15 and 13:2 and 26:16, 18. We appreciate Paul’s writings, in the measure, that we understand the distinct place which God gave him, and the super-excellent message revealed to him for the Church.

There are not two classes of believers addressed here as the authorized text indicates. Rather, Ephesian saints are faithful saints; and this letter is especially addressed to, faithful Ephesian saints. It is not a letter of correction, like those to the Corinthians, Galatians and Colossians; John writes words of reproof to the Church of Ephesus, as representing the saints seated provisionally in the heavenlies in Christ—Rev. 2:1-7. It is very far-fetched and unfortunate to say, that this Epistle was written to the Colossians. The gist of the teaching and

the mention of Tychicus in Chap. 6:21 with *Acts 20:4, are against, such a view. And the meaning of Ephesus, “city of the moon,” is against it; for Ephesus only can express our seat in the heavenlies.

It was a fervent custom of the Apostle to pronounce “grace and peace” upon those to whom he wrote, at the opening of his letters. There is one exception—the Epistle to the Hebrews, because to them he had to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ before he could announce His grace, or God’s grace in giving Him. See **Heb. 2:9. The assemblies were addressed as knowing the favor of God, and the epistles were written to set forth the all sufficient abundance of grace, and peace thru grace. Paul’s Gospel was emphatically and absolutely the Gospel of grace.

Provisionally Blessed in Christ

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, Anointed, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in the Anointed One” (*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:” KJV*)—V. 3. Oh, beloved reader may you comprehend this verse, “In Christ,” is the abundant supply of all blessings. “In the heavenlies,” is the sure place of all spiritual blessings. A good meeting is not the meaning of “the heavenlies;” but this is the meaning—Christ ascended to the heavenly regions. We expect to be there with Him some day; but by faith we are already there, because provisionally “God raised us up together with Christ and seated us there” (*“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:” KJV*)—Chap. 2:6. In God’s reckoning, believers are already in heaven, where they shall spend eternity with Christ, because they are “in Christ.” And if we reckon as He reckons, that is, count ourselves already in heaven in Christ, of course we have a good meeting on earth. Note further that “God HATH blessed us.” This is not experience, but provision. The babe in Christ is as truly blessed as the adult; but he does not know it. Abraham gave all his great wealth to his son Isaac: but Rebekah was enriched with the same riches by accepting Isaac, tho’ she had not seen, hence had not yet enjoyed that wealth. Just so, all the Church is made rich in all

1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

*Acts 20:4 “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.”

**Hebrews 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

spiritual blessings by simply accepting Christ as Savior; but a small few avail themselves of their wealth. Only a few believe the verse we are considering; therefore, they have small enjoyment in Christ.

“In Christ,” is the key phrase to this Epistle, even as “Christ in you” may be termed the key phrase to the Colossian Epistle. This phrase, or its equivalent, occurs a dozen times in the first chapter, and many times thru-out the book. In verse one, we read of the “faithful in Christ.” In the above verse, we just saw that God hath blessed us in Him. Briefly stated, this Epistle announces our provisional wealth in Christ and indicates the various items of our wealth with the surpassing fulness of each item. All these things are “according to” the love that planned them and the grace that provided them and the sacrifice of Jesus that bought them for us. The first and chief spiritual blessing is “sonship” V. 5. Then follows “an inheritance,” even an eternal inheritance in Christ, because we are sons. Our growth, progress, maturity, usefulness; our place, honor, exaltation, destiny, glory as sons of God are herein described. But bear in mind, that “in Christ” we are already blessed with all these. But we must see them new to forever enjoy them.

1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

“According as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love” (*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*” *KJV*)—V. 4. The word “according” (Greek, kata) occurs seven times in this chapter. It is rendered “after” in verse eleven. The verses in which it appears are prolific with truth. It is exceedingly full of meaning.

Our wealth of blessing is therefore according to the divine choice of us before the first creation. God saw the new creation in Christ before He saw the old creation in Adam. By faith, the Son of God (Wisdom personified) was delighting Himself with the many sons whom He should afterward bring to glory—*Prov. 8:30. This choice does not mean that God rejected some arbitrarily and selected others independently of their wilt He chose no one in the old creation, or first Adam; but He chose a new creation in Christ. All who will, come into that new creation line by faith in Jesus. Therefore, God blessed us in Him according to His choice of a new creation—Vs. 3, 4.

The transcendent measure of our wealth and the unspeakable

*Proverbs 8:30 “Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him;”

1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

enjoyment thereof are according to the surpassing sovereign love—“God SO loved”—that He chose us away back yonder before the world had a “sick-spell” by Satan’s wicked intervention. Compare *Gen. 1:2 with **Isa. 45:18. The word rendered “foundation” in this verse, also means, “a periodic sick-spell, a fit,” which the devil precipitated upon the world before Adam was created; wrecking it even as he afterward wrecked Adam and Eve. ***Job 1:6, 7 does not record the first, nor second time that Satan walked to and fro in the earth. Did he have a suspicion that God intended to create a body of beings who should occupy the place in the heavens which he now occupies? God knoweth. God chose us in Christ to be “holy and without blame before Him.” Will He succeed? Can man be holy and blameless? The old creation cannot. But the new creation, “that which is born of God, sinneth not; and it cannot sin, because it is born of God” (*“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” KJV*)—1 John 3:9. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” weak, sinful, sickly, doomed to die, But “that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, heavenly. “incorruptible,” “imperishable,” “born thru the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

Previously Marked Out

“In love having predestinated us for sonship thru Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (*“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,” KJV*)—V. 5. Here God is seen as the great Architect, whose scheme and skill flow from His boundless love. The phrase, “in love,” properly prefaces this verse rather than ending the preceding verse. Many people shudder at the very thought of foreordination, or predestination, as if the words meant that some could not be saved if they would. Be it ever remembered, that no one desires salvation until God calls him. Adam hid himself (sinful man loves darkness), and did not seek God; but God sought him. All Jehovah’s doings are in love, primarily for His Son and then for

*Genesis 1:2 “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

**Isaiah 45:18 “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the Lord; and *there is* none else.”

***Job 1:6, 7 “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”

mankind. Predestination means, to mark out beforehand. However, the Lord did not mark out some arbitrarily to be lost and others to be saved. That is not the meaning. As with verse four, so here. Jehovah previously marked out, or pre-determined, a new creation, but brought forth the first creation, or Adam line, as the base and figure of the new. Jehovah sketched His scheme of redemption, and planned beforehand that every one who would believe in His Son should be saved; but he who would not believe, of course could not be saved. Therefore, we should leap for joy to learn that thousands of years before we were born, the divine architect selected us in His Son.

Unto what were we predestinated in particular? He “marked us out for sonship,” the first and basic spiritual blessing. Some teachers would rob us of the enjoyment of it by belittling its meaning. Therefore, let us consider the original word (*huiothesian*), here translated “adoption of children.” It is from “*huios*” meaning a son, and from “*tithemi*,” to place, put, set, fix, determine, plant, etc. It signifies to place, or fix as sons. The Diaglott renders it “sonship,” which expresses it correctly. The phrase, “adoption of children,” does not state the exact fact. By the new birth, we receive “the Spirit of His (God’s) Son” (Gal. 4:6), which certainly means far more than adoption. Most emphatically, we are not adopted into God’s family. We are born into it, by being “born of God.” An adopted child is only added, and partakes in no sense of the parents, who become adapted parents only. A child born partakes of the nature and dispositions of the parents. Believers on Christ are made “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), “partakers of Christ”—Heb. 3:14. Otherwise, they could not be heavenly, or spiritual. They would still be like the first Adam, “natural and earthy,” and liable to fail and fall again. In the first Adam, we were only creatures. In the Last Adam, Christ, we are sons. We were sinless in the first Adam before he fell; but we are “holy in Christ,” the last Adam (“*sanctified in Christ Jesus,*” *KJV*)—1 Cor. 1:2.

Another word about predestination. In verse 11, we read, that in Christ, “We obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (or marked out before hand), according to the purpose,” which was previously in the divine mind. You see, that sonship and the inheritance as sons were the two great final purposes of redemption. And this is “according to the good pleasure of His will,” which is the second according named. “God is love.”

His will is good. It pleased the triune God, therefore, to make a blue print, so to speak, or pre-determine, that by means of redemption, He should bring “sons unto glory.” They who believe on Jesus, constitute these sons. Should we not be hilarious over such glad news?

Fraise upon Praise

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherewith He graced us in the Beloved One” (*“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” KJV*)—V. 6. God’s supreme boast is His grace, which is especially emphasized in this Epistle. The Greek word “epainon,” means praise upon praise; for the word “ainon” alone signifies praise. The salvation of lost mankind thru the redemption of Christ brought out the divine attribute GRACE, which would otherwise have been hidden in God forever. Therefore, God’s grace merits praise heaped upon praise as the Chinamen puts it. But it is “the glory of His grace,” which is covered with heaps of praise. What is that glory? It is this: Grace has poured itself out upon the undeserving. There is nothing in man to merit God’s grace; neither can he do one little thing to earn it. There was nothing in mankind, except tremendous need, that called out His grace. Jesus said to the disciples, “Freely ye have received; freely give”—Matt. 10:8. The adverb “freely” is from the Greek word “dorean,” which means gratis, for nothing, without a cause. The ungodly who believes, is “justified freely (dorean) by His Grace”—Rom. 3:24. He does not merit justification, and cannot earn it. He merits death, which we all received in the death of Christ for us, as a necessary background for our salvation. For this very reason. Paul abased himself, what few ministers dare to do, and “preached (*to you, KJV*) the Gospel of God freely” —2 Cor. 11:7. He preached “dorean,” that is, gratis, without charge, without remuneration from the people, without a cause in them, except the dire need—they must be saved by divine grace, or lost forever. Grace boasts, therefore, in this, that it bestows its unbounded blessings upon those who are “weak, ungodly, sinners and enemies”—Rom. 5:6, 8, 10. Therefore, thru all eternity, it will be humanity’s due to pile up multiplied heaps of praise to the glory of the limitless grace of God.

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Then the Apostle adds, that in this grace, God “hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Another rendering reads, “With His grace, He has graced us in the Beloved.” That is, divine grace gives us a place by the side of the Son of God. The Fathers favor toward His well beloved Son, is passed over to us and grants us a standing on a par with Him. We stand in the same grace in which Jesus Christ stands. He deserves the Father’s favor; as sons, we deserve it in Him. Note then, that the measure of the Father’s love for Jesus is the measure of His favor bestowed upon us. That is what we understand by grace. Reader, do you see that?

Grace Displayed in Redemption

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”—V. 7. We have redemption in Christ. The Greek word “apolutrosin,” here

translated “redemption,” has a double meaning, viz; “release,” and “acquittal on payment of a ransom.” In Christ, we have acquittal from our sins, or offenses, because He paid the ransom price; which divine justice demanded of us, even death. He died for us, or poured out His life, which is the meaning of “redemption thru His blood.” This redemption is termed “the forgiveness or remission of sins.”

Forgiveness from God means much more than is generally understood. Man forgives, or pardons his fellow upon confession and request, whether the wrong has been righted, or not; but God can forgive an offense only upon the ground of full reparation of loss, or harm, and full payment of the penalty incurred. Hence, Jesus had to “put away sin once,” before God could forgive the sinner. He abrogated sin as lawless. He nullified, rejected and set it aside. How did Jesus do that? The answer is solemn—“By the sacrifice of Himself” —Heb. 9:26.

Another thought about forgiveness. This word is from the Greek “aphiemi,” which signifies to send forth, or away, to discharge, throw away, dissolve, disband, divorce; hence, to remit, forgive. Consider these meanings and get the full force of our redemption in Christ. The same word is translated “remission” in *Luke 1:77, and “deliverance” in **Luke 4:18. Hence, when we believed on Jesus, our sins were not taken away; but we “had no more conscience of sins;” for by faith “our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience”—Heb. 10:2 and 22. The Word which we believed sprinkled our hearts, because our sins were all divorced from us, discharged and sent away at Calvary. This is certainly the gladdening meaning of ***Lev. 16:21, 22. Jesus Christ was the “Scapegoat” and the “Man of opportunity,” who bore all of Israel’s iniquities and ours into “a land of separation.” The Cross of Christ, the blood of Jesus, the death of the holy Son of God and Man, looms between us and our sins and iniquities forever. Hallelujah! Study ****Acts 5:31 at your leisure.

*Luke 1:77 “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of theirs sins,”

**Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”

***Leviticus 16:21, 22 “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

****Acts 5:31 “Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

This, which is only the negative side of salvation, is too positive for many people, even Christian workers. Their legal, reasoning minds reject it, because it puts all the responsibility of our salvation on God. Is it any marvel then, that they try to deny and explain away the real positive side of our salvation, viz: justification and regeneration? They cannot believe, that “thru this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness (aphesis, remission) of sins, and in Him, all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified in the law of Moses” (“*through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*” *KJV*)—Acts 13:38, 39. They shudder when we exclaim, “Now are we the sons of God” (1 John 3:2), being “in Christ, (*he is, KJV*) a new creation, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new”—2 Cor. 5:17. But faith in these positive bottom Bible facts gives us full victory and puts a shout of triumph into our hearts and voices. The cross of Christ divorced us from our sins. The resurrection of Christ has justified us before God. And the Word of Christ has made us sons of God.

It may be well to note, that an entirely different word is translated redeem in Chap. 5:16 and Col. 4:5—“redeeming the time.” The original means “to attend the market-place, to buy from, to buy for oneself,” without any thought of release. The thought of acquittal, or deliverance, or forgiveness, is not implied in this word redeem.

Grace Super-abounding.

“According to the riches of His grace.” This is the third of the amazing accordings. The redemption which Jesus wrought and the salvation He provided are balanced by the wealth of divine grace. Paul wrote, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich—rich in might, honor, wisdom and glory (*Heb. 1:2, 3)—yet for your sakes, He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich”—2 Cor. 8:9. Jesus became poor, “emptied Himself,” took the lowly place of a dependent servant. He tasted abject poverty, when He “was counted sin and numbered with transgressors.” Justice turned from Him because our sins were laid upon Him. His physical nakedness on the Cross expressed His real poverty, stripped of all strength, honor and righteousness, and dying as a criminal. “He tasted death (forsaken

*Hebrews 1:2, 3 “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in high;”

of God) for every man.” What a great mystery! But that extreme poverty made it possible for us to possess unbounded and eternal wealth. The distance from glory, which the Son had with the Father, down to the poverty He suffered on Calvary, is the measure of the wealth of divine grace that redeemed us. Can you comprehend in a little measure that distance? Do you wonder that Paul proclaimed grace? How could he, or how can we preach anything else? Only “blind guides” can oppose the teaching of divine grace. See exactly (Chap. 2:7) why God saves men.

“Which He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence” (“*Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*” *KJV*)—V. 8. One divine utterance follows another in rapid succession, until we are simply bewildered before the ocean of God’s goodness. The Lord’s great heart is not content with speaking of “the riches of His grace” and its lavish display in His death for us. No, but He says yet much more about it. He makes His grace to abound toward us. The original word means to super-abound, to be over and above and beyond, to be more than enough. Whatever our trial, or trouble, or need. God says, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” The supply cannot be exhausted. We can never make too large a draw on divine grace. God could say to Abram, when he was ninety years old, “Walk before me and be thou perfect,” because He had said, “I AM the Almighty God.”—Gen. 17:1 He was the God of inexhaustible resources, the God who was more than enough.

On the other hand, Jehovah guards His grace against “lasciviousness,” or looseness of conduct. Some people think to take advantage of it. See Chap. 4:19 and Jude 4. But they cannot really do so; for grace abounds only in “wisdom and intelligence, or prudence.” Some times saints wonder why grace does not abound toward them. Why does God not answer their prayers? It is because they are not spiritually wise and intelligent. They are worldly minded. They yield to worldly companions. They follow the wisdom of this world. Jesus said, “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?” —John 5:44. Study Paul’s five serious questions in 2 Cor. 6:14-18. Tho’ God is “The Lord Almighty,” yet He cannot show Himself to be “a Father unto us” unless we separate from all that is unclean. We must stand aloof from the subtle, defiling religiousness of the present age, as well as from the world, if we would experience the super-abundance of divine grace. We must depend upon the “wisdom and intelligence” of grace, as well as upon its power. Thus we will prove God to be a Father to us in all things.

1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

The Mystery of His Will.

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will” —V. 9. By this means, the Lord made His grace to super-abound toward us in experience. Note, that “He purposed this mystery in Himself,” (*“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:”—V. 9 KJV*) men and angels having nothing to do with it, because it was “according to His good pleasure.” (*“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Philip. 2:13 KJV*) The mystery meant is described in Chap. 3:6, as threefold. We will study that verse later. The motive for revealing the mystery is “to sum up under one head all things in the Anointed One, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.” In Col. 1:16, we learn that the “all things,” are the governments on earth and in heaven, or visible and invisible. See also verses 20, 21. “The kingdoms of this world” and the principalities in the heavens shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Anointed. The Man, Christ Jesus, will be the supreme Ruler of the universe for a thousand years. The complex phrase, “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times” (V. 10), means, “unto an administration of the fulness times,” which began with Paul’s personal ministry of the Gospel to the Gentiles. That administration, or stewardship, will end by the coming in of “the fulness of the Gentiles”—Rom. 11:25. During this period, of about 1900 years, God has been taking “a people for His name” out of the Gentiles—Acts 15:14. God revealed the mystery of His will, because Paul’s Gospel had to be dispensed thru-out this age, before all the dominions on earth and in the heavens could be summed up under Christ as Head over all things. Why? Because a great company of redeemed people must be joined to Christ during His Headship over all. That company is called the Church, His body, the fulness of Him,—Vs. 22, 23. Jesus’ Headship is by means of the Church.

Our Divine Allotment.

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him, who worketh all things after (according to) the counsel of His own will”—V. 11. The fact of “sonship” (verse 5) implies an inheritance. “If children, then heirs; heirs of God”—Rom. 8:17. All children legally possess what the parents leave behind. How much more so in this great divine family. Even as the Apostles wrote before (Gal. 4:7)—“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” A new creation was “predestinated,” or previously marked out for such

an inheritance, in being marked out for “sonship,” which was emphasized before. Observe that in this verse, the fifth and sixth “accordings” are named—according to His purpose and wrought according to His counsel. The word rendered “purpose” here and in verse 9, literally means, “placing before:” hence, “are solve, a design.” How wonderful! Our sonship and inheritance in Christ are according to a previous divine design and resolve. Then, of course, He “worketh all things” (in view of bringing this purpose to pass) according to the counsel of His own sovereign will.

What is the particular “counsel of God’s will” at this point? Answer, “That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ,” or rather, who had a prior hope in Christ. The pronouns “we” in verse 11 and “us” in verse 12 refer to the Jews, of whom Paul was one. They first were to be “a praise of His glory.” That was the especial counsel of His will, for which He made all things work. The “ye” in verse 13 refers to Gentiles; hence, the phrase, “in whom also ye,” verse 13. We must keep these facts in mind else confusion will reign in our study. The Jews were “before hoppers in the Anointed One,” because God had so ordained, and had announced to them the Coming One. Therefore, Peter says: “Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you”—Acts 3:26. “Unto them were committed the oracles of God”—Rom. 3:2 and 9:4, 5. The Holy Spirit fell on them first (Acts 2), then about ten years later, on the Gentiles—*Acts 10:44. And we read of “the churches in Judea which are in Christ” (*“the churches of Judea which were in Christ:” KJV*)—Gal. 1:22. Those were Jewish Christian assemblies; but Ephesus was a Gentile Christian assembly, tho’ there were Jewish believers in it—**Acts 19:1-7.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation”—V. 13. The phrase, “ye also,” refers to the Gentiles. Here we are already let into the secret, that Gentiles should share in the grace of God equally with the Jews. They “heard the word

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

*Acts 10:44 “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.”

**Acts 19:1-7 “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.”

of the truth,” the Gospel of salvation for Gentiles, after divers Jews were hardened and believed not; for then Paul went outside the synagogue to preach—*Acts 19:8-10.

“In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” As with the Jews, so with the Gentiles—after they believed on Jesus as their Savior, they received the Holy Spirit. Sinners can receive the Savior only. They cannot receive the Spirit. Only saints can receive Him, Study **John 14:16-17. It is neither logical nor scriptural to teach that people receive the Holy Spirit, or are filled with the Spirit, when they get saved. The clause, “after that ye believed,” is correct. (See our Notes on Acts 19:2.) The word translated “to seal,” is interesting in its meaning. It signifies “to seal up, shut up;” generally, to mark as with a seal, to stamp, to stamp with approval, to limit, define, determine. The seal itself, as in ***Rev. 7:2, was signet-ring a stone for a ring, the impression of a signet-ring, a token, a passport. The Spirit was given to Jesus as the seal of the Father’s approval—“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”—Matt. 3:17 and John 7:27. So is He also given to us His sons. The Gift of the Spirit is also a pledge. After Naaman was healed he desired to take from Elisha “two mules’ burden of earth” as a pledge that he would never offer sacrifices to any but the true God—****2 Kings 5:17. Likewise, God gives us the Holy Spirit as an earnest, or pledge of the kind of resurrection body we shall have. “He gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;” that is, theme a sure of the love, the joy, the hope, the glory which we possess here are a pledge of the measure which we will possess in the glory land—2 Cor. 1:22.

*Acts 19:8-10 “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

**John 14:16-17 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

***Revelation 7:2 “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,”

****2 Kings 5:17 “And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.”

1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Accordingly, some resurrected bodies will be more glorious than others. Only the Prize-winners will have bodies “fashioned like unto the body of the glory of Him,” who is “all glorious.” Bridal splendor must compare with Bridegroom splendor. Read *1 Cor. 15:40, 41, then consider verse 42—“So also is the resurrection of the dead.” Some saints will share equally with Jesus in His future honor and glory, as to their place and fellowship and power and glory, and their bodies will radiate with the same supernal splendor as intimated by the transfiguration of Christ **Matt. 17:2. Now since there are different ranks of believers in Ephesus, there are also grades of earnest, or pledges; but they are all certain; and “our inheritance” is sure. “The day of redemption” (Chap 4:30), is the resurrection period; and “the redemption of the purchased possession,” is the obtaining of our glorified bodies, which completes our “sonship”—Rom. 8:23. The word “redemption” here is the same as in verse 7; hence, our bodies will be released from the grave because Jesus paid the ransom price by His death. He lifted the mortgage, physical death, which sin entailed upon our bodies: “abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light thru the gospel.” (*“abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”—2 Timothy 1:10 KJV*) Truly, this will be “for a praise of His glory,” the measure of which we somewhat grasp as we ponder the following pages of this marvelous little book.

Thus ends the second sentence, twelve verses, of this first chapter, exactly 200 words in the Greek. It begins with the blessing of God who blessed His people with every spiritual blessing in Christ and climaxes with the inexpressible fulness of His glory. These verses express the divine will, purpose, design, motive, choice, operation and hope of redemption. The following chapters unfold the certain outgrowth and eternal glory thereof.

First Prayer for Ephesian Saints.

“Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (*“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give*

*1 Corinthians 15:40, 41 “*There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*”

**Matthew 17:2 “*And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*”

1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;” KJV)—Vs. 15, 16.

The last nine verses of this chapter constitute the third sentence. The Apostle offered two important prayers for Ephesian saints. This is the first one; the second is recorded in chapter three. Consider exactly for whom he prayed, viz; for the holy ones seated in the heavenlies, for the faithful in Christ Jesus (verse 1), for those who are sealed with the Spirit (verse 13), and for those whose faith Godward and love manward is praise-worthy. I do not mean to say that Paul prayed here for four classes of people, but for one class, all of whom possessed those four marks of sainthood. Passing strange, you say. Why did he not cry to God for blinded sinners? Why did he not intercede for enslaved Galatians? Why not for fleshly Corinthians? Ah, he did pray earnestly for all those; but he could not offer this petition for them. Multitudes are storming the courts of heaven in behalf of sinners. Very few are “again in travail until Christ be formed” (*“of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,” KJV*) in those who are under law—Gal. 4:19. And who but Paul, dear brother Paul, ever besought God after the fashion of this petition?

Let us look at the prayer. First, note that he prayed to “the God of our Lord Jesus,” whom he terms here, “the Father of the glory,” because he is not here concerned with “the common salvation” (Jude 3), but with the possible culminations of grace, even the zenith-glory of redemption of which some saints shall be the glittering crown.—1 Cor. 15:41. Compare *John 17:22, 24.

“May give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”—V. 17 Now this is not another baptism, or a fresh anointing with the Holy Spirit; not a baptism of fire. It is not more of the Spirit. It means that our own spirit is made wise by the Holy Spirit thru knowing Jesus Himself by the word, that we may understand what is written in this wonderful Bible which is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 18 explains it. “The eyes of your heart being enlightened for you to know.” (*“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know,” KJV*) It is written, “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” The Christian life is a heart-life. “Thru faith, the faith of the heart, we understand” the things of God (*“Through faith we understand that the words were framed by the word of God,” KJV*)—Heb. 11:3. “A soulish man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God,”

*John 17:22, 24 “*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ...Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*”

(“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:”—1 Cor. 2:14 KJV) for He gives a heart knowledge of His will to those who believe His word without reasoning about it. Let me emphasize it, that the spirit and revelation can come to us only thru “an exact knowledge of Him,” (*“revelation in the knowledge of him:”—V. 17 KJV*) Christ. And that exact knowledge is found in Paul’s writings.

Three Things To Know.

The knowledge of three very important facts results from having a spirit of wisdom and revelation. 1. “The hope of His calling.” God has called us to “sonship,”—Verse 5 and *Gal. 4:5-7. In this Epistle, we learn what sons may hope for: what wealth of glory, what place of honor, what a crown of destiny. All believers are God’s children; but all believers do not become full-grown children, or sons, and never know who they really are. Is that not deplorable? Reader, may it not be so with you. 2. We may know “what fire the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Holy ones.” (*“what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”—V. 18 KJV*) Jehovah is not poor. He needs nothing. All the wealth of the universe is His. Nevertheless, He shall be enriched by redemption. He shall have “an inheritance in the saints.” (*“inheritance in the saints”—V. 18 KJV*) It is usually supposed that we only obtain an inheritance. It could not dawn upon us that God gets anything out of our salvation; but this is just what the “enlightened eyes of the heart” (*“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;”—V. 18 KJV*) behold. The measure of Christ in us is the measure of God’s inheritance in us. As much as we “are partakers of Christ” now, so much will we possess forever. Accordingly so much will God possess. “Christ in us is the hope of glory” (*“which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:”—Col. 1:27 KJV*) for us. Christ fully formed in us, full grown, fully matured, so that we are “all glorious within,” “the assembly glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish” (*“a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—Eph. 5:27 KJV*)—this will be the “riches of the glory of the Father’s inheritance in the saints.” (*“the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”—Eph. 1:18 KJV*) Oh, how wonderful! Look for the further amplification of this truth in this book. 3. We may know “what is the surpassing greatness of His dynamite” (*“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power”—Eph. 1:19 KJV*) in behalf of us

1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

*Galatians 4:5-7 “To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

who believe according to the operation of the full might of His strength. This power in our behalf has no reference to our salvation. It rather means that the very divine energy that raised Jesus from the dead and took Him up to the highest heavens, is at our disposal, actually to give us a seat in the heavens, where we are now seated in God's provision. We "fight the good fight of faith" as we count ourselves there; for we thus "lay hold on the hope set before us" ("*lay hold upon the hope set before us:*"—*Heb. 6:18 KJV*) and on this surpassing resurrection and ascension power. We believe according to the working of the strength of His might.

God put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet, and gave Him the Headship over all things for the Church. The "all things," means dominions, all authorities, whether good or bad in the heavens and on the earth. Observe that "the Church is the body" of Christ; hence Christ and His Church constitute "the full-grown man" of Chap. 4:13, which is the "mystery of Christ." This Christ in mystery (1 Cor. 1:13 and 12:12), this full grown man, is "the fulness of Him (that is God) that filleth all in all." This is the sovereign plan and purpose of the wisdom of Jehovah. Thru redemption, God, who fills all and in all, is constituted full by means of Christ and His Church. This fulness is God's inheritance in the holy ones, as before stated, verse 18. And this fulness includes our possessions in the heavens with Christ. The triune God fills all things in all by means of Christ and His Church, "the full-grown man" of Chapter 4. Hence, that we may actually come into our possessions, all the unlimited power of Almighty God which stooped to break the bars of the grave and carry Jesus up past all the power of the prince of the air, the devil, is continually in our reach, for our faith to appropriate, that we may indeed secure the heavenlies for our eternal abode and dominion. The racer in Philippians beholds Christ as "the Prize of the upward calling," ("*the prize of the high calling*"—*Philip. 3:14 KJV*) and runs with joyful patience and unswagging speed that he "may obtain."

The Seven Accordings

A brief retrospect of the first chapter may whet our interest for what follows. Let us look especially at the accordings, viewing them together. Observe first, that we were blest in Christ according as God chose us in Christ before Adam was created. Then we were marked out before hand to be sons of God according to the good pleasure of His will. Therefore, God chose us as sons, that the glory of His grace should be praised forever. That required redemption; for when Jehovah began to perform the good pleasure of His will. He found a ruined and sinful

1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all *things* to the church,

1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

race, a lost race, to deal with. Hence, redemption, even divorcement of our sins, was granted in an amazing measure—according to the incomparable wealth of His grace. But it was all a secret, which God could not any longer conceal. Therefore, He made known the mystery of His will, which He purposed in Himself, according to His good pleasure. The divine purpose was back of all. Hence, He marked us out beforehand also, for an inheritance, which Satan tries to hinder. But he cannot, because the inheritance is according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things; yea, He worketh all things according—to the counsel of His own will. Finally, the counsel of the will of the triune God is to marshal “the exceeding greatness of His power” in our behalf. To what extent? How much is Almighty Jehovah for His people? His power to usward who believe, is according to “the working; or His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and authority and dynamite and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.” (*“according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:”—Eph. 1:19-21 KJV*) That divine resurrection power is pledged to be employed by Jehovah Himself, that all His saints may experience all the marvelous provisions of redemption here and now, and for all eternity. And this Epistle lays open to our view these boundless provisions.

2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The Divine Provision

Chapter Two

“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, etc.”—V. 1-2. Observe here as in the preceding chapter, that both Jews and Gentiles are brought on the scene. The Apostle begins by saying, “And you” (Gentiles), and in verse 3, “also we” (Jews). God’s provision for the Church, the Body of Christ, made up of Jews and Gentiles, is herein outlined as including seven pertinent facts—our death with Christ; made alive with Christ in His grave; raised from the tomb with Him; seated in the heavenlies with Him, created in Christ for good works; made nigh to God in Christ; and Jews and Gentiles made one in Him. These seven items are not our experiences. They are acts accomplished in Christ for us and with us, independent of our will: and we would never know them if He had not revealed them to us by His Word. These facts are true of every believer on Jesus Christ, whether he knows them, or believes them, or not. But when we do see them and believe them to be portions of God’s great grace-plan, then we are encouraged and enabled to appropriate Christ in all His fulness. Thus we are brought to enjoy the victory, power and wealth of such unspeakable provision. I trust the reader understands this. Let me illustrate. Marie fell heir to 200 acres of land. She was told about it when quite young. When she was twelve, she pointed out the plat to me with childish delight; but I saw that she did not understand how wealthy she was. Now that tract was no more hers then, than when she was born, and no less hers than 15 years later; but at the age of 27, she began to appreciate and enjoy her possessions. How did she come to that final enjoyment? By believing steadfastly that the land was hers; by exploring and appropriating it and by planting it with seed for a harvest.

Likewise, as we believe these wonderful statements of God’s gracious provision, and squat down by faith upon our claims and use them, we come into real living enjoyment of their purposes and power. We enjoy Christ Himself to the full by means of them.

Who is “the prince of the power of the air?” And who is “the prince of this world?”—John 14:30. Of course it is the devil, or “the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.” (“*the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*”—*Eph. 2:2 KJV*) Note that the course (literally, age) of this world is according to the will of Satan, and not according to God. Note also that all sinners live under Satan’s power; that all the desires of the flesh and of the mind are according to the wicked one; for sinners are counted dead in trespasses

and sins. A sinner can do absolutely nothing to please God, but acknowledge that he is a sinner by accepting Christ as his Savior. All believers were “children of wrath” before they believed in Jesus; but sinners who reject the light and never believe on Him become children of the devil—*John 8:44. Remember that so-called noble thoughts and desires of the natural man are no less obnoxious to a holy God than ignoble thoughts. Compare **Gen. 6:4 with ***Rom. 3:9, 10, 23.

Great Divine Love

2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

2:6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made us sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)”—Vs. 4-5. This verse sounds like ****John 3:16. Love is back of grace. “God is love.” And before God could actually quicken a soul, dead in sins, He must quicken him provisionally beforehand with Christ. God saw a full and complete victory over death and the devil before He justified one sinner. “He made us alive together with Christ in Joseph’s tomb, and raised us with Him from that tomb, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenlies far above that tomb, and altogether in Christ.” And all this before we were born. What was the divine motive of such provision? It was that He might display His grace. People do not like to hear about grace; nevertheless, God did the above expressly “that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness toward us in the Anointed Jesus.” (“*That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*”—*V. 7 KJV*) My friend, think of that. Infinite Love purposes to put on exhibition God’s GRACE, matchless and boundless. It is your privilege and mine to enjoy that exhibition forever. How foolish then to reject His grace.

*John 8:44 “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

**Genesis 6:4 “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.”

***Romans 3:9, 10, 23 “What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ...For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;”

****John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Therefore, the following words—“by grace are ye saved thru the faith.” (V. 8) God’s grace, your faith is the process of our salvation; and yet the faith is “not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,” which cometh by hearing the word of God—*Rom. 10:17. We cannot even credit ourselves with believing. All is of grace, “not of works, that not anyone might boast.” Compare 1 Cor. 1:31 and Gal. 6:14. Verse 10 is valuable for those who are ambitious to work for God. He beforehand prepared “good works” for us to walk in. We need not prepare them, need not hunt them. They are called works of love—**1 Thes. 1:3. And God has created us in the Anointed Jesus for these good works, in which, “we are labourers together with God”—1 Cor. 3:9. How very important then for us to learn from God what these good works are; for not all religious effort is of God; and not all good works are for every individual. For example, do not imagine that you must preach because I do, or that you must edit a paper because I do. “Whatever He (not the people) saith unto you (not to some one else), do it” (not something that you think should be done)—John 2:5. If saints do not camp around verse 10, they are sure to build for a bonfire—***1 Cor. 3:15. Observe in verse 2, that the word “children,” is really “sons.” Compare also Chap. 5:6. As we learn in Ephesians of grown up saints, a “full grown man,” the fully developed mystical Christ; so Satan also will have full-grown children, here called “sons of disobedience;” that is, they are fully developed in their disobedience to God and in their obedience to the devil. How blessed that we may grow into full obedience to God and His Anointed. The distance between these two classes widens every day.

Jews And Gentiles Made One

God chose Abraham out of idolatry, and his descendants have been known as the “chosen line.” All other people were regarded as heathen. Because the Lord gave Abraham a covenant, the sign of which was circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14), his followers are known as “The circumcision;” hence they call all other people “The uncircumcision.” Tho’ there were hints of God’s ultimate purpose concerning the Gentiles, as seen in the salvation of Rahab and the choice of Ruth; yet until Calvary, they were “without hope and without God in the world.” (*“having no hope, and without God in the world:”—V. 12 KJV*)

*Romans 10:17 “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

**1 Thessalonians 1:3 “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;”

***1 Corinthians 3:15 “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Therefore, the Apostle declares: “But now in the Anointed Jesus, ye (Gentiles), that once were far off, are become nigh in the blood of the Anointed One.” (V. 13) To Israel, because of their distance from God in fellowship, Peter exclaims, “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” But Paul announces to Gentiles that they are nigh, even as also Jews, because of Jesus’ death for all men. The Cross of Christ bridged the chasm between God and man. The law given to Moses became “a middle wall of partition” between the Hebrews and Gentiles, because it was given to the former and not to the latter. That God should show favor to the Hebrews, of course aroused the envy of other nations. Now this cause of envy has been removed by Jesus dying in behalf of all men, and thus offering salvation to all men by faith in Himself. Jesus’ death being the fulfillment of “the law of commandments in decrees,” which were simply shadows of coming things (Col. 2:17), by His death. He put an eternal end to all observances of law. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth”—Rom. 10:4.

“So making peace.” We never need to exhort men to make their peace with God; it was made once, by the death of Christ, who died in our stead. Let us announce this blessed fact, and exhort, or entreat men to receive peace from God, and be “filled with all joy and peace in believing.” “Jesus is our peace,” (V. 14) says Paul; that is, He is Israel’s peace—Micah 5:5. And He “made both (Hebrews and Gentiles), one.” “He created in Himself of the two, one new man.” The Church of Christ is here called “one new man,” constituted of Jews and Gentiles. See chap. 4:13. Remember that we are here studying God’s gracious provision. Jesus Christ identified Himself with the old creation, which included Jews and Gentiles, assumed the headship of the first Adam, and took all men, as one bad body, into death with Him, and thus made it possible to bring up from death in Himself, “a new creation” as “one flew man,” Himself being the rightful Head thereof. The oneness here wrought provisionally, was actually wrought 50 days later, when “in one Spirit (the Holy Spirit), we all into onebody were baptized, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or freemen; and all of one Spirit were given to drink” (“*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*” KJV)—1 Cor. 12:13, That was at Pentecost. Now all who believe on Jesus Christ, step into this one body, the Church, “the Body of Christ”—Chap. 1:23, And all believers who drink, that is receive the Spirit, even as did the 120 are sealed and made to understand and enjoy this glorious oneness with Christ. Jews and Gentiles alike share equally the benefits of redemption by faith in the world’s Redeemer.

2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Accordingly, the last four verses of this chapter speak of all believers by three figures—a building, or house; household, or family; and a city, or commonwealth. “The household of God” here is the same as “the household of faith” in Gal. 6:10, and includes all believers for every age. The fact of citizenship carries the same thought. Hence, the Apostle says that believing Gentiles are “no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens” (V. 19) of all the great commonwealth of God, here termed the household of God. “Our commonwealth,” our particular citizenship as members of Christ’s body, “is in heaven”—Philip. 3:20. Evidently, the Spirit indicates two “buildings fitly framed together—one includes “the churches of Judea which are (*were, KJV*) in Christ” (Gal. 1:22), which are called “a spiritual house, etc.” (1 Pet. 2:5); and the other, are Gentile churches as expressed by verse 22—“in whom ye also are builded together.” All believers during this church age are denominated, “all the building”—Verse 21. The foundation of each building, whether Jewish, or Gentile, is “the apostles and prophets”—Verse 20. Jesus Christ is “the Corner Stone.” He is termed the foundation in *1 Cor. 3:11.

Who fitly frames the building? The great original Architect. We may carry materials; we may feed hod-carriers: we may assist in whatever way He may indicate: but God alone can do the framing. It is then sure to “grow into an holy temple, or sanctuary in the Lord.” (V. 21) In chap. 4:11, 12, we learn our part in the up-going of this wonderful spiritual building. Jesus said, “On this Rock, meaning Himself, I will build MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (“*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” *KJV*)—Matt. 16:18. The final results of redemption will be certain, wonderful and eternal.

*1 Corinthians 3:11 “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

The Divine Power

Chapter Three

3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

“For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles”—V. 1. The phrase, “for this cause,” refers to all that has been said in the two preceding chapters. The word “cause” is “charin” in Greek, which means “grace.” The same expression occurs in verse 14. Therefore, the Apostle means to say, “For this grace,” because of God’s favor to men thru Christ, Paul wrote to that Gentile Assembly. Indeed, he was the prisoner of Christ because of God’s grace. You will find, that in all his writings, he puts all the responsibility of all his career upon the wondrous grace of God. He refused to acknowledge himself a prisoner of Rome, tho’ he wrote from here. He would not give Satan credit for his bondage. However, in chap. 4:1, he speaks of himself as “the prisoner in the Lord.” (*“the prisoner of the Lord,”—Eph. 4:1 KJV*)

The grammatical construction of these first verses is peculiar. The first seven verses are a compound clause without any predicate, as if the writer began to say something, which he never quite finished. No, Paul never could tell all that he saw. See *2 Cor. 12:4. But the Spirit enabled him to write all that we need for our highest good and for God’s greatest glory. Hallelujah!

The words, “for (in behalf of) you Gentiles,” shows that this Letter was written to Gentile believers in particular. However, the first twelve verses of chap. 1 are concerning Jewish believers; for the divine order is always “to the Jew first”—**Rom. 2:9, 10. Then he spoke of both Jews and Gentiles, stating the relation of each to the other and of their mutual share of Christ’s death on the Cross. After the end of the second chapter, there is no more direct reference to Jewish believers. Hence, the language of the first verse of this chapter—unto and in behalf of the Gentiles.

3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

“The stewardship of the grace of God toward” (V. 2) Gentile saints was committed to the Apostle Paul. “The mystery hidden in God” (v. 9) was not revealed to “the sons of the men,” “the children of Israel.” It was sovereignly revealed to Paul, for him to announce and explain to others. He was made the “housekeeper, or steward, or administrator” of the mystery of God. Verse two implies that they may not have known

3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

*2 Corinthians 12:4 “How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

**Romans 2:9, 10 “Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:”

3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

this fact. He had written afore in brief (chap. 2:11-22) by reading which, they might perceive his understanding in the mystery. We can never understand except we read. No man can learn the mystery of God except thru Paul's writings. And this is why there is so much unpardonable ignorance concerning the Church. Men fail to read the Gospel as made known to this man, God's "vessel of election," His chosen "steward" of the Church. Shame! SHAME! It will pay the reader to study *Rom. 2:16 and 16:25 and **1 Tim. 1:11 and ***1 Cor. 9:17 and ****Col. 1:25, 26.

What great encouragement is here for us. We may understand the Apostle's knowledge of the mystery of Christ. How? By reading what he has written—Verse 4. The Bible is an enigma to those only who do not care to know it. The mystery of Christ is fully unfolded in Paul's epistles in particular.

What is The Mystery?

The mystery of Christ, mentioned in verse 4, is expressed in verse 6. "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." The word "fellow" shows that God bestowed His grace upon the Gentiles as well as upon Israel. Jesus "tasted death for every man." Hence, "fellowheirs" means that "the sons of God" (Gal. 4:6, 7 and Heb. 2:10) are composed of Jews and Gentiles. The phrase, "and of the same body," means that the Body of Christ, the Church, is constituted of Jews and Gentiles. Likewise, the phrase, "and partakers of His promise," means that all who believe on Jesus, whether Jews, or Gentiles, are participants of the promise made to Abraham—"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"—Gen. 12:3. The Greek preposition "sun," meaning, joint, with, fellow, etc., is a prefix to each of these words. Hence, in the R.V., the verse reads thus—"That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs anti fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers of

*Romans 2:16 and 16:25 "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel... Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,"

**1 Timothy 1:11 "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

***1 Corinthians 9:17 "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of *the gospel* is committed unto me."

****Colossians 1:25, 26 "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"

the promise,” (V. 6) etc. Jews and Gentiles share equally in Christ in three definite respects.

There is no Scripture for the phrase “Gentile bride.” There will be saved Jews in the Bride of Christ as well as Gentiles. Neither will the Bride of Christ be altogether of Israel, as some have taught Abraham sent Eliezer to get a wife for Isaac from his own “kindred” in the flesh; but that does not teach that God means to get a Wife for His Son from Abraham’s “kindred” after the flesh. Abraham was not a Jew. He was a Hebrew, or journey man thru this world. It teaches that the Bride of Christ will be taken from Abraham’s spiritual kinsfolk, which include all nations. The first company seen inside the open door in heaven, the only ones “in the throne and round about the throne, are redeemed out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation” (*“in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne...and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” KJV*) —Rev. 4:6 and 5:9. Who are they, if not the Bride of the Lamb?

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of His power”—V. 7. Saul of Tarsus was sovereignly chosen of God to preach this hidden Gospel. See *Acts 9:15. He fought conviction and kicked hard against the pricks of truth; but the Lord prevailed. The working of His power was effectual. God’s mighty grace conquered him, and afterward made him a faithful minister of the very grace that saved him; and his followers are preaching the same Gospel.

The Secret of Strength

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given”—V. 8. The Apostle took the place of abject weakness and absolute dependence upon his precious Lord, even as the Lord depended upon His Father. Jesus said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me”—John 5:19, 30. Paul learned that Christ held that attitude of dependence. Therefore, he wrote, saying, “Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God; for we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you” —2 Cor. 13:4. Jesus said also, “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than” John the Baptist, whom He pronounced the greatest among men—Matt. 11:11. Jesus condescended from the highest place,

*Acts 9:15 “But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.**”

3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

as the Son of God, and came down the furthest. He took the lowest place possible, even that of a servant. “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many”—Matt. 20:27, 28. Thus He assumed the least place, ready to perform the most menial tasks. He became the bond-slave (Gr. *doulos*) of His Father in behalf of undeserving mankind, and laid down His life voluntarily to redeem them. Jesus, the holy Son of Man, touched the utmost depths of condescension. His disembodied Spirit went down into hades, while His spotless temple lay in the grave. He was so absolutely helpless and dependent upon the Father, that He would have remained there, had not “God raised Him up from the dead” (“*This Jesus hath God raised up,*” *KJV*)—Acts 2:32 and 3:15, 26. Therefore, many times we read, that God raised Him up. Oh, let us consider it, my friend. For three weary days and nights, God’s holy One was with the spirits in prison, down “in the heart of the earth.” Compare *Matt. 12:40 with **1 Pet. 3:19. Those 72 hours seemed like an age to Him; His cry was heard by the Father—***Jonah 2:2, 6 and ****Heb. 5:7.

Paul Imitated Christ

Likewise, the Apostle Paul chose the same place of servitude, or of absolute dependence upon the Lord. The phrase, “weak in Him,” expresses his attitude and experience. It is the key to an understanding of the words, “less than the least of all saints.” He saw that the only way to be “strong in the Lord,” was by being weak first, in the Lord. Christ chose the attitude of weakness, and Paul took Christ to be his weakness, so that he could take Him also to be his strength. If Christ is weak, and therefore dependent upon the Father, and if Christ is my life, then I too am weak in Him, and dependent upon the Father. That was his logic. But that place of abject weakness and childlike dependence upon God is the very root of the mightiest power; “for when I am weak then am I strong”—2 Cor. 12:10. Other saints also learned that secret of power; but Paul had gone on so long, and that truth of dependence upon God had been so deeply wrought in him by years of strenuous

3:9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

*Matthew 12:40 “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”

**1 Peter 3:19 “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;”

***Jonah 2:2, 6 “And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice...I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.”

****Hebrews 5:7 “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;”

necessity and grave responsibility, that he could well regard himself as being “less than the least of all saints.” That is, there were none so entirely and unchangeably dependent upon the Lord as he. Furthermore, the menial service he rendered, doing the little, undesirable things, from which others shrank, and suffering the taunts of Satan and the mockings of men and the rejections of should-be friends, which others could not have borne—all required that deep, secret reliance upon Jehovah.

People speak and write eloquently of “the great Apostle Paul;” but not one in a thousand understands wherein his greatness lay. They slip over his testimony of personal sufferings and privations. They cannot understand him, when saying, “We are fools for Christ’s sake, weak and despised. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands.” (*“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our hands:” KJV*). People are ashamed of him and of his Gospel, who was “made as the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things” (*“we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.” KJV*)—1 Cor. 4:10-13. But those were his credentials. God’s matchless grace was thus displayed. Its sufficiency was proven. God’s power was perfected in Paul’s weakness. Therefore, he gloried in his infirmities, or weaknesses (not sicknesses, but limitations), that the dynamite of God, like a tent, might cover him, and thus the divine power be exploited by means of human limitations. Therefore, Paul boasted in what others despise. He said, “I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ; for when I may be weak, then powerful I am” (*“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.” KJV*)—2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

In this citation, the Apostle explains what he means by being “weak in Christ”. His limitations are Christ’s limitations. If he is insulted, it is against Christ. If he is in a strait, Christ is in that strait; because he is in Christ and Christ is in him and he lives for Christ. He knows nothing apart from his dear Lord, desires nothing and attempts nothing independently of Him. But oh, this is after all the only boundless life and sphere. The perfect will of the unlimited God is his only boundary. Any wonder, then that he shouted, “When I may be

weak, then powerful I am?” (“*for when I am weak, then am I strong.*”—*2 Cor. 12:10 KJV*) His limitations, his necessities, necessitated the divine intervention, and thereby God was glorified.

Let Us Imitate Paul

Oh, beloved Reader, may we understand this. If we desire to experience anything of Paul’s great power, we must follow in his steps. We too must despise what others eulogize. Let us no longer bewail our inabilities and apologize for our infirmities. Our lack of prestige, learning, wealth, tact, eloquence, organization, gifts, renown, or anything and all things, which the flesh dotes on—our lack, I say, is Jehovah’s opportunity to arise and display Himself and His wisdom and might. God can use the above named items, and does often use them, if we have them without knowing it, or without thinking about them, or depending upon them. As sure as we depend upon anything except the Lord Himself, we actually hinder His operations. This is why people with natural gifts and qualifications are usually stiff, intellectual and formal. Their music is not musical, or melodious. Their writings are not racy. Their addresses are not living and unctious. Their lives are not fragrant with the love and meekness and unselfishness of Christ. “According to your faith,” is the rule; not according to your inability. “If thou canst believe;” not if thou art eloquent, or hast some natural gift.

Untraceable Wealth

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”—V. 8. No small task was imposed upon Paul. Therefore, he required the mightiest strength of Jehovah, which could be granted only to him who was the chief in “weakness in Christ.” His huge task was to preach, or announce the glad tidings of the wealth of Christ, which was beyond tracing out. How few people know anything about that wealth. Oh, how very few seem to care to know. When men are saved, they think that they have all that is to be had. Well, they have all in Christ; but they do not grasp the dimensions of that ALL, unless they read, or are taught Paul’s Gospel in its fulness. Salvation from sin and sinning is wonderful. Justification before God and being born of the Spirit are blessed. But these experiences are only the beginnings, which should be consummated with an enjoyment of the unbounded and untraceable wealth in Christ. Oh, pity the ministers and people, who paddle around in the shore waters of initial salvation, and never launch out into the broad, deep ocean of the fulness of God.

3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Some go a little further, and discover healing in Christ for the body. These paddle and splash in this pool, but see nothing more. Again, some sail out from shore and become anointed, or filled with the Holy Spirit. They become occupied with their mighty endowment with power from on high, which is all great and wonderful and necessary: but they unwisely limit the operations of the Spirit to miracle workings and revival achievements. Oh, that more saints were out this far from land. But they are not; hence, they remain babes in Christ as to growth in Him and a knowledge of God's will. Most Christians fear to get out of sight of the land. They keep near enough, so that they can scurry back any time that the depths and breadths may not suit them. They are afraid of being lost in God, unlike Paul, who yearned to "be found in Christ" ("*be found in him,*" *KJV*)—Philip. 3:9.

Still others accept the doctrine of Jesus' coming. They look for Him at least theoretically. They have some conviction of the nearness of His advent. They know that the signs of His coming are imminent. But they have very little understanding of the nature of His coming for the Church, and of the Scriptural preparation needed for that event. The whole affair is a sort of vague, dreamy, far-off event that does not grip the heart. Christ's coming is not a personal experience with such. It is rather some distant event for all the saints. They do not say with the poet, "Oh, He's coming after me;" or with John. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Such saints have never discovered the vast golden plains, which the advent of Jesus will unfold. These are some of the unsearchable riches set before us in Paul's unique epistles. Let us therefore pursue our study of this Epistle, that we may learn some of them, all of which are for us to enjoy.

Observe, that the riches of Christ are "unsearchable, or untraceable." Man cannot understand the Lord by human wisdom, or by his mental searchings. Divine truth comes to men by a divine revelation. Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But Jesus replied to him, saying, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven"—Matt. 16:16, 17. Paul wisely exclaimed, "How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past tracing out" ("*how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out,*" *KJV*)—Rom. 11:33. They are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes: that is, to those who acknowledge their inability to understand and depend upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Word. We can know the riches of Christ only by reading and pondering the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit, who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"—I Cor. 2:10. We may be "filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding."

(“filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”—Col. 1:9 KJV)

Scope of the Mystery

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery”—V. 9. It was the divine intent that Paul’s Gospel be proclaimed worldwide, and it has been so done—*Col. 1:6. God chose and anointed other men to assist the Apostle in publishing his glad tidings in the beginning; and some are publishing them to day. A heart knowledge of this Gospel creates an unspeakable fellow feeling among saints and an indescribable inward warmth, which is sure to flow out in glowing streams to others. We saw in chap. 2:14, 15, “a middle wall of partition, the enmity, caused by the law of commandments in ordinances,” (*“hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;” KJV*) between Jews and Gentiles. We saw also that wall broken down by the death of Christ. Hence, the Apostle would have all men to behold and marvel at the fellowship between Jews and Gentiles, which his Gospel has produced and established. Now bear in mind, that “the mystery,”

“From the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by (thru) Jesus Christ.” We saw by verse 5, that the mystery of Christ was not made known to “the sons of men” in the generations before Christ. But this verse shows that this Gospel of unsearchable wealth was in the mind and purpose of God “from the ages” past. All things were created thru Christ in view of making known this secret. The first Adam line, what we call the old creation, would never have been brought on the scene, if God had not planned to bring forth another and far superior line thru His Son, the Last Adam. And Likewise, there would never have been a “house of Israel,” if God had not beforehand purposed to have also “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Reason for the Proclamation

“That now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God”—V. 10. The Greek word, rendered “manifold,” is from “*polus*,” meaning “much, vast, deep,” and from “*poikilos*,” which means “many colored, variegated, elaborate, intricate, cunning.” In Christ “are hid all the

3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

*Colossians 1:6 “Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, *as it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:”

3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

treasures of wisdom and knowledge”—Col. 2:3. This divine wisdom is vast and deep and great. It is intricate, variegated and elaborate. It is greatly diversified, multifarious, manifold; that is, fold upon fold. Paul’s Gospel had to be proclaimed, that the governments and authorities on high might learn of this multifarious wisdom. It is “now,” during all this evil age, and “thru the Church,” that the mystery should be published, that holy angels might stand aghast and marvel and unholy angels might stagger and reel at the untraceable wealth of divine grace. Therefore; how highly we should prize the teaching of divine grace and the mystery of Christ. How thoroughly we should be imbued with it. How unfalteringly and vehemently we should declare it. If you and I do not accept and put forth this message, others will. Do you believe it? For it is “according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”—V. 11. When Jehovah “framed the ages by the Word (“hremati,” Greek) of God,” (*“framed by the word of God”—Heb. 11:3 KJV*) He had all these things in mind. They were all included in His vast, secret purpose, of which we read in chap. 1:9, 11. Compare *Heb. 1:3 and 11:3, R. V. (* *in KJV*)

3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him”—V. 12. “In whom,” that is, in Christ, is a frequent phrase in this Epistle. All that Ephesian saints are and do is in Christ. Hence, the Apostle declares here, that in Him, we have freedom of speech to proclaim the mystery. If we do not have it in Him, we will not have it at all; for Satan fights this doctrine fiercely. Note his request for prayer in his own behalf—Chap. 6:19 and **Col. 4:3. In Him, we have also “access, or an introduction, with confidence.” (V. 12) The door that He opens for us, where we may announce the glad tidings, no man can shut. Thank God, if we are in Christ, we never need to break doors down, or force an opening for our message. We need not seek some one else’s job. But how do we have this boldness of utterance and confident introduction? It is “by the faith of Him.” Here is a lesson that few learn. If God orders our steps, we will have “the faith of God.” If He does not order them, we cannot have His faith. “The faith of Christ, or of God,” obtains what it seeks for. It is never defeated. Myriads of projects fail because they are not born of God. The only faith the projectors have is in their own ingenuity, tact, wisdom and strength.

*Hebrews 1:3 and 11:3 “Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; ... Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

**Colossians 4:3 “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:”

They mistake their own desires and plans for the will of God. Of course, they cannot have “the faith of Christ.”

Second Prayer for Ephesian Saints

“Wherefore, I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory”—V. 13. Here is a reminder of the oft-repeated trials that our brother Paul endured to bring us the message of grace in all its fulness. Bear in mind, that he was “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles,” (*“the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,”—Chap. 3:1 KJV*) incarcerated in Rome, when he wrote this Epistle. No doubt that was his great tribulation; for he yearned to broadcast the Gospel of grace and glory to all men, and build up and feed all the children of God. It was to him an unspeakable affliction, unless the Lord revealed to him that He would get more glory from his imprisonment than from his freedom. Furthermore, after reading verse 12, the saints might wonder why Paul was still in prison. Did not his bondage contradict his words about boldness and access, etc.? He felt that his enslavement might be a shock to them. If he had boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Christ, why was he not released from the Roman cell? Therefore, that soliloquy of mind, occasioned a fervent and profound prayer for them. How mysterious and wonderful are God’s ways. If the Apostle had not been kept in prison, it is not likely that we would have had this matchless Letter, including the two profoundest prayers ever made.

3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

“For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—V. 14. The petition of chap. 1 was, that we might have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in an exact knowledge of Christ. The answer to that prayer is preparatory to this one. The latter is doubtless the most important petition that Paul ever offered. If not so, why does he say, “I bow my knees?” This is the only time that he speaks thus. His supplication is bold and fervent. Overwhelmed with the supernal glory which awaits full-overcomers, and knowing the subtle schemes and untiring efforts of Satan to hinder them, he waxes warm in his unselfish cry. The devil would make the saints faint, when running for the Prize, over the very tribulations which were sure to befall him as he persisted in the teaching and toil necessary to help them to obtain the highest glory. That is what he means by saying that his tribulations are their glory. Therefore, he poured out his heart to God in this petition that we might be so equipped as never to faint on the race course.

3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Observe first, that he addressed “The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He prayed for His own brethren in Christ; for God was their Father also. “The whole family in the heavens and earth,” (V. 15) is

3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

another way of expressing “the household of God”—2:19. All believers in all ages constitute that “family, or household.” Paul himself is one of that part of the great family, which is now in heaven (*Philip. 1:22-24 and **2 Cor. 5:6-8), even as he was a part of the family, when he was on earth. If the undesirable, unthinkable, unbelievable heresy of “soul-sleeping” were true, no part of God’s family could now be in heaven, except the three prophets and those resurrected when Christ was raised—***Matt. 27:52, 53. Those who fell asleep in Christ would still be in their graves. Would that be good news? Not for me. Paul would not have called that being “with Christ, which is far better.” Would that be “absent from the body?” If soul-sleeping were true, how could Jesus say, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living?” (*“He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living:”*—Mark 12:27 KJV) Is that the best that the new creation could hope for during the absence of our Lord thru-out this present age? Nay! Thank God! Part of the family are already in heaven.

The Apostle’s petition was not of ordinary dimensions. It was “according to the riches of His glory,” of which he had obtained an inexpressible vision. What unworthy prayers most saints are wont to offer. What a beggarly conception most people have of the Father’s wealth of glory in His Son. How little men see, and how much less they dare to lay hold of by faith. But oh, what a limitless answer we may expect to a prayer so bold as Paul’s. Brother Paul, what right have you to ask Holy Justice to dispense so lavishly upon sinful, depraved humanity? Methinks he answers, saying, I am coming to the throne of grace, whereon my own Father sits, inviting me. I am coming in behalf of those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, even God’s own “dear children.” I want them actually to experience all that they have fallen heir to in His beloved Son. Paul never insulted the goodness and power of God by any puny, unscriptural prayers. When I was beginning to trust God for the healing of my body, a bishop (?) thought to give me some fatherly advice. He said, “Brother Copley you believe too

*Philippians 1:22-24 “But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.”

**2 Corinthians 5:6-8 “Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight :) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

***Matthew 27:52, 53 “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

much.” How offensive to God is such counsel to a young minister. He wanted me to believe according to man’s carnal conception of God’s grace. Poor fellow; he did not realize that his words pleased the devil. Oh, I am a thousand times glad that the Spirit did not let me be influenced by him. What eternal loss I would have experienced, and others also. Paul, a true, faithful, scriptural bishop, or overseer, prayed according to God’s wealth of glory, which culminates His marvelous grace. He was unlike that ecclesiastical bishop.

Consider the glory of the “eternal power and Godhead” of Jehovah. Think of “the glory of the incorruptible God” (*“the glory of the incorruptible God” KJV*)—Rom. 1. Meditate upon “the glory of His Majesty,” and that “He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” (*“who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”—Exodus 15:11 KJV*) What did He do when Moses cried, saying, “I beseech thee, “shew me thy glory?” He passed by him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (34:6-7)—Ex. 33:18 and 34:6, 7. What vast wealth of glory was there displayed before Moses. In chap. 1 of this Epistle, we saw how the Apostle prayed for us to know “what are the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in the saints.” Our redemption is “according to the riches of His grace,” and our sonship is “to the praise of the glory of His grace.” (*“To the praise of the glory of his grace,”—Chap. 1:6 KJV*) Finally, our inheritance, including a glorified body, is “to the praise of His glory” (*“To the praise of the glory” KJV*)—Chap. 1. All this expresses the unlimited riches of divine glory, according to which, we may expect “the Father of glory” to answer Paul’s prayer in our behalf. Thus we shall be filled with all the fulness of God.

The Petition Summarized

How foolish to call this “entire sanctification,” as some do. This prayer is for believers who are already called “saints, or holy ones”—Chap. 1:1. How ignorant to term it “the baptism, or anointing with the Spirit.” Those saints were already sealed with the Spirit, and walking in Him. See chap. 1:13 and 4:30. The supplication itself is five-fold, essentially expressed by seven words, or phrases, viz—“strengthened,” “dwell,” “rooted and grounded,” “able to comprehend;” “to know” and “filled.” These terms are stretched to the utmost of their meaning, which the Holy Spirit has come to make clear to us and enable us to appropriate—*1 Cor. 2:10.

*1 Corinthians 2:10 “But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

“Filled into all the fulness of God,” (V. 19) is the amazing climax of Christian experience. The last step to this fulness is “to know the love of Christ,” God’s Anointed One. That love surpasses the utmost possibility of being known, except by those who are saved. There is boundless breadth and measureless length and unfathomable depth and an insurmountable height to the love of Christ. Yet, Paul dares to pray that we may be enabled to seize hold upon, and “know that knowledge-surpassing love.” (V. 19) To be filled into all the fulness of God is to dwell in all His love and have all that love dwell in us. John wrote, saying, “God is love; he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in, God, and God in him.” (*“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”—1 John 4:16 KJV*) Evidently, Paul reached this climactic experience. Such language as the following indicates that he did. “I have learned, that whatever state I am in, therewith to be content.” (*“for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”—Philp. 4:11 KJV*) He did not murmur, nor chafe. Dear Reader, how is it with you? He said also, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, etc.” (*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,”—Romans 8:28 KJV*) His faith in God concerning His providences was perfect and calm. He knew that “no evil can happen to the just.” (*“There shall no evil happen to the just.”—Pro. 12:21 KJV*) Brother, is this your experience? He shouted, “I can do all things thru Christ, who strengthens me.” (*“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”—Philip. 4:13 KJV*) He was never daunted; for he was never out of God’s will. The four following words are exceedingly full of meaning—“Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” He was never discouraged. He grieved and groaned because of the leathery of some saints and the unbelief and impudence of others; but he rejoiced ever more in God’s goodness and grace. He records no regrets. He had nothing to take back, or make right. How different with most Christian workers today. Is there not a cause? I fear they do not maintain a single eye to God’s glory, and do not press on into all His fulness. No man could justly find any fault with Paul’s teaching, or conduct. Even Peter, the chief of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, gives him the highest compliment by placing his writings on a par with the rest of the Word of God. He wrote to his own people, the Jews—*1 Pet. 1:1. In his second epistle, chap. 3:15, 16, he says, “Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you (the Epistle to the Hebrews); as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood,

*1 Peter 1:1 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”

which they, that are unlearned and unstable; wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” Compare also 1 Cor. 4:9-14 and 2 Cor. 4:7-12.

The Petition in Detail

First, the Apostle prays for us to be “strengthened with might by His (God’s) Spirit in the inner man.” This cry is three-fold—“strengthened with dynamite;” strengthened “thru the Spirit,” that is, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and strengthened “in the inner man.” There is no quarter here for the flesh. The “new man, the inner man” only can know God’s dynamite. He may know it and never have a want. The Spirit deals only with the new creation; for God dealt with the old creation once thru the death of Christ on Calvary. “Our old man was crucified with Him” (“*our old man is crucified with him,*” *KJV*)—Rom. 6:6. This explains why so many saints never grow and never learn the Lord. They hold, that they are in the place of the first Adam, by being cleansed from sin and the carnal mind. They claim that the old man is taken out, root and branch. Of course that supposedly sanctified old creation can never be filled with God. Only one class of believers ever learn Christ and His fulness. They who know, by experience, the two natures in believers, and count the one dead and the other only, “the inner man,” alive.

What Paul is here praying for is, therefore, far more than the anointing with the Spirit. This petition can be in behalf of those only who have already received the Spirit after the fashion of the early church. We are thus strengthened in the inner man, as we yield with all the heart to the operations of the Spirit, who works in us by the Word. This goes on continually as we believe and appropriate the Word of God. Thus the new man, the inner man, is undergirded and built up. We become “dynamited with all dynamite according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks unto the Father.” (“*Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father,*”—*Col. 1:11-12 KJV*) Then we “walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit, and growing by the knowledge of God” (“*That ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,*” *KJV*)—Col. 1:10, 11, Gr. The Christ-life grows stronger and stronger. Finally, the self-life, by being reckoned dead, is brought under full subjection to the inner man, who is controlled entirely by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Hallelujah! How then, can there be a want?

The second strain of the petition is, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” (V. 17) Some may ask, Does not Christ dwell in every believer? Yes, as to fact, He does; but most believers do not know it by experience. If they did, they could not talk of being saved today and lost tomorrow. Christ does not dwell in all His people in the sense here meant. He should dwell in us, not only as a Visitor, or Guest, but as Possessor and Director of the house. A babe lives in a house; but it has no power, nor authority there. It is kept by the house, just as most people think that they keep salvation. Christ keeps us. We all have a babe’s experience of salvation at first; but our Savior is not a baby. When we learn Him fully, He assumes full control of our affections and desires, sorrows and joys. Our whole heart is gladly yielded to Him and filled with His love. Thus we learn also, that neither is our salvation a baby, which needs to be kept by our own puny power; for Christ is our Salvation and lives in us. He is our life, “It is no longer I that live; but Christ that liveth in me.” (*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:”—Gal. 2:20 KJV*)

“Being rooted and grounded in love” is the third strain of the prayer. It is like a deep, bass tone, which sustains the other parts of a song, giving it firmness and steadiness. Roots and foundations are invisible usually. Likewise, this is a deeply hidden and unappreciated experience in the Lord. It is not at all showy. The resultant super-growth and super-structure only are seen. Roots do not plunge into the deep earth in one silent and imperceptible. Finally, they grapple with and hold fast to the firm objects below. It takes time to lay a good, firm foundation. Exploration and excavation, which must precede it, also require time and toil. Roots begin above and grow downward. Foundations begin deep and are built upward. The former supposes life, in which are hidden the elements of development. The latter, being inanimate, are absolutely helpless and motionless in themselves.

Likewise, our rooting and grounding in divine love require time, toil and patience. They are tedious and tiresome to the flesh. This goes on as we ponder God’s Word with sincere purpose of heart, seeking to know and do His will. We learn the nature and process of spiritual rooting. We find that the providences of God are His ordained instruments of our rooting. We are moistened and strengthened by the Spirit and fed and nourished by the Word. Faith grapples around the rocky portions of Truth and holds to them firmly. Observe that these two figures are coupled together. In the spiritual, it seems that the rooting comes first. Hence, it is named first. The roots deeply grown and holding strongly beneath, become the deeply laid foundation. Therefore, when we are rooted in the love of Christ, we are fixed and

3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

firm, like a great temple, “steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (*“be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,”—1 Cor. 15:58 KJV*) It seems that Christ dwelling in the heart by faith is explained by being rooted and grounded in His love. The one implies the other. Christ cannot dwell in us without us being rooted and grounded in love; and we cannot become rooted and grounded in divine love except by Christ dwelling in us by faith. Wonderful!

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height”—V. 18. This is the fourth strain of this wonderful prayer song. It seems to be the four parts in mighty unison—“with all the holy ones.” The rooting and grounding, which we have just considered, declare the “depth” and imply the “height.” But there can be no real going down and building up without also a corresponding “breadth” and “length.” The Apostle here pictures the love of Christ as an immense cube, and prays that we may be fully able to comprehend it. He would have us to seize hold upon that great love, stretch our arms of faith around it and understand it by deep experience. And this is not a theoretical, or historical knowledge, concerning which men might say nice things, No, it is actually understanding the love of Christ in unwordable fellowship. It is a sweet sense of His love toward us and a fervent response of our love for Him. It means much more than knowing Christ as the Savior. Indeed many people have very little love for Jesus when they first get saved. They learn to love Him as they learn the cost of their salvation. The comprehension of Christ’s love means much more than knowing Him as the Healer, or Anointer with the Spirit, or as the One who answers prayer. The first part of verse 19 connects closely with this verse and completes it.

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” The Greek word rendered “and” here is “te,” which is not a conjunction, but an expletive. That is, it emphasizes and intensifies the foregoing statement, or explains it. The word means “even” rather than “and.” For a parallel, the first “and” in *1 Cor. 1:30, really means “even” (Greek “te”). Here Paul prays that we may “know even the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ.” (*“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” KJV*) The Greek adjective “huperballousan;” here translated “passeth,” is exceedingly unique. It seems that our language fails to express the unlimited sweep of its meaning. The verb, from which it is derived, means, “to throw, or hurl over, or beyond a mark, to excel all bounds, to reach the zenith, to be over and above and

*1 Corinthians 1:30 “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:”

3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

beyond the highest point.” Our English word hyperbole, meaning exaggeration, comes from it. But the Apostle’s meaning in this place certainly cannot be easily exaggerated. The love of Christ, for which he prays that we may know, excels all limits. It sweeps above and beyond the furthest conception of even the redeemed mind. It scales the zenith of the utmost desires and longings of believers after God. By divine grace, that love springs up in a human heart, reaches forth and soars away to meet God, and sweeps far beyond the most dizzying heights or knowledge. My spirit seems to see something here that is too unspeakably great and glorious for words.

Paul sought to prepare the Corinthian saints for this prayer, by writing 1 Cor. 13. Note especially verse 2—“And tho’ I have the gift of prophecy and understand all the mysteries and all the knowledge; and tho’ I have all the faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.” (*“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” KJV*) Certain it is, that many Christian workers possess the above four items in some degree; but they come sadly short of “the more excellent (hyperbolen, Greek) way;” that is, the way which far excels and leads beyond the greatest gifts and completest knowledge of even Bible history and doctrine, and outstrips mountain-moving faith. This love of Christ, of hyperbole dimensions, smiles at gifts and achievements and knowledge and miracle-working faith, all good and proper in their places, and rises to meet and respond to the great heart of Jehovah, in whose love it is lost. It becomes intoxicated with His personal attention and tender care. “His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely...I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me.” Oh, what wealth of privilege is ours; what distance of sweep away from things of time and sense, even from religious activities, away off into God Himself, to enjoy Him with holy and infinite delight.

What is the last strain of this unique petition? What is the ultimate and culminating purpose of its answer? “That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” How full is all the fulness of God? What does it mean to be filled unto all the fulness of God? The answer has already been anticipated, or intimated. Perhaps it is like other spiritual blessings. It must be experienced to be actually understood. No one can understand the new birth until he is born again. The difference between the light and life of salvation and the darkness and death of sin and condemnation, cannot be grasped by a sinner. No one knows how good it feels to be healed by the Lord until he lets the Lord heal him. Can saints be filled with divine fulness, if they do

not accept divine healing? Certainly not; for the love of Christ cannot dwell with unlimited authority in a medicine chest. Can saints, who refuse the pentecostal fulness, or anointing with the Spirit, ever be filled with God's fulness? Certainly not; for the Holy Spirit is the Chief Agent in making us full. He must come into our bodies, His temples, and abide. We saw by verse 16, that first of all, we must "be strengthened with might thru the Spirit in the inner man," (*"to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"—Chap. 3:16 KJV*) as a necessary preparation for all that follows. We must be initially filled, or anointed with the Spirit, in order to be filled with all the fulness of God. It requires only an act of simple faith to be filled with the Spirit; for He is the Father's Gift to believers. But to be filled with all God's fulness requires many continuous acts of faith; for it is a growth, usually of long continuance.

Well, then, are not all they, who believe in healing and in Pentecost and in Jesus' coming, filled with all the fulness of God? By no means. Indeed some of them seem to be filled with foolishness, and others with confusion, and still others with conceit and puffed-up-ness. And why, if they have received the Spirit? Because they have not read and studied Paul's prayers for the saints. Jesus Christ spoke a wonderful word to the devil, which He meant for us, of course. He quoted from Deut. 8:3, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—Matt. 4:4. Men know that a full, all round diet is necessary to develop us physically and give us full strength in the natural. But not one saint in five-hundred applies that sensible rule in the spiritual. It requires God's entire bill of Bible fare to answer the Apostle's powerful prayer. If we eat all the Truth; if we believe all the Word of the Lord; if we yield to all its instructions, prohibitions and admonitions, we will grow into all the fulness of God. We will learn how to walk and work, how to talk and teach, when and what to say. This Bible route seems narrow and slow. It entails suffering; because it is hard on the flesh, and is bitterly opposed by Satan. But the Word, which we eat, "effectually works in us," (*"effectually worketh also in you that believe."*—*1 Thess. 2:13 KJV*) and affords strength to endure hardness, and courage to stand. It begets faith, even the faith of God, to go on, go thru every trial and go over the top of every difficulty. As we eat and believe, we are being filled unto all the fulness of God. In the pentecostal anointing, our bodies were filled with the Spirit; but here our lives are actually filled up with the God of all grace. We become like Jesus, as a Man, who, was thus filled with God. We learn to believe and act like He did. We learn to yield to the voice and power of the Spirit as Jesus did. We come to have fellowship with the Father, even as Jesus did; "because as He is, so are

we in this world”—1 John 4:17. We grow up into Christ. Christ grows up in us. We “increase with the increase of God” (*“increaseth with the increase of God.” KJV*)—Col. 2:19. Jesus Christ fills our vision. The Word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom. The peace of God rules in the heart—*Col. 3:15, 16. What is the utmost limit of such fulness? Only Christ Himself; “for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are in Him filled full” (*“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” KJV*)—Col. 2:9, 10, Greek.

An Impetus to Believe it

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or think, according to the power that worketh in us”—V. 20. Amazement staggers, reels and sits down in a holy hush, overwhelmed with the Apostle’s added words. We supposed that his vision of our privileges climaxed with the prayer; but nay, his anthem of praise to God is like a tremendous chorus of AMEN AND AMEN to the prayer. He glorifies Jehovah for being fully able, yea, powerful, to answer his cry, even all that we ask, or think. That is wonderful and stimulates our faith. Is that all? Nay! nay! Much more. God is powerful to do above all that we ask, or think. Yes, and abundantly above all. Ah! yes, exceedingly abundantly above all. Oh, yes, in very deed, the God to whom Paul prayed “is powerful enough above all things to do more than super-abundantly above all that we ask, or think” (*“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”—V. 20 KJV*) (Greek). But our beloved Apostle, who loves to revel in spiritual hyperboles, does not stop there in his high praises. He reverts back to the dynamite of verse 16, and shouts. “According to the dynamite that worketh in us,” (*“according to the power that worketh in us,” KJV*) Jehovah is able to do it all. And surely, that dynamite operates in us rapidly and effectively, deeply and wonderfully, widely and gloriously, as we yield to the blessed Holy Spirit, who carefully and wisely manipulates the dynamite. Glory! glory! Hallelujah forever!

Most everyone misquotes this verse. Usually, people say, “All that we can ask, or think.” They add the “can.” Well, God is able to do that much too, tho’ it reads, “all that we (do) ask, or think.” The implication is, that most people ask way below their privileges. And many ask far less than they think, because they have not learned God’s grace. Hence, they do not know the great and full provision, which has

*Colossians 3:15, 16 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

been made for us. The little that people see of divine goodness is too great to suppose that there could be any greater than what they have beheld. But the provision is complete and immense.

Therefore, let the dynamite work. Let the Holy Spirit have His way fully. Put full confidence in the dynamite. Let us learn the vast sweep of divine power in a human life. What could anyone desire rather than to be filled with all the fulness of God? If it is blessed and profitable to have any measure of His fulness, why not be supremely blessed and superlatively profited, and useful to God, by being filled unto all His fulness? Furthermore, this immeasurable, unspeakable fulness will no doubt climax in the preparation of the Bride for the Lamb. And now, hearken to the fullest and sweetest doxology of all the epistles.

“Unto Him be the glory in the Assembly in the Anointed Jesus, into all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen!” (V. 21) The millennial period will be by far the greatest of all the “ages of time.” During that period, Jesus and His Bride will be exalted to highest honor. They will reign in heaven, where the satanic dominions now have sway. From thence, Jesus will govern the earth, as “King of kings and Lord of lords;” His Bride being associated with Him. During our life time, we are given grace and wisdom to put down all rule and all authority and power in ourselves. We learn to yield to Him, who is able to subdue all things in us and all things around us in our behalf. But we will be rewarded then for that yieldedness, by assisting our Lord, our Bridegroom, as He puts down all rule and all authority and all power in the world. We will enjoy a thousand years remuneration for enduring a thousand temptations while here on earth. The morning of our eternal day of inexpressible felicity with Jesus will last a thousand years.

Thus ends the divine side of Ephesian doctrine, set forth in three thrilling chapter. This is its necessary background. Have you noticed one exhortation in these chapters? Not one. God first shows us the true standard; its liberty, its wealth and splendor, before He gives any invitation, or entreaty. In these preceding portions, we have seen three huge Ps in the Divine Pod—The Divine Purpose, The Divine Plan and The Divine Power. We see that God has already raised us up to the standard, provisionally. We saw that none of these wonderful things are attainable by our own efforts; but all is absolutely of grace. And finally, He caused Paul to pray fervently for us, that we might not be hindered from enjoying the wealth and glory, which Christ’s death purchased for us, as herein outlined. To the incorruptible, invisible, triune God be unending praise!

3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The Divine Procedure

Chapter Four

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”—V. 1. The three preceding chapters of this Letter present God’s purpose, plan and provision for a ruined race. An understanding of them is absolutely necessary to a clear understanding of what follows. There is nothing haphazard, nor unnecessary in the Bible. The following three chapters set forth our appropriation of the divine provision, and the results thereof. Therefore, we find no exhortation in the first three chapters; but the remaining ones abound in entreaties and instructions.

Paul was the prisoner in the Lord: This does not contradict chap. 3:1, where he said, “Prisoner of Jesus Christ.” In both statements, he refuses to give Satan, or Rome, any credit for his bondage; but his imprisonment was by divine permission, hence, in God’s will. He had learned to be content with any state. The noun “vocation” is “calling” in the original, agreeing with the verb “called.” It also should read, “ye were called;” because it refers to the Gentiles, who were called once to share jointly, with the Jews, the threefold inheritance specified in chap. 3:6. That call was provisional and includes all the Gentiles. It does not refer to our personal call to repentance. The succeeding chapters indicate how we can walk worthily of that calling.

4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Five qualities enter especially into that worthy walk. Four of these are named in the next verse—“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” The fifth is in verse 3—“Endeavoring (or giving diligence) to keep the unity (oneness) of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The first two agree with Matt. 11:29—“I am meek and lowly in heart.” Lowliness means humility. The same Greek word is translated “lowliness of mind” in *Phil. 2:3, and “humility” in **Col. 2:18, 23, and “humbleness of mind” in ***Col. 3:12. Meekness means mildness, softness, gentleness. The latter is the outward expression of the former, which is the inward attitude, or state. Longsuffering and forbearance flow from them. The Greek word for endeavoring, literally means, “to make speed, or haste.”

4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

*Philippians 2:3 “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*”

**Colossians 2:18, 23 “*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshy mind, ... Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*”

***Colossians 3:12 “*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*”

To simply endeavor to keep the oneness is not sufficient. We should really do it, and be diligent about it. How remarkable that these five conditions and acts meet us at the threshold of becoming real Ephesian saints. Therefore, it behooves us to ponder them all. There are seven “walks” named in this Epistle. This is the third. It contrasts directly with the first, which was radically unworthy—Chap. 2:2. The second is the place in which the third begins and continues thru life—Chap. 2:10.

The “unity, or oneness of the Spirit” is doubtless the seven basic ones of verse 4 to 6. The phrase, “there is,” is in italics, which means that it is not given in the original. A dash should follow the word peace, the last word of verse 3. The Holy Spirit cannot operate fully in the Church to the highest glory of the Father and the Son except these seven facts are maintained and sustained. At the very outset, we are admonished to be diligent to observe them. Doing so is the primary preventative of all church difficulties, and the guarantee of healthy growth and usefulness.

The Seven Ones

“One body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord; one faith; one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all”—V. 4-6. The “one body” is the Church, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles. This is the second item of “the mystery” mentioned in chap. 3:6. All who believe on Jesus unto salvation thru-out this age constitute that Body, or Church. “And the Lord added daily, those who were being saved, to the assembly” (“*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*” *KJV*)—Acts 2:47, Gr. This agrees with Jesus’ words, “one flock” (Gr.)—*John 10:16. The provision for this oneness was made on Calvary—Chap: 2:14, 15.

4:4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

The “one Spirit” is of course the Holy Spirit. He has been operating in accordance with the divine provision during these 1900 years, gathering out a people to the name of the Lord—**Acts 15:14. The first two items of the oneness, the one Body and one Spirit, are closely connected by the conjunction “and.” Why? Because the Body of Christ, the Church, is the only dwelling place for the Holy Spirit on earth today. The Church is here called a body, because it is likened to a human frame, having many members, and yet being one only body,

*John 10:16 “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

**Acts 15:14 “Simeon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”

or frame—*1 Cor. 12:12, 13. The schismatic conduct of men has made the Church to be as many bodies, or sects, which is deplorable indeed.

“Even as (or according as) ye were called in one hope of your calling” (“*even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*” *KJV*)—V. 4. This hope is the third of the seven ones. Israel had been “before hoppers in Christ,” because to them the promise was given—Chap. 1:12, last clause, Gr. But the Gentiles had no hope, because they had no promise. However, in the divine plan, the Gentiles also were called, tho’ the call was not made known till after the death and resurrection of Christ. Jews and Gentiles were called, jointly to enjoy the full measure of the blessings promised to Abraham. They together have “one hope,” that is, they share equally in the results of redemption. The “blessed hope” (Tit. 2:15) refers to the second advent of Christ, which will be the culmination of the “one hope” here named.

4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

“One Lord.” This is the fourth one. This is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church, His Body. As there is only “one Body,” so also there is only “one Head.” For one body to have more than one head is a monstrosity, ridiculous and destructive. Has not Christendom proven it to be so? Has she not made herself the object of ridicule, and brought upon herself demoralization? The “one Lord” is the central figure in this wonderful seven-fold New Testament archway. All who are really saved acknowledge Him to be the Savior from sin; but the majority of believers give Him no further place on the program than that. They think to be their own keepers and guides, or they must keep and guide one another. But Jesus has not redeemed men to live for themselves and by their own strength. He has paid the ransom and released them for Himself. Jesus does not save men from the angry floods of sin, to let them run loose and wander about in a sinful world, with the possibility of falling back into the ocean again. He saves men to take care of them. He saves men to be with Him and enjoy Him. He saves men that He may have fellowship with them, and show His unbounded love to them. He saves men that they may love one another and have mutual fellowship together, with Himself as the one object of their devotion. They are to meet only in His name, and no other; “for where two, or three are gathered together in MY NAME, there AM I in the midst of them”—Matt. 18:20. All the divisions and griefs of Christendom are traceable to NOT following this simple plan. “Not holding the Head;” not giving Christ His ordained place as Head of the

*1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Church. His Body, is the chief crime of His followers. In assemblies, where Jesus is actually recognized and treated as the Head of the whole Church, there is fellowship sweet, liberty unbounded, growth perpetual, depth and breadth of scriptural knowledge and power and glory real, but not fanatical. It has to be experienced to know the difference between such meetings and those who do not hold Christ as Head.

“One faith” is the fifth item under consideration. This is “the faith of God.” (*“Have faith in God.” KJV*)—Mark 11:22, margin. It is “the faith of the Son of God”—Gal. 2:20. Chap. 2:8 declares that the faith which saves a sinner is “the gift of God,” because “faith cometh by hearing the Word of God” (*“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” KJV*)—Rom. 10:17. “God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life” (*“God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” KJV*) (Acts 11:18), the news of which begat faith in their hearts. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”—Heb. 11:1. By the faith of God believers recognize only one Body, or refuse to divide the Body of Christ. It rejects sectarianism. This faith rests upon the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit alone. It will not “receive another spirit, or another gospel, or another Jesus” (*“reacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel,”—2 Cor. 11:4 KJV*)—Gal. 1:6, 7 and 2 Cor. 11:4. Paul calls it “The faith,” saying, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”—2 Cor. 13:5. This “one faith” accepts Paul’s Gospel with all the heart and becomes familiar with the whole of his Gospel by a thorough knowledge of his epistles.

“One baptism.” This cannot be baptism in water; for that is only a memorial, a symbolic baptism. Water baptism answers to circumcision under the Old Covenant, which was “a sign, a seal” (*“the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised,” KJV*)—Rom. 4:11. If baptism in water were the “one baptism,” then the “baptism in the Spirit” would be no baptism, or it would have a secondary place only, which is impossible. How unworthy of the dear Holy Spirit, to presume to assign to a symbol what belongs to one of the three Persons of the Godhead. The “one baptism” is unmistakably “the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” John the Baptist and Jesus both spoke of this baptism. *Matt. 3:11 and **Acts 1:5. This baptism occurred on the day of Pentecost. Study the following

*Matthew 3:11 “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with fire*.”

**Acts 1:5 “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

verses. “In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews, or Greeks, whether bond, or free; and were all given to drink into one Spirit” (“*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*” *KJV*)—1 Cor. 12:12, 13. In this citation, we read plainly of the first, of the second and of the sixth ones—the “one Body,” the “one Spirit” and the “one baptism.”

The mystical Body of Christ, called the Church, was sovereignly constituted on the day of Pentecost. It was formed of both Jews and Gentiles, termed “the mystery” in chap. 3:6. Those, who had before believed, and on that day were filled with the Spirit, became the nucleus of the Church of Christ. Hence, all who believe on Jesus throughout this church period were that day counted as baptized into the “one Body.” Therefore, there is absolutely only “one Body,” and there was only “one baptism.” There cannot be more than one body; hence, there cannot be another baptism in the Spirit. Most people fail to see that the baptism in the Spirit was a divine sovereign act. I believe that some see it; but refuse to accept it as the truth. God gathered the 120 disciples. He set the time for them to be baptized. They could not have been filled with the Spirit 30 minutes sooner than they were; no matter what they might have done, or how earnestly they might have prayed. That hour of that day was the set time of the Holy Spirit’s advent from heaven. It was in perfect accord with *Lev. 23:16. That was the fulfillment of the promised out-pouring of the Spirit. John and Jesus fore-announced it as “the baptism in the Spirit,” because it should constitute a new company of believers, which Jesus termed “My Church”—**Matt. 16:18.

There was one death of the old creation by the sovereign death of One Man, Jesus, in their behalf. Study the ones in Rom. 5. Christ died for both Jews and Gentiles “once.” Thus He broke down the enmity between them (See notes on chap. 2), and made way for a new creation to be formed out of both. As we saw before (chap. 2:1-3) Jesus brought up from death with Him a new creation. “He raised us up together with Him.” (“*And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*”—*Chap. 2:6 KJV*) According to God’s sovereign counting, the whole old creation died and paid their penalty in the death of Christ. On the other hand, all who believe on Jesus, and only those, were raised from the dead with Him. In like manner, after God’s sovereign reckoning, by the “one baptism,”

*Leviticus 23:16 “Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord.”

**Matthew 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

He constituted all believers of this age “one body,” which He denominates “the Assembly, or Church.” The Holy Spirit was the “one Spirit,” as the only necessary Agent of that one baptism. And, of course, Jesus Christ is the “one Lord,” or Head of that one Body.

Therefore, thirsty believers do not receive the baptism of, or in the Spirit, or a fresh baptism. That is not scriptural language. Thirsty saints “drink” of the fulness of the Spirit, which was fully poured out for us. All who drink become filled with “rivers of living water”—John 7:38. The experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is never once called “baptism of the Spirit” in the epistles, except in *1 Cor. 12:12, 13, which refers only to the day of Pentecost. To “drink” only refers to our experience. (See more on this subject in our Tract, The Holy Spirit.)

“One God and Father of all.” This is the last of the seven wonderful ones. Thus the three Personalities of the Godhead stand forth prominently in this seven-fold framework of the Church. We saw in chap. 1, that God was the Author and Designer of redemption and its results. All that we are studying about is according to a previous purpose and plan. Of course, God must be a vital figure in it all. He is the “Father of all that believe.” (*“father of us all,”—Rom. 4:16 KJV*) Oh, how comforting, to know that we have a real Father, who loves us and cares for us in harmony with the unlimited provision, which He made for our edification and happiness. Many saints do not know by experience the fatherhood of God, because they are not separated unto Him. Read and ponder **2 Cor. 6:14-17. To Ephesian saints, God as Father, is “above all and thru all,” (*“who is above all, and through all,” KJV*) in our behalf, making all things work together for our God. And He is “in you all.” How beautifully this agrees with John’s words—“He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” He dwells in each individual by the Spirit, and makes also the entire Church His habitation.

Observe the symmetry and beauty of the arrangement of these

*1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

*2 Corinthians 6:14-17 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,”

4:6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

seven ones. Imagine a wheel of six spokes reaching out from a hub in the center. Jesus Christ is the Hub; for He is named as in the middle, with three on either side. God the Father is not the Hub, because He is not the Head of the Church. Neither is the Holy Spirit. Note, then, that the first spoke, “one Body,” is directly opposite from the last, “one God and Father.” The second spoke, the “one Spirit,” is directly across from the sixth, the “one baptism.” Is that not rich and interesting? Finally, the third, the “one hope,” looks over the Hub and beholds her twin sister, the “one faith.” And our wheel is complete, perfect, beautiful, simple, powerful. If the Church had rolled on during the past 1900 years in full accord with this wheel, what would she have become? Nevertheless, thank God, some saints have seen this seven- fold truth and have lived and labored accordingly. These make up the company of true Ephesian believers, who will roll into the glory as Smyrna and Philadelphia victors. They will be crowned with Him, whom they have held as Lord and Head; for He will reign as “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Hallelujah!

Basis for Various Gifts

“But unto every one of us was given the grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”—V. 7. The grace, or favor, mentioned here is provisional. It “was given” (Gr.). The measure of this favor, is “the gift of Christ,” or God’s Anointed One. The Greek word for “gift” is “dorea,” which literally means a free gift, an undeserved gift. It refers directly to Jesus here. He is “the unspeakable Gift” (“*his unspeakable gift.*” *KJV*) of 2 Cor. 9:15 and “the heavenly Gift” of Heb. 6:4. God gave His Son freely. There was no merit in man that demanded such a gift. There was no cause in him, except his unspeakable need, which called down this unspeakable gift. Nay; but He came unasked for, undeserved and unearned. Now in Christ, God’s great Gift, each of us has been granted great grace in measure comparing with the greatness of Christ. This is the Apostle’s meaning in 1 Cor. 1:4, 5. He thanks God “for the grace of God which was given you in Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye were enriched in Him.” (“*for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him,*” *KJV*) Here, in Eph. 4:7, is indicated the measure of that enrichment. There is no lack, therefore, to those who trust in Jesus and make runs on the bank of heaven. The next verse is based upon the fact expressed in verse 7.

“Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men”—V. 8. In this verse, reference is had to *Judges 5:12. The Lord aroused Barak to deliver

4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

Israel from captivity to the Canaanites. And **Psa. 68:18 is especially referred to, which will have its fullest fulfillment when Jesus will reveal Himself to Israel. But Paul gives it another application also. Who does he see in captivity? The phrase, “the lower parts of the earth,” in verse 9, intimates that it is some company below. “Abraham’s bosom,” where the spirit of poor Lazarus was housed, was in the same place. Jesus called it “paradise” (***)Luke 23:43), whence He took the thief, who believed on Him. Doubtless many who did not accept Noah’s message in time to enter the ark, afterward believed it, as the rain was falling. To them, Jesus went in His own Spirit, while His body was in the grave, and announced the victory, which He had just accomplished on the Cross for them and for all who believe. Of course all the other believing spirits “in the lower parts of the earth” heard His glad message. Did He not then loosen those prisoners by making them His captives, so that He could take them up to heaven with Him? That is exactly what He did. “He led captivity captive.” This is rendered variously, and every rendering is interesting. The margin says, “He led a multitude of captives,” which was emphatically true; for the spirits of the saved were there from Adam to Christ. Another version says, “He captivated a captivity.”

Now contrast Luke’s location of paradise (Luke 23:43) with that of Paul—2 Cor. 12:2, 4. He declares that paradise is now in “the third heaven,” and that he saw “a man in Christ caught up” (“*a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up*”—2 Cor. 12:2 KJV) there. Furthermore, in ****2 Cor. 5:8, he shows that those who are absent from the body now, are “present with the Lord.” For that reason, he had a “desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better,” (“*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*”—Philip. 2:3 KJV) than to continue on earth, tempted and tried, beaten and bruised. See Philip. 1:23. What became of those saints, whose bodies arose from the grave and went into Jerusalem on the day of Christ’s resurrection? (“*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his*

*Judges 5:12 “Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.”

**Psalms 68:18 “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

***Luke 23:43 “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

****2 Corinthians 5:8 “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

*resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” KJV) — Matt. 27:52, 53. They are no doubt “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23); for Jesus’ resurrection was His perfection. Compare *Luke 13:32 with **Phil. 3:12. Now if Paul does not mean by verse 8, that Jesus emptied the prison house of the believing dead and took their spirits to heaven, why does he set Christ’s ascension over against His descent “into the lower parts of the earth?” Why does he put the significant question of verse 9? Certainly, His body went not only into the grave; but His spirit went into the lower parts (not simply six feet deep) of the earth. Jesus’ own words confirm the above. He said, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”—Matt. 12:40. The heart of the earth and the lower parts of the earth are the identical same locality. And 1 Pet. 3:18-20 confirms this thought—Christ was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened in Spirit, in which also He went and published unto the spirits in prison.” (“put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;” KJV)*

Church Officers Bestowed

4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

“And He gave indeed the apostles and the prophets and the evangelists and the pastors and teachers”—V. 11, Gr. In verse 8, we read that God “gave gifts unto men.” In this verse, we have those gifts named. The Greek word here translated “gift”, is “domata,” a gift, a present. The sacrifices were this kind of gifts. In verse 7, another word (dorea) is used, and refers to Christ. It is also used with reference to the Spirit, for example, Acts 2:38—“the Gift of the Holy Spirit.” (*“the gift of the Holy Ghost.” KJV*) Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God’s chief Gifts (Dorea) to men. And still another word (charisma) is used in speaking of the gifts of the Spirit—1 Cor. 12:4, etc. It means especially a grace, a favor, a kindness for the sake of another. It is termed a “spiritual gift” in ***Rom. 1:11. Those nine gifts are so called, because they are the gifts of the Spirit, or the gifts, which He brought with Him, and gave to the Church for the sake of Christ. Jesus, our Lord and Head, is glorified by the proper use of the gifts (the charismata) of the Holy Spirit.

*Luke 13:32 “And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.”

**Philippians 3:12 “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

***Romans 1:11 “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.”

But here, the Apostle is not writing of Christ, nor of the Spirit, nor of the gifts of the Spirit. He is naming the officers in the Church, which were necessary to keep the seven-fold unity, or oneness, outlined before. In 1 Cor. 12:4, 5, 28, note several vital statements. "There are diversities of gifts." He says also, "There are diversities of administrations," (*"And there are differences of administrations,"—1 Cor. 12:5 KJV*) which fact calls for officers. Therefore, "God hath set some in the Church." Literally, "And these indeed, God did set in the Church, first the apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." (*"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,"—1 Cor. 12:28 KJV*) It seems that the necessity of evangelists and pastors was revealed to Paul after he wrote to the Assembly in Corinth; for these two are named in that letter. Both officers (domata) and gifts (charismata) are mentioned in the Corinthian letter; but the former only in the Ephesian letter, because they are the more important. Babes run wild with gifts if not wisely guarded and guided. Therefore, 1 Cor. 14 was written to safeguard the gifts.

1. "The apostles." The word "some" does not fully express the thought of the Spirit. It weakens the force of each office. Not "some apostles:" but "the apostles and the prophets" were placed in the Assembly. The word "apostle" is from "apo," meaning "away," and from "stello," which means "to set in order, to arrange, to furnish, equip, get ready." Hence, "apostello," or apostle, literally means to arrange for, to furnish and send away on service. The application in the New Testament is, that Jehovah called and equipped certain men and sent them away on very important business for Himself. The twelve of Matt. 10 and the seventy of Luke 10 were all apostles, sent especially with the message concerning the kingdom of God. There were seven church apostles, as Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Epaphroditus, etc. Modern apostles, self-styled, or called so by others, have been far from apostolic, either in doctrine, or practice. Beware.

2. "The prophets." A prophet is one who speaks "to edification, and exhortation and comfort"—1 Cor. 14:3. That is a fine definition. The original literally means, "to speak for another." It is from "pro," meaning for, and from "phemi," to speak. A prophet is one who "interprets the Scriptures." The Old Testament prophets, as well as those in Paul's day, spoke for the Lord. Hence, they recited history and biography, as well as foretold future events. Some people vainly imagine that a prophet is simply one who tells something not recorded in the Bible, and something always future. Oh, no. Not that. Study the above definition, and see. A scriptural prophet expounds the Word of

God, declaring what He bids him to say. Only such a one can edify, exhort and comfort the people. Usually, so-called modern prophets only deceive and mislead their followers, because they do not speak according to the written Word of God.

3. “The evangelists.” An evangelist is a messenger of the great Gospel of grace. It is from the Greek word, “euaggelion,” which is translated gospel, or glad tidings, in the New Testament. The word “evangelize” is some times translated “preach,” as in *Acts 5:42 and **Rev. 14:6. An apostle was more than a prophet, or an evangelist. He had managing authority over the others. He set things in order—***1 Cor. 11:34. Or he instructed others to do it, and how to do it, as did Paul to Timothy and Titus. All the apostles were prophets and had evangelistic abilities. But not all prophets and evangelists were apostles. Philip was an evangelist, but not an apostle—****Acts 21:8. Neither were Niger and Manaen; and yet they were prophets and teachers—*****Acts 13:1.

4. Pastors and teachers.” These two officers are coupled together, because every pastor should be a teacher; but every teacher is not necessarily a pastor. The Greek word, rendered pastors is “poimenas.” It means a herdsman, a shepherd. It is derived from the verb “poimaino,” which signifies to feed, to tend, to keep flocks, to cherish. Jesus said to Peter, “Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.” At first, only teachers seemed to be sufficient; and most men like to pose as teachers. It was found later, that shepherds were more needful than teachers; hence, shepherds is named first. Very few ministers today have enough love for the saints to stay with them and feed them. It is far easier on the flesh to have a few “candle-stick, or sugar-stick” sermons, just enough for a ten day’s campaign. One with a good

*Acts 5:42 “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

**Revelation 14:6 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”

***1 Corinthians 11:34 “And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.”

****Acts 21:8 “And the next *day* we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.”

*****Acts 13:1 “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

memory and strong in himself can deliver those, drum a good collection out of the poor sheep, and go on to the next place. He is shamefully destitute of the two most vital qualifications of a pastor. He is ignorant of the Scriptures, and he has no shepherd love for the people: tho' he may speak with the tongues (other tongues) of men and even of angels, and have miracle-working faith—*1 Cor. 13:1-3.

Our hearts bleed at the deplorable conditions in Christendom today. The cry of the flock of Christ is pitiful. Oh, send us a pastor; oh, that we had some one to teach us the Truth; all we hear is law; where can we find some one to shepherd us? Such are the lamentations that reach us. Then some fellows, who claim to be pastors, do not have a shepherd heart. They flog the sheep rather than feed them. They demand food for their own lazy bodies, tho' they give no spiritual food to their people. One of the saddest facts today among the pentecostal people is, that many self-appointed, or sect-appointed pastors are demanding a stipulated salary for their "glad service," as they term it. But, the Lord be praised, there are some real shepherds, who seek to feed the sheep and build them up in the faith of the Gospel.

Here is a precious truth. Jesus Christ possessed the aforementioned seven offices. "Consider the Apostle of our profession," wrote Paul in Heb. 3:1. Peter announced Jesus to the Jews, as "the Prophet" that Moses foretold should come—**Acts 3:22. He is called "an Angel" in Revelation several times; for example, chap. 8:3 and 10:1. The only difference between the word angel and evangelist, is this, that "eu," which means "good," is prefixed to the word angel. And certainly Jesus Christ proved Himself to be the chief Messenger of the good tidings of grace. Then, He termed Himself "The Good Shepherd"—John 10. Paul denominated Him "the Great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20), and Peter proclaimed Him "the Chief Shepherd"—1 Pet. 5:4. Finally, the official title by which He was so well known among His people was "Master, or Teacher." This is wonderful. He was all these seven officers in Himself. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit calls and prepares men for these various official functions, He is in a manner

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

**Acts 3:22 "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

4:14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

showing Jesus Christ off therein. Jesus is again executing the same official authority and power thru His yielded servants. Oh, how sacred is the place of God's ministers. How meek and lowly in heart they should be. How they should seek to adorn their office, and please and glorify their Lord. Usually, if they are really called of God, they will do so.

(For further light on the officers, see our Notes on the twelfth chap. of 1 Corinthians.)

Object of the Officers

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ”—V. 12. There is an ultimate purpose of the five ministries indicated in verse 11. That purpose is expressed in verse 15—“that we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ.” There are ten necessary steps to reach that goal. These are given from verses 12 to 15. The first three occur in the verse above. Each step prepares for the next one. Three of these steps are negative (V. 14); the others are positive. Have you the patience to stop and consider them one by one? If so, you may reach the goal in your experience.

1. “With a view to perfecting the holy ones;” (V. 12) the Holy Spirit has placed permanently in the Assembly the afore-named five officers. The Greek word, “katartizo;” means to fit thoroughly, adjust, or furnish completely. It is variously used. It supposes perfect worship in *Matt. 21:16; perfect fellowship in **1 Cor. 1:10; perfect faith in ***1 Thes. 3:10 and perfect work in ****Heb. 13:21. Such all round perfection is brought about in the saints by means of the Word of God, “which effectually worketh in all them that believe” that Word. Thus we become thoroughly fitted and furnished for the second step—

2. “Unto a work of serving” (V. 12) as a deacon (lit,

*Matthew 21:16 “And said unto him, Hearst thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, **Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**”

**1 Corinthians 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

***1 Thessalonians 3:10 “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?”

**** Hebrews 13:21 “Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

authorized version sounds like it meant the ministry rendered by the preachers. No; the service of the preacher was considered before. This is entirely a ministry rendered by the people who have no official place. A scriptural assembly is by no means a one-man assembly. All the members may be ministers, or deacons (Greek, diaconoi). They need no license, nor ordination papers. Of course, they do not want any carnal handle to their names, as Rev., or D. D. They do desire to be useful, however; and the apostles, prophets and other officers are required to feed them so that they may become useful. Thus the saints themselves effect the next feature. Is this not interesting? I am sure you are not impatient yet.

3. “Unto the edifying of the Body of Christ.” (*“for the edifying of the body of Christ:”*—V. 12 KJV) To edify means to build up. By the scriptural ministry of all the members of an assembly, that assembly edifies, or builds up itself in love—V. 16. Such a goal is to be coveted indeed. But, oh, how few people, how few ministers understand what is meant by edifying the Church. In the majority of cases, all they expect, or even desire, is to get sinners saved and possibly filled with the Spirit and healed in body. If they do not have such results, they either become discouraged and disintegrate, or go wild with fanaticism and bring discredit upon the cause of Christ. Reader, are you a pastor? Do you know that the Lord, the Good Shepherd, expects you to feed your flock by teaching them the whole Word of God, so that they will “grow in grace and in the knowledge of God?” (*“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*—2 Peter 3:18 KJV) Are you showing them the way of victory over sin? Do you teach them the necessity of judging the flesh in themselves, and show them how to do it? Are you judging your own flesh as an example for them? Sometimes the preacher’s flesh needs the severest judgment by himself. As the shepherd, so the sheep. And how is it with you ministers in the pew? Are you taking in the whole Truth so as to be useful in edifying the entire body?

4. How long shall these three steps of progress continue? “Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (*“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,”* KJV)—V. 13. It is the same Greek word, “enoteta;” for unity as in verse 3. It means also oneness. We saw that the “unity, or oneness of the Spirit” was a divine arrangement, which we are admonished to keep (therein, Greek) or give heed to. But this oneness is an experience that we come down to, or arrive at, in the valley of humiliation and suffering long with one another. See verse 2. Oh, what precious pearls of truth are found in the valley, where Shimei

casts stones at us. Often it is dreary and lonely in the valley. Often we have to “suffer long and be kind” to those who will not judge themselves. Nevertheless, this is the only, but sure route to experimental oneness. Observe that the unity is found in two pockets—“faith and knowledge.” These are very closely related. Note too, that it is not the knowledge of science, nor inventions, nor grammar. It is a knowledge of God’s Son. Now faith in the Word we read, or hear, affords us that needed knowledge. And as we learn Christ, Our faith becomes perfected. Thus we all travel on together, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (*2 Cor. 10:5), and finally reach this two-armed goal of perfected faith and exact understanding. We “see eye to eye.” There is no discord between us. We know Christ and believe Him alike. Such is a real Ephesian assembly. Then, what do we behold? Or perhaps we better ask, What will the Lord behold there?

5. “Unto a perfect man.” The original reads. “Unto a man full-grown.” We are not to look at full-grown individuals, but at the Assembly as full-grown. Note the exact wording, “till we all come,” not till each of us comes; for some in the Assembly may not yet be full-grown. The faith and victory of the Assembly as a whole may guard the weaker ones and carry them along as children. Verse 15 suggests this view.

6. “Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” The Greek word “metron,” translated measure, also means “rule, standard.” The word “helikia,” rendered stature, means also “time of life, age, vigor, growth.” There are marked stages in the Christian life, which John expressed as “children, young men, and fathers.” Likewise the Church, or Body of Christ, should reach the stage of childhood, grow unto young manhood and finally into full maturity in Christ. This verse evidently means the stage of young manhood, or at least, vigorous youth, as the next verse suggests—“that we be no more children” (*“That we henceforth be no more children,”—V. 14 KJV*) (literally, infants). The point reached here is not the culminating fulness of Christ; but that ultimate fulness is a standard, or rule of the vigor, or growth to be attained at this stage. Verse 15 also shows this to be the thought here. Having arrived at this goal, we are delivered from the misfortune outlined in the next verse—

7. “That no longer we may be infants, tossed to and fro and

*2 Corinthians 10:5 “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

carried about by every wind of doctrine in the sleight of men, in craftiness after the wiles of error” (*“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” KJV*)—V. 14. Gr. We are all infants in grace, when first saved; but it is not our Father’s will that we always wear baby clothes and be imprisoned in a religious cab, or high chair. He has made ample provision for us to grow out of this stage. That was the purpose of the five God-given ministries of verse 11 and the succeeding steps of verses 12 and 13. The Word of God is the food, “the pure milk of the Word,” (*“desire the sincere milk of the word,”—1 Peter 2:2 KJV*) for babes in Christ. The God-ordained ministers and older members of the Church constitute the nursing mother.

Satan takes advantage of the infantile state of most believers, and bewilders them by false teachings. There is a bad family of four terms here, closely related, by which the Apostle expresses the terrible tossings of babes in Christ. These four are (1.) “Kubeia;” which means “dice-playing, sleight of hand, trickery, gambling.” (2.) “Panourgia;” meaning “villany, knavery, ready to do any evil, doing a holy deed in an unholy way.” It is rendered “craftiness” in our text. (3.) “Methodeia;” which means literally “a following after, moving by method;” hence, “artifice, cunning.” It is here translated “lie in wait, or wiles,” as in chap. 6:11, where it is called the “wiles of the devil.” Paul uses the word in these two places only. He never employed the word in a good sense. Hence, I have cut the word “method” out of my vocabulary entirely, unless I wish to express cunning, or craft. It never was used in a good sense by the Greeks. Why, then should we? (4.) “Planes,” which signifie “leading astray, leading by wandering about, leading into error, wandering in mind.” It is rendered “deceive, or error” in the text. Jude (13) terms methodical teachers “wandering stars” (Greek, “planetai asters”).

Now couple with these, two other striking words in our text. The Greek word “kludonizomenoi” means “tossed by a surging wave.” The word “peripheromenoi” means “carried around in a circle, holding out.” Satan makes some brainy men and women religious. They play dice, or gamble with the Word of God. They are “walking in craftiness and handling the Word of God deceitfully” (*“not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully;” KJV*)—2 Cor. 4:2. They are unscrupulous in their religious knavery, or craft. They make merchandise of sacred things, and thus enrich themselves in fame and money. Their teaching is rank error, leading astray from the simple truth of Christ, yet so religious and in such a roundabout manner, that

their plot is not seen. And, what is still worse, all their teaching and maneuverings are attractively methodical, politely systematic and charmingly arranged, or programmed. Method, system, tact, skill, adroitness, cunning—all this appeals to the natural man. Babes in Christ are often caught up by religious “winds, or whirlwinds,” and tossed and whirled around, hither and thither, up and down, never knowing where they are. Like babies in the natural, they are always restless, dissatisfied, whining, fussing with other babies, jealous, peevish and never grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord; but increase in error. They end in dead formalism, or rank fanaticism, if they do not lose their minds altogether. The simple truth as it is in Jesus is the only remedy against such a terrible state.

Imitators of Evil Men

Here we must note another sad fact. Some saved people, ministers and Bible teachers, are caught in this devilish snare. They denounce much of the truth of God. Preachers of religions of works, or legality, are terribly guilty in this respect. Paul says to the Galatians, “There be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” He pronounces a curse upon such teachers—*Gal. 1:7-9. They are deceitful workers. They are actually crafty and underhanded in their ministries. They twist the Scriptures to prove their pointless points. They are unscrupulous in their smart, methodical craftiness. It is no wonder that their poor, unfed hearers feel that they must be carried along on their religious waves, or “hold out faithful” in order to be saved. Yes, method, tact, or pious trickery, appeals to the carnal mind. Some Christian workers seem to be carried away with it innocently, not knowing that Satan is the author of it all. Perhaps some might think to hide behind 2 Cor. 12:16, where Paul says, “Being crafty, I caught you with guile.” If the Apostle means that he caught the Corinthians by cunning deceit, then he contradicts all his other utterances on this subject. Furthermore, he would contradict all the other six citations where this word guile (Greek, “dolos”) occurs—John 1:47, 1 Thes. 2:3; 1 Pet. 2:1, 22 and 3:10 and Rev. 14:5. In all those it means deceit, cunning, craft. Certainly the number seven could not be broken by our beloved brother Paul’s exception. Well, what did Paul mean? I answer: you will observe that he spoke in irony several times in this twelfth chapter and in the preceding one. Read verses 11, 13; also verses 16,

*Galatians 1:7-9 “Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him accursed.”

21, 23 of chap. 11. Then, continuing his irony, he says, “Being tricky (as you claim), I have caught you with a bait (as you accuse me).” (*“being crafty, I caught you with guile.”—2 Cor. 12:16 KJV*) That is, he preached the Gospel without a salary. There is no scriptural ground, therefore, resorting to chicanery in the service of God. The Apostle says, We “have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”—2 Cor. 4:2. Unselfishness was Paul’s craft. Now, having taken the three important negative steps, we are ready for the last one, which is indeed comprehensive and precious.

The Glorious Goal

10. “But speaking the Truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ”—V. 15. True ministers speak only the Truth; and true followers accept only the Truth. The Word of God is so vast, the Word of grace so full and sufficient, that no Gospel messenger need add any of his own cogitations to try to help the people. If we are honest before the Lord and faithful to the people, we will keep within the Bible and take heed to good and sound doctrine, and have nothing to do with “doctrines of demons.” Thus the Lord will give us flocks that will “endure sound doctrine.” “In love!” What a beautiful phrase. It occurs three times in this fourth chapter. Compare verses 2 and 15 and 16. It is not enough to know the Truth and fight for it; for truth is not some cold, rigid code of laws, or hide-binding rules. Truth is warm, because it is life itself. Jesus said, “I am The Truth.” (*“I am the way, the truth, and the life:”—John 14:6 KJV*) Some fellows teach grace with a great hammer. They talk about love in a spirit of vengeance. They would force the Word upon and into their hearers as by a pile-driver. It seems that some ministers, even of grace, have not sat down very long in Paul’s love chapter—1 Cor. 13. If preachers are heady and stern in their ministrations, they need not be surprised if their people are like them. “Love begets love” is an old adage, which is still true. However fervent and unfaltering we may be in declaring God’s Word, it must be with the fervor and firmness of unselfish love, which is longsuffering and forbearing, pitiful and patient. A real mother feeds her children without forcing them to eat. She comes to them with an inviting platter, laden with enticing victuals, and not with a raw-hide. Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” They are His sheep; and yet, He gives some of us the high privilege of shepherding them. What a marvelous grace! How then dare anyone flog, or flay Christ’s sheep?

“Grow up into Him in all things.” There are four degrees in

4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

this brief statement.

First, fed saints “grow.” As Peter exhorted, they growing race and divine knowledge. Some saints never grow. Usually it is because they do not have nourishing food. People cannot increase spiritually without spiritual provender, any more than they can grow naturally without food. What a reckoning a waits most ministers because of their laziness and neglect. What will they answer when He shall ask them, Did you feed my lambs and sheep? Why did you not feed my flock? No excuse will be accepted. Their religious playhouse ministries will receive no reward, but rebuke and shame.

Second, well-fed saints “grow up.” In chap. 3:17, we saw them growing downward, or “rooted in love.” (*“being rooted and grounded in love,” KJV*) Here we behold them becoming taller in grace and the things of God. In experience, they approach nearer to the throne of grace. They possess a keener sense of the divine presence.

Third, properly fed believers “grow up into Him,” that is Christ. This should be the desire of everyone. Their growth may not be in fame, or name, or achievements. “Growing pains,” such as trials and afflictions, may be the most marked features of their progress; but they will be growing up into their living Head. This is slow, tedious, imperceptible, but exceedingly profitable. Finally,

Fourth, scripturally fed saints “grow up into Him in all things.” This is the ultimate goal. “In all things” is too big a mouthful to swallow at once. There are very few symmetrical people in the natural. Most of us are too tall, or too small for our weight. We are too thick, or too thin. Who is properly proportioned in every part? Likewise, in the spiritual family, there are very few evenly poised believers. Some saints grow in knowledge, but very little in practical experience. They may “know” but not “understand.” Some grow in faith, but not in love. They can “move mountains,” but they are not moving towards perfection. They can pull down demons and disease; but cannot build up the saints. They learn to speak and sing in meeting; but they do not know when to quit. Some children do not eat of all that is set before them; therefore their growth is out of proportion. They turn up the nose with a scowl and a frown. It is often just that way with the saints. They refuse some of the Truth, taking in only what their self-life likes. They do not like the “in all things.” Reader, do you?

If something is said about giving, they cough. Their penurious old man begins to squirm. If healing is mentioned, they ask, What are the doctors for? They have to live. If they are asked to help others, or

give them a seat in the auto, they say, No one helped me. Oh, I have a new car. The Word read, or expounded shows people what to do, or what not to do; but because they do not yield to that corrective, or directive truth, they fail to grow in all things. They never become evenly balanced in their Christian lives; hence, their happiness is imperfect. They wonder why they are not blessed and contented as some others. It is because they chafe under, or run from the very providences which make for those things. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.” (*“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” KJV*) Only those, who eat all of the Word of God, grow in all things. Admitting and admiring the Truth is not enough. We must assimilate it and live by its power.

Source of Unity and Growth

“Which is the Head, even Christ.” (V. 15) This final clause is not incidental, but vital. The Headship of Christ over the Church is as exceedingly important as it is shamefully slighted and ignored by His people. There is no growth apart from its observance. Note that the goal is, “grow up into HIM.” How can we grow into Him, if we do not hold Him as our individual Head and as Head of the whole Church, which is His Body, and as “Head overall to (in behalf of, or by) the Church?” (*“the head over all things to the church,” KJV*)—Chap. 1:22. It is impossible. It is a lamentable fact, that people, who do not with the heart maintain this attitude to Jesus Christ, simply hang on, go on apparently and keep a form. They lose the power, fail in faith, fall from grace. Their love cools off and joy leaks out. Some lament their sad condition, but cannot locate the disease, nor the cause of it. Therefore, the Apostle ably and beautifully amplifies this growth in Christ, the Head, in the next comprehensive verse.

“From whom, the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love”— V. 16. The followers of Jesus as a company are pictured in different ways. Some times they are likened to the human body; other times to a house, or to a family in a house. All three of these likenesses are couched in this verse. The two chief classes of employees on the scene are carpenters and teachers. We saw the carpenters at work in chap. 2:21—“In whom (Christ), all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” The Greek word, “sunarmologoumenon,” occurs in these two places only. It literally means, “having been accurately framed

4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

together.” The next word, “sumbibazomenon,” means “having been brought together.” The same word is translated “knit together” in *Col. 2:2 and 19. It is rendered “proving” (bringing together evidence) in **Acts 9:22, and “teach” in ***1 Cor. 2:16. Two important acts by the carpenters are expressed by these two long words. The material is first fitly framed. That is, the saints are so wrought up on and in wrought by the Word and Spirit of God, that they become adjusted and adapted and spiritually fitted for certain places in “the Temple of God,” called also “the Body of Christ.” Then, secondly, that prepared and fitly-framed material is placed together, or joined piece to piece. That is, the saints, who yield to the divine process of spiritual framing, are gathered together by the Spirit and “set in the Body as it pleaseth Him,” (*“set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”—1 Cor. 12:18 KJV*) member joined to member, saint united to saint, one associated with another in warm fellowship and mutual respect. All are deeply devoted to God and tenaciously depending upon Christ as their Head.

The clause, “by that which every joint supplieth,” changes the figure from carpentering to anatomy. The uniting, or knitting together of the members of the spiritual Body of Christ is accomplished “thru (or by means of) every joint of the additional supply.” (*“by that which every joint supplieth,”—Chap. 4:16 KJV*) Col. 2:19 says, “By joints and bands having nourishment ministered.” Now these two phrases are the same word in the original, viz, “epichoregia,” meaning an additional abundant supply. But I am amazed to discover that “choregeo,” the base of this word, means “to lead a chorus or pay for a chorus, pay the piper.” How wonderful, then, that Paul should use it in this connection. The “nourishment ministered,” or “the supply,” by every joint and band, evidently includes “speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and songs spiritual, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks at all times for all things” (*“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving*

*Colossians 2:2, 19 “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ... And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

**Acts 9:22 “But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”

***1 Corinthians 2:16 “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;” KJV)—Chap. 5:19, 20. The “joints” and “bands” refer to such saints as afford spiritual nourishment, a prominent feature of which is a spirit of melody. All this speaks of perfect harmony in the Assembly. What is more soothing and comforting than sweet, scriptural words sung to a melodious tune, harmonious and tender? What an uplift to the saints as a whole, when they sing in the Spirit in other tongues! This is expressly mentioned (in chap. 5:19, 20) as “the will of God.” And the Spirit does not stop here with His minute description as to what enters into the growth of the Assembly. But He says, that all this process is

“According to the energetic working in due measure of each several part.” (*“according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,”—V. 16 KJV*) Is that not significant? Every member of the Church is to learn its particular place, whether a joint, or band, or whatever part of the Body, and keep yielding to the Holy Spirit and walking in the Truth in its place. Whatever our place, we should operate with divine energy, which the Lord is always ready to supply. We should operate “in due measure,” and not fall short, nor go beyond. Some folks pray and testify too often and too long. They have a conceited notion of their gifts. Others do not pray, or speak at all. They underestimate their gifts. They let the sly fox of timidity seal their mouths. They are personally robbed of blessing, and so is the whole meeting. But what is the climacteric result of the due working of every member of the Body in harmony with the written Word? The last clause of this verse answers—

“Maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love.” The divine appointment of the five gifts (domata, Greek) of verse 11, is to this worthy end. The ten steps of verse 12 to 15 are to this glorious end. The several items of verse 16 are an explanatory review of the preceding ten steps. Now we understand why most assemblies do not grow. They do not receive proper scriptural teaching and training; hence, there cannot be among them the ordained articulations of their members. There is no scriptural growth in numbers, because there is no power to bring forth. There is no growth in grace and knowledge, because “the Word of grace” (*“the word of his grace,”—Acts 20:32 KJV*) is either rejected, or neglected. The Assembly, “the Body,” cannot build up its own self in any sense.

“In love.” Let us pause here. The love here mentioned is not sentiment. It is not carnal pity, a glossing over other’s faults. It is not that sickly something that exclaims, “Well, we must be charitable; there

is good in all people.” It is the “love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit” (“*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,*” *KJV*)—Rom. 5:5. This love puts Christ first, and seeks His honor and gives Him His place first of all as Head of the Body. This love reveres and believes the Word and practices it. Therefore, we read in verse 2, “Forbearing one another in love.” That does not condone in, nor give quarter to the old self-life; but it supports the weak and suffers long with those who learn slowly and are hindered and handicapped by Satan. It “speaks the Truth in love,” (“*speaking the truth in love,*”—*V. 15 KJV*) which cuts down the flesh and builds up the new man. This love judges the flesh in each individual life, primarily in himself first of all. “Pull the beam first out of your own eye, then you can see clearly to pull the mote, or splinter, out of your brother’s eye.” (“*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*”—*Matt. 7:5 KJV*) Self-judgment is the most powerful proof of “love one to another.” It prays more, talks less, criticizes never, washes feet, lifts burdens, runs errands, sings songs, binds up bruises, takes insults, revenges no one. A meeting of such members “builds up itself in love.” (“*edifying of itself in love.*”—*V. 16 KJV*) In Col. 2:19, the Apostle goes a little further, saying, “Increaseth with the increase of God.” This is wonderful, and as vital and real as it is wonderful. In a typical assembly, God is seen to grow. There is no real growth in a meeting except God grows therein. Only by the increase of God can we be “filled into all the fulness of God.” (“*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*” *KJV*)—Chap. 3:19.

In the light of such delicate and intricate dealings of divine love, we marvel that any Spirit-filled person should introduce any kind of manmade cement to hold saints together. We marvel that men claim to find a receipt for such glue in the Bible. The above language speaks of the unbreakable union, solidity and growth and vigorous health of the Church, which we should covet for God’s glory. If we believe these words, we never will contrive some human framework and expect the blessed Holy Spirit to fit redeemed souls into it. We will not break the tender heart of our adorable Head, by substituting ourselves, or others as heads of Christ’s Body. Beloved, let us stand aloof from present conditions, which do not give Him His ordained place. Rather wound your friends than the Beloved. Rather court His favor and approval than any other. By God’s enabling, we can maintain this most loyal attitude to Christ and the Truth, “speaking the Truth in love.” Thus we will indeed be “building up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (“*beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,*”—*Jude 1:20 KJV*) (Jude),

and be “always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”—1 Cor. 15:58.

Suitable Sundry Exhortations

Verses 17 to 33 comprise above a dozen instructions as to our daily conduct, or walk, in view of what is contained in the sixteen preceding verses. The first of these is the fourth of the “seven walks” of this Epistle—“Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.” That is, do not “walk as men”—1 Cor. 3:3. Before we were saved, we walked thus, even “according to the age of this world” (*“according to the course of this world,” KJV*)—Chap. 2:2. But now that we are a new creation in Christ, we are to walk as Christ walked. When sinners among sinners, we may not have realized the actual condition of sinners: but now that we are saved, we may know what we were before we enjoyed God’s salvation. Therefore, as a background for his entreaty, the Apostle briefly outlines the sinner’s state. With eight dashes of his word-brush, he makes a dark and dismal picture of fallen man. He says, that the

“Gentiles walk in the vanity, or emptiness, of their mind, having the understanding darkened.” (V. 17) But they think themselves to be full and bright. They boast in their intelligence and wisdom, or supposed light. They are “alienated from the life of God.” (V. 18) They went away from Him deliberately, as indicated by Rom. 1:21 to 25. How terrible to be “dead in trespasses and sins,” and continue thus, when the glorious real life of God is offered to men thru His Son. How have they become alienated? “Thru the ignorance that is in them.” (V. 18) And the more ignorant they are, the more they “profess themselves to be wise.” (*“Professing themselves to be wise,”—Romans 1:22 KJV*) How have men become ignorant? “Thru the blindness (hardness) of their heart.” (V. 18) Rejection of light increases blindness. Rejection of conviction induces hardness of heart. They are “past feeling.” Literally, they “have cast off all feeling” towards God and divine things. If that was true in Paul’s day, it is more true in our day. And they “have given themselves over to lasciviousness,” (V. 19) or licentiousness, which is another rendering. They go to the utmost extreme of wickedness and lewdness, and “work all uncleanness with greediness,” (V. 19) or craving, or eagerness. Such a picture should produce an eternal recoil to believers.

The foreground of Paul’s exhortation is expressed in verse 1 of this chapter—“Walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye were called.” (*“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,”—Eph. 4:1 KJV*) The inward attitude of the saints toward God and toward one

4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

another are the chief concern of the first sixteen verses of the chapter. Hence, the entreaty—"Keep the unity of the Spirit" (V. 3), and the goal—"the unity of the faith"—V. 13. That is a walk before the Lord, the faithful steppings of the heart and will. It is a walk together with one another—"forbearing in love, speaking in love, building up in love." (*"forbearing one another in love... speaking the truth in love... edifying of itself in love."*—*Eph. 4:2, 4:15, and 4:16 KJV*) The power of the Word and Spirit effectually operate in the new man, the inner man, causing it to grow up into Christ in all things. But the outward conduct is the concern of the latter half of this chapter. How to walk before men calls for these cautions.

A Change of Clothing

"But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard Him and have been taught by (in) Him, as the truth is in Jesus"—Vs. 20, 21. The fundamental truth as to experience, which Paul always emphasized, was, that we put off the old man, when we believe on Jesus, and put on the new man. He declares this positively in Col. 3:9, 10—"Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." The old man "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," (V.22) or the desires of deceit, in which the nations still revel. Therefore, we are admonished not to walk as they walk. We are no longer to walk like the fellow we abandoned, but like the new man, which we have taken on. As believers, we are a new creation; we are in a new realm; we have a new Head, even the Last Adam. We are a spiritual people. Now verses 22 to 24 seem to teach us to put off the old man again and put on the new man again. But that is not the meaning. Paul does not mean to say that we may be saved today and lost tomorrow, and have to be saved over again. He means that we are to put off the conduct of the old man. The former course, or manner of life must be abandoned—"walk not as the nations walk." (*"ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation,"*—*Leviticus 20:23 KJV*) Note exactly the wording of verse 22—The truth, set forth in Jesus' teaching and in His conduct, is this, "that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man," or that ye put away, according to the former manner of life, the old man. When you were saved you put off the old Adam head; therefore, now put away his old habits, "which are waxed corrupt." The exhortations of verses 25 to 31 name some of those habits. Heeding those exhortations is putting off the old man, as to his former conduct.

The other side of truth, as it is in Jesus, is "that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man, which, according to

4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

God, is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”—Vs. 23, 24, Gr. Here the conduct of the new man is meant, as the following verses also show. The phrase, “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2) is a comment on these verses. Neither one refers to salvation, but to being “renewed in knowledge” (Col. 3:10), “renewed day by day”—2 Cor. 4:16. Having taken the Last Adam as our Lord and Head, we are to wear His robe of righteousness. Our daily life should agree with our Sunday profession. In the following platform of eight planks, there are eight “nots,” or negatives, and five “lets.” Some of these planks are as couplets, a positive set over against a negative. These couplets declare unquestionably the fact of the two natures in believers. They prove that “the old man is not taken out, root and branch,” as the second work theory claims. There is no kind of sanctification this side of death, or translation, that puts a believer, as to his body, into the state of sinlessness and purity, which Adam enjoyed before he sinned. Old sinful deeds are possible after we are saved, because of “sin in the flesh” (“*sin that dwelleth in me.*” *KJV*)—Rom. 7:17, 18, 20, 23 and 8:3. But we should not let sin reign in our mortal body; “for sin shall not have dominion over you”—Rom. 6:12, 14. By observing the following entreaties, we put off the old manner of life and put on the new manner of life. We heed verses 22 to 24.

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another”—V. 25. This verse is a significant triplet. The devil is a liar from the beginning. Tho’ he has inoculated us with a lying nature, we are to yield our members to God and tell the truth. Lying to my neighbor, is lying to myself, because he is a member of me. And a white lie is just as black as a black lie. Truth makes men free (*John 8:32); therefore, we should speak the truth always.

“Be ye angry and sin not; let no sun go down upon your wrath”—V. 26. Here is another triplet; but some of these triplets have couplets as opposites. Psa. 4:4 is a parallel citation—“Stand in awe (be angry), and sin not.” It means well-grounded hatred of evil, or wrong done. Mark 3:5 is a side-light—Jesus “looked round about on them with anger (“orge,” Greek), being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.” But, however just our holy indignation may be, we must not let it burn on into bitterness. We must not “chew the rag” after we have had our say. We must not boast of how we rebuked the foe. If our anger does not subside, it will turn to wrath and become sinful; then darkness will steal over our spirit—the sun will go down upon our wrath. Thus we

*John 8:32 “**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**”

4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

will be giving the devil a chance to do mischief.

“Let him that stole, steal no more”—V. 28. It is wise to make restitution, if possible; but restitution is not even intimated here. How then can anyone teach the necessity of restitution in order to be saved? Salvation is by faith in Him who paid all our debt, and not by restoring what we might have stolen. We are not exhorted to repair the past conduct of the old man, but we are taught not to continue in that conduct. “Rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good,” instead of stealing with his hands; for stealing is evil. This verse is another significant triplet. Observe, that the toil is not to enrich the former thief, nor the present toiler, but to relieve the sufferer. The Gospel of Christ and of Paul never gives any place for selfishness.

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”—V. 29. Someone said, If you think something, you might as well speak it out. That is a poor excuse for not being willing to put his hand on his mouth, as *Prov. 30:32 advises. Oh, how much harm is done, how much sadness is wrought among saints by not heeding this injunction. We may not be responsible for evil thoughts; but we certainly are responsible for saying everything which comes into the mind. Do you turn on the faucet and let out all the water just because the water is there? Do you open the windows and let all the dust and smoke blow in, simply because they are crying for entrance? Some people are so given to grab in the natural, that it seems they never get control of their talkative old man, tho’ they have received the Holy Spirit. Instead of being ashamed of their useless palaver, which is invariably baneful, they enjoy hearing themselves talk.

Oh, beloved, stop and consider before you speak. Is it “good to the use of edifying?” What profit to others will my words give? At railroad crossings, stands the loud caution—“Stop; look; listen.” Neglect of that warning has plunged many persons suddenly into eternity. Reader, stop and think; look up to the Lord; listen for His voice. Certainly you will not talk so much. When you do speak, it will be for the building up of others. You will be a wise minister of grace. See, you need not be a pulpiteer to preach grace; preach it in your walk. Rather than disseminate disgrace, let us be silent for ever.

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye were sealed unto the day of redemption”—V. 30. This verse has no reference to praying and testifying in meeting. It refers to our daily life among

*Proverbs 30:32 “If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, *lay* thine hand upon thy mouth.”

4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

the saints. Neglect of the preceding and succeeding admonitions grieves the Spirit. Walking after the flesh, doing the things we did when unsaved, living and talking like the world, misusing our tongues, misappropriating our earnings: all such things grieve the Holy Spirit. The next verse is a sample—"bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking, with all malice." (V. 31) It is a summing up of what went before.

Is it possible that saved people need these exhortations? Yes, and these were written to pentecostal people. They had been "sealed with the Spirit," (*"sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,"—Eph. 1:13 KJV*) that is, "anointed with the Spirit," (*"ye have an unction from the Holy One,"—1 John 2:20 KJV*) or as folks today say, but unscripturally, "baptized with the Spirit." (*"baptize you with the Holy Ghost."—Mark 1:8 KJV*) Note also chap. 1:13. Apparently there is more strife among the Spirit-filled saints than among others. There are several reasons for this. First, they are the most out-and-out-for-God folks on earth. Of course, the devil seeks to make trouble among them more than among others; for he knows that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." (*"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."—Mark 3:25 KJV*) Second, when the Holy Spirit comes into a life, He begins to show up the character of the old man, and domestic war arises between the old and the new lives, or the two natures. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit (the renewed spirit), and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary to one another, so that ye may not do the things that ye would" (*"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." KJV*)—Gal. 5:17. The individual, and usually the whole assembly, are dwelling in the seventh chapter of Romans—sin is reigning in their flesh. Third, they have not learned the way of victory over sin, the road out of Rom. 7, by means of reckoning as taught in Rom. 6. Therefore, they know nothing experimentally about the glorious, victorious, reigning life in the Spirit, as taught in Rom. 8. Some may have a philosophical self-control in certain respects, but not thru the mastery of the Holy Spirit over them. Fourth, some saints know the theory of victory over sin, according to Rom. 6; but they do not practice the theory. They fail to reckon. They do not judge their own cantankerous flesh. They sit in judgment over their fellows, and justify themselves. Or they do not judge their nice, sweet, flesh, their natural self-control. The flesh in one believer snorts against the flesh in another believer; or the flesh in one arises against the Holy Spirit in another. Some times error in doctrine causes strife. All these things grieve the Holy Spirit; and that grief is

keenly felt by those who are filled practically with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

Some may ask, What is meant by “the day of redemption?” This is not an unfair question. It deserves an answer. Rom. 8:23 gives us light—We, “which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (or sonship), the redemption of our body.” (*“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” KJV*) The full fruitage of the Spirit will include the resurrection and translation of the body; for Christ died to save the entire man, spirit, soul and body. The Greek word “apolutrosis,” rendered redemption, literally means “a loosing away, a release on payment of a ransom.” An immortal body will be the final result for us of Christ’s redemption. We will be actually loosed away from all sin and from the possibility of committing sin. We will be loosed away from death and disease, to be forever with the Redeemer Himself. Therefore, “the day of redemption” is when the Lord shall raise the dead bodies of saints and change the living and catch us up to be with Him in the glory. When we received the Holy Spirit, we were sealed unto that glorious time; and none can break the seal.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”—V. 32. Doing this pleases the Holy Spirit; for this is what He will enable us to do, if we keep yielding to Him. What a beautiful finale to the chapter! It is akin to the beginning of the chapter. If we consider the motive of God’s forgiveness, even “for Christ’s sake,” we will become kind and tender toward our brethren. Then there will be also reality and depth to our forgiveness. When the Lord pardons us, He does not afterward publish what wicked wretches we were. If we really pardon an offense of a brother, we will not broadcast the crime he had committed against us. The forgiveness for Jesus’ sake forgets as well as forgives, even as Jehovah casts our sins into the sea of forgetfulness for ever.

An Explanatory Word

Our use of the word “officer” in reference to the five divine “gifts” in verse 11, may seem to some that we endorse organization. No, we simply endorse divine order, or arrangement. God forbid that we should leave an unwise impression on anyone’s mind. Let me explain the meaning by several citations. Paul said, “I magnify mine office” (literally, “deaconship, or ministry”)—Rom. 11:13. He said, “All members have not the same office” (Greek, “praxis,” meaning,

4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

“work, action, use”)—Rom. 12:4. Also, “if a man desire the office of a bishop (Greek, “episkope,” “oversight, bishopric”), he desireth a good work”—1 Tim. 3:1. Note that this office is called “a work.” See also *Acts 1:20, where the four-word phrase is translated “bishopric” (“*bishoprick*” *KJV*)—**Luke 1:9 and ***Heb. 7:5. The priests were not in an organization, and were not chosen by the people. They were divinely appointed.

Who is an officer? An officer is one who fills an office, or acts in an official capacity, or performs a certain service. Hence, a deacon, a bishop, a minister, an apostle may be called an officer, as by divine appointment. Such an appointment, or such an officer need have no reference to an organization at all. The Greek word “huperetes,” translated “officer” in the Gospels, means “an under rower, an assistant, an attendant.” John Mark was such an officer with Barnabas and Saul, but was called “their minister”—Acts 13:5. Of course, if we call those five classes of ministries in verse 11, “gifts” (“domata,” Greek), as in verse 8, we shall not be misleading; neither will we give Satan an advantage to introduce something unscriptural. Consult again page 55, the first paragraph.

*Acts 1:20 “For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.”

**Luke 1:9 “According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.”

***Hebrews 7:5 “And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.”

The Divine Product,

The Bride

Chapter Five

“Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour”—Vs. 1, 2. These verses properly conclude the preceding chapter. The expletive, “therefore,” connects them with it. For us to do as admonished in the foregoing couplets and triplets is being “followers, or imitators” of God. Thus we are “children beloved” of God, as our Father, who loves His dear children even as He loves His Son. We also are His very own, having been begotten of Him. We were entreated to “walk worthy of our calling” (“*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*”—*Chap. 4:1 KJV*) and “walk not as other Gentiles walk”—*Chap. 4:1 and 17*. Three things were to be done “in love.” Now all those walks and works are summed up in one comprehensive request—“And walk in love,” which is the fifth of the seven walks of this letter. To walk in love is to do God’s perfect will. The leverage for such a perfect walk is profound and powerful. It is twofold, which observe.

5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

“As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us.” God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem it. The Son so loved the world that He left the glory to come to earth to die for mankind. The Holy Spirit so loved the world that He came to empower the Son to die thus. Hence, the Son has given Himself, an offering and a sacrifice. During the time of the shadows, the people brought offerings of money, or wood, or other things, to the Lord. Those were thank offerings, etc. Then they brought also animals and birds for sacrifices, which were called burnt offerings, sin offerings etc. They all foreshadowed Jesus Christ and His death on Calvary. As the offering and the sacrifice, Christ gave Himself for us. God accepts us in Christ, who is our offering, by accepting Him. In Christ, we are a thank offering to God. He accepts the sacrifice of Christ as the burnt offering for us. In offering Himself, as a sacrifice for us, He was a sweet smelling savor to the Father, and we who believe on Jesus are a sweet savor also in Him. Gen. 8:20, 21 is a bright side-light at this point. Noah “offered burnt offerings on the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor.” The margin says, that He smelled “a savor of rest.” God is absolutely satisfied with the offering and sacrifice of His Son in our behalf. Therefore, He has entered into an eternal rest. He wants no other offering, no other sacrifice. And more. He smelled that savor of rest for you and me. By accepting Jesus, we too satisfy God. Oh, this is too

deep and wonderful for words. He is resting in regard to us in the perfection of His Son, and He rests in us as His sons, because of Christ. (Paul does not speak here of Christ as the sin and trespass offerings. We have those in chap. 2.)

Do you marvel, then, that Paul said, “And walk in love?” How can we walk otherwise, seeing that we are so highly favored? With such a view of divine grace, we need not wonder that “Enoch walked with God.” It makes me want to walk with Him. Yea, it makes me let God walk IN me. If a scriptural vision of the boundless grace of God and of the self-sacrificing grace of His Son does not move us to chastity, unselfishness and holy living, what will? But that is not all. We are to “walk in love as Christ also hath loved us.” We are to walk as He walked, love as He loved, give ourselves up to the Father as He gave Himself. Moses and Paul are examples of the possible depth of such devotedness to God. Moses was willing to have his name blotted out of God’s book, if thereby Israel might be forgiven—*Ex. 32:32. Paul was willing to be accursed, or separated from Christ for the salvation of Israel—**Rom. 9:3. The high purpose of this deep love and devotion is set before us in verses 22 to 33 of this chapter.

Walk Not After the Flesh

“But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints”—V. 3. These are called “works of the flesh” in Gal. 5:19-21. They head the list of seventeen there, and of six here. These are the most pronounced and include the others. Strange to say, these works of the flesh are termed “your members” (Col. 3:5) because they operate thru the members of our bodies. We did put off all these works once, in God’s reckoning, when we accepted Jesus as our Savior. We turned from them as belonging to the old creation. Nevertheless, as to experience, they may clamor for recognition and seek to continue working. Hence, we have to deal with them, one by one, as they arise. We must “mortify” them, put them to death by treating them as dead, because they were executed in the execution of Christ. It is becoming among Ephesian saints, that such carnal working be not even named, so great should be our victory over sin in the flesh.

People put unwarranted distinctions between lusts of the flesh.

*Exodus 32:32 “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”

**Romans 9:3 “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:”

5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

They raise a hue and cry about fornication; but pass lightly over covetousness and even rejoice over a jest. Bear in mind that Holy Writ always sees them in the same pen, as abominable in His sight. If there is any difference, covetousness is the worst; for it is termed “idolatry”—V. 5 with *Col. 3:5. It substitutes for God what it hankers after. Verse 5 is unmistakably plain—“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Of course not. The old creation can have no part, or lot in God’s kingdom, because it is flesh, and “all flesh is grass,” which shall be burned with divine wrath. Rev. 22:11 gives the final verdict of the old creation—“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” Gal. 5:21 declares that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“The foolish talking, or jesting” (V. 4) means much more than innocent pleasantries, or mirthful puns. It means professional story-telling, creating laughter by ludicrous remarks and actions. “A jester was one retained by persons of high rank to make sport for them and their friends. He wore a motly, or parti-colored dress, with a cap, or head-dress, furnished with bells and asses’ ears.” This refers no doubt especially to making a mock of the Truth and of divine things. After giving those unanswerable proofs of the resurrection, Paul adds, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”—1 Cor. 15:33. He had no reference to ordinary conversation. Devilish doctrine was the evil communication. By good manners, he meant good behavior in God’s sight. Wrong teaching will produce bad conduct. Similar is the meaning here. Smart remarks, witty, tricky flings at Christ and His doctrine are not befitting to believers. Instead of enjoying them, much less engaging in them, we should rebuke them as coming from vile mouths.

Christ’s Headship Adorned

There is deeper meaning than the natural to these verses. God’s chief concern for His people has always been their spiritual condition and their relation to Himself. Most saints are unduly taken up with the natural works, or lusts of the flesh, and miss the enjoyment of the place and fellowship which is ours in Christ. Therefore, let us consider the spiritual application of these motions of the flesh.

Religious “fornication and uncleanness,” (*“fornication, and*

*Colossians 3:5 “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”

all uncleanness,”—*V. 3 KJV*) etc., certainly figure prominently in Christendom. Fornication heads the class in the religious realm as well as in the natural. It seems to be the father of all the others. God’s way is that His Son should be the Head of His people, which, for this age, are termed the Church, or Body of Christ. See chaps. 1:22, 23 and 4:15 and Col. 2:19. Paul said, “I have espoused you to one Husband,” Christ—2 Cor. 11:2. As their Head, He desires to be their Wisdom, Life, Strength and Guide. He would be to His own all that a husband should be to his wife, and more. But men have assumed His place of headship over the Church. Thus they have made themselves, or others have made them, religious fornicators; and they cause the Church to commit adultery. Human wisdom is substituted for Christ. Intellectual feasts and musical performances take the place of Christ as the Life and Strength of His people. Presbyteries, conferences and official boards assume to guide, by human legislation and legerdemain, whom only the infinite Spirit of Jehovah can direct.

“And all uncleanness” is sure to come as a nasty troop after fornication. First of all the fellowship is unclean, because an unclean fellow is in the lead. How can the fruitage be pure and the spiritual offspring be scripturally clean and healthy? Error in doctrine is sure to spring up. Worship becomes soulish. Spiritual power wanes. Formality reigns. Mentality gains the day.

“Covetousness” is the next child born to fornication. Perhaps it did not occur to you that some people are religiously covetous. It stalks with long legs, high air and brazen face on every hand to day. It is a most common thing for saints to yield to this shameful lust. Men have no scruples about stealing other people’s places. Preachers covet the pulpits of their brethren, and get them by craft. They covet well-fed sheep and connive to win them. Covetousness is so wily and oily, so polite and fawning, that its real character is not readily discerned. It talks smoothly and smiles complacently. It flatters and fools folks. Apparently, it wants nothing; but actually it craves everything. Apparently it is contented and satisfied, but all the while pulling wires and shoving dice to win a spiritual game. Dear Paul cried, “Let it not be once named among you.” It is unbecoming for saints to want what does not belong to them. It is a burning shame the way some ministers mal-treat their brethren. Brother, If God calls you, He will find you a job. You need not steal one.

“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting.” These follow close behind the former trio. The Greek word “*aischrotes*,” here translated filthiness, means also “ugliness, baseness, infamy.” The

word “morologia,” rendered foolish talking, is from “moros,” meaning “dull, heavy, stupid, silly, foolish, tasteless;” and from “lego,” to speak. It is amazing to what depths of ugliness and abuse that men can stoop, when they assume authority that God has not given to them. With heated invectives, they warn people against those who proclaim the whole counsel of God, and are innocent of ministerial filthiness. Their teaching, if it may be called such, becomes dull and insipid. Their preaching, empty and tasteless. Finally, they crown their harangues with ludicrous jests about the truth. Here is a sample of such pious (?) filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. One fellow wrote, that “eternal security makes God unholy, unjust a respecter of persons and both a liar and a fool. It makes the whole Bible a pack of lies and a bunch of nonsense. It forces you to believe in infant damnation, or universalism. It teaches in effect that men can be cleansed from sin after death, and has purgatory beat forty ways. It is hellish and blasphemous, and a lie of the devil from start to finish.” Reader, is that not terrible for a Gospel minister? But that is a specimen of what flows from religious fornication. Hence, how wisely Paul wrote—“Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord” (*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” KJV*)—2 Cor. 7:1.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”—V. 5. If such false lights, as the one just quoted from above, are saved at all, it is because God saved them by His wondrous grace before they imbibed such shameful error. They certainly will have no inheritance; for they are building “wood and hay and stubble.” Their vain works of flesh will be burned by the just fires of divine judgment, tho’ they themselves be saved. “An inheritance among all them that are sanctified” is possible only thru “the Word of grace, which is able to build you up” (*“the word of his grace, which is able to build you up,” KJV*)—Acts 20:32. Legality, or fleshly activity, has no right to any inheritance; “for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise”—Gal. 3:18. That was absolutely by grace. God dealt in wondrous grace with Abraham 300 years before the law was given.

Perhaps you think it is too much to say, that there are religious whoremongers, unclean and covetous fellows in the pulpits; but that is what the Bible teaches. What else is the fitting title for the man that deliberately takes the official place that belongs to Christ, if Christ is

Head of the Church? And is he not unclean by making himself the husband of Christ's very own? And does he not defile the Body and Bride of the Son of God? What kind of covetousness could be more criminal? And this spirit of unclean dominion and covetousness flows thru entire organized systems. They demand stipulated and systematic support of their flocks. Imagine a man marrying a woman, ostensibly because he loves her, and then demanding of her \$50.00 per week for his headship. No doubt a divorce suit would soon follow.

Now, if these things are so, how can such ministries obtain a heavenly inheritance? How can the God of all grace reward the works of flesh with spiritual remunerations? "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." (*for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;*—Gal. 6:7-8 KJV) All the reward and inheritance that many Christian workers will receive, is in this life. They themselves will be saved as by fire, if they are born again; but their carnal works will ascend in smoke, a stench in the nostrils of the holy Jehovah.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"—V. 6. The projectors of the six evil acts named in the three preceding verses are termed "sons (Greek, huious) of disobedience." They have grown up and become efficient in their wicked works and religious buffoonery. Tho' their language is catchy and entertaining, they are really "vain, or empty." Fleshly hearers may be attracted thereby; but the spiritual are disgusted with them. They are useless, defiling and destructive. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ"—2 Cor. 11:13. Hence, our Apostle warns us not to be deceived by them.

"Be not ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light"—V. 7, 8. Some saints are deceived by the cunning flattery of the afore-mentioned religious evils, and become partakers therewith. They have not learned that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," and has "ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works"—1 Cor. 11:14, 15. His light is darkness. His righteousness is a false righteousness. It is a make-believe, a put-on, an imitation, a whitewash. It is commonly called self-righteousness. Many believers are snared by it. Christian workers are victims to this trap of the devil, and defile their followers thereby. Hence, Paul warns us not to be deceived thereby,

5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

and not to partake thereof.

Observe the logic of his entreaty. “Ye were sometimes darkness.” Once we were in the world, unsaved and of the world. We were not only in darkness; but we were darkness. We were in the sphere and realm of the above-named “sons of disobedience;” (*“children of disobedience.” KJV*) tho’ we had not developed into sonship therein, and were not such leaders. Yet we were darkness in God’s sight. Thank God for the radical change and transference—“now light in the Lord.” (V. 8) Now we are in the realm of light, even “in the Lord.” And we are “light in the Lord.” We are “daylight” to a dark world. The Greek word “phos” means also “joy, deliverance and happiness.” Therefore, saints are joy, deliverance and happiness to sad, enslaved humanity. Oh, what a sphere the new birth brings us into. It is supremely wonderful. We are out of darkness. We are no longer darkness. We are not even false, or pretended light. We are nothing in ourselves. But thank the Lord, we are light in the Lord.

5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Three Worthy Walks

“Walk as children of light.” The chapter began by saying, “Be ye imitators of God as dear children.” (*“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;”—Chap. 5:1 KJV*) That exhortation requires a three-fold walk. The first and basic one is “walk in love,” which we have considered already—V. 2. The last one is “walk circumspectly”—V. 15. The second one demands our attention here. It is the direct opposite of the walk of the religious make-believes of verses 3 to 5. We are admonished to move in harmony with our new sphere and new nature. We are in the light; we are in the Lord; we are light; we are children of light, being born of God, who is light. Hence, we should walk accordingly. Note that the Greek for children here is “tekna,” and not “huios,” sons, as in verse 6. We are reminded that God is our Progenitor. We are His offspring. Hence, we are to walk in dependence upon Him, and not independent, as do the self-righteous, who depend upon their own strength and wisdom. Tho’ we grow up into actual sonhood in Christ and are led by the Holy Spirit (*Rom. 8:14); yet we are always absolutely dependent upon the Lord every step of our Christian journey. Therefore, John called his flock “little children” In his last entreaty—**1 John 5: 21. The teaching, that we do not need the Bible and the Christ in heaven, since Christ is in us, is extremely dangerous. That is sure to land its victims into hideous fanaticism, if not in the asylum. Ever “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of

*Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

**1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

the faith” (“*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,*” *KJV*) (Heb. 12:2) and “holding fast the faithful Word” (Tit. 1:9) are our only safety.

5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

“For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth”—V. 9. This verse is parenthetical; for the last clause of verse 8 connects directly with verse 10. By walking as children of light, we prove what is acceptable unto the Lord. We prove verse 9. The word Spirit in this verse should be light; for the Apostle is writing about the fruit of the light, and not concerning “the fruit of the Holy Spirit.” (“*the fruit of the Spirit*” *KJV*) He is contrasting light with darkness, and the respective fruits of each. Of course, this is not contrary to the Spirit, nor independent of Him. Where the fruit of the light is seen, which is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, there the fruit of the Spirit—“love, joy, peace, etc.”—is also manifested.

5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”—V. 11. If those evil workers and works were only in the natural, certainly so much attention would not be given to them. It is the religious deeds against which we are warned. They are works of darkness, tho’ they pretend to produce light. They are unfruitful of goodness and righteousness and truth, which only are acceptable to the Lord. They are so cunning and seemingly pious; they appeal so pleasingly to the carnal mind; they employ so much of certain Scriptures, that ignorant souls are often snared thereby. Unity, Spiritism, Christian Science, Adventism, Theosophy, New Thought, Latter Day Saintism, etc., belong with the unfruitful works of darkness. They are the subtle brood of legality, which is flooding the world and has honeycombed Christendom. Cain is the father of the mall. The Cain religion of works, which rejects “the sin offering lying at the door” (“*sin lieth at the door.*” *KJV*) (Gen. 4:7), was the foundation of all the abominable, unfruitful works of religious darkness. Oh, how many honest hearts have been trapped therein.

5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

“For it is a shame even to speak of those things, which are done of them in secret”—V. 12. The shameful secret things are not all done in the red-light district. They are not confined to the natural flesh. The most shameful and abominable secret works are religious. The public does not recognize them; but Jehovah does. The religious performance may not be hidden behind a screen; but the devilish secret is disguised by pious words and religious garbs. There is the “meal,” some of the Word of God; but it is adroitly leavened with doctrines of demons, and people do not detect it. How pertinent, therefore, is the next verse.

5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

“But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light”—V. 13. Lift a board in a damp place and let on the sunlight, and behold the worms and bugs. The light makes them manifest, and they scurry off, hunting a hiding place. All that is needed often is simply the quoting of one Scripture verse. The leaven is exposed. The worms of error begin to wiggle; the bugs of darkness flee in every direction. And the owners of those dark broods either blush and cower, apologize and explain, or rave, snort and dash with rage. “Be sure your sin will find you out,” saith the Lord. Saints expose error and cleanse away leaven by their happy testimonies; for they are lights in the Lord.

“Wherefore it saith, Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee”—V. 14, R. V. This quotation is not verbatim from any Old Testament citation. Jonah 1:6 comes the nearest—“What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God.” It may seem strange that such an exhortation should occur here. However, if we study Acts 20:29, 30 and Rev. 2:1-6, we discover why it was given. The religious evils dwelt upon before, were lurking about the Ephesian assembly. It was threatened from every side. “Grievous wolves” were already prowling around on the outside. They claimed to be apostles; but Ephesus found them to be liars. She hated their Nicolaitane works—their wool-picking ministry, or preaching for hire. Paul saw, by the Spirit, that from within the assembly, self-seekers would arise, speaking per verse things to draw away disciples after them. John wrote to Ephesus, saying, “Thou hast left thy first love.” She had fallen into drowsiness, which is next door to death. Can it be that the slumbering state was stealing over them already when Paul wrote? Surely there was great reason for his fervent, repeated and detailed admonitions and warnings. Let us profit by them. Let us ever “walk in love, walk as children of light,” keep aloof from dead religious bodies (*Lev. 21:1, 11); then Christ will always shine upon us and our way will be clear and clean.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil”—Vs. 15, 16. This is the last of the seven significant walks of Ephesians. It is of a culminating character, in view of our gathering together unto Christ in the glory. The word translated circumspectly, means also understandingly, hence, accurately. Luke had a “perfect, or accurate,” understanding of all

*Leviticus 21:1, 11 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people...Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;”

things pertaining to Christ's birth and biography; hence, he wrote of Him—*Luke 1:3. The preceding steps brought us up to this, the final one. They were preparatory to it. No one can leap from the lowest step to the seventh of any material stairway. Neither can anyone span the spiritual stairway by one bound. We ought to be able, by this time, to walk accurately. The Spirit has given us wisdom. Light has been streaming in upon our spirits. Dangers have been pointed out. Adequate instruction has been bestowed. What lack we? Nothing. Let us "walk as wise." (*"walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,"—V. 15 KJV*) How can we thus walk?

"Redeeming the time," or buying up the opportunity. The Greek here for redeem is "eksagorazo," It literally means. "to haunt the market place; do business there; buy for oneself." The thrifty business man watches for bargains. He is not particular as to what he buys, if only he can make it count dollars into his purse. He deals in pencils and shoe-strings, if he thinks them to be the most prolific of gain. Just so with the saint who walks spiritually wise. He makes every providence count eternal revenue into his heavenly bank. He resents error and resists evil, not by argument, but by the Word of God. Thus he converts every obnoxious moment into blessing to another and into gain for himself. The opportunity, which another fails to see, or puts from him, the wise saint grabs quickly. It may seem unworthy of notice, like Samson's jaw bone of an ass, or too stupendous to undertake, like Goliath against David. But the wise man passes over nothing flippantly, and shrinks from no proffered task. He is grateful for the smallest blessings and runs after the largest ones.

God shows men their privileges of blessing and usefulness continually. Then He furnishes them sufficient capital of wisdom and faith to "buy up the opportunity." Most people, however, want their own way. They have some schemes of their own. They refuse to invest with Jesus as led by the Spirit. His opportunities and investments seem too small, too narrow, too humiliating, too self-sacrificing for them. Hence, God's market for them closes, and they go out of business altogether, or they dwindle into a little racket store on an alley. They keep up a religious racket anyway. Compare the word "redemption" in verse 16 with the same English word in chap. 1:7. See notes on that verse, page 17. That speaks of Christ paying a ransom for us and buying us out of sin's market-place. But this verse speaks of us entering into the market-place and seizing goods, which He has already bought, and delivering them to Him. What an honored place we have.

* Luke 1:3 "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,"

5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

“Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is”—V. 17. The spiritual marketer observes one governing principle—what is God’s will? With him, it is not a question of brains, or experience, or equipment, or means; but what does the Lord want? It is most unwise to determine what to do, or not to do, by our own wisdom. But is it possible to know God’s will? It certainly is possible, else He would not tell us to find it out. “Surely, the Lord will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (*“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” KJV*)—Amos 3:7. And the Holy Spirit has been given to us to “guide us into all the truth” (*“he will guide you into all truth.” KJV*)—John 16:13. Shame on the people who cry, saying, The Bible is a riddle, a sealed book, or how can we know God’s will? The next verse shuts the critic’s mouth, and shows us by what means we may learn the will of the Lord. Indeed, it declares what is the first and important item of the divine will.

5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”—V. 18. This verse does not refer to our anointing with the Holy Spirit, or the baptism with the Spirit, as some call it. Paul did not write this letter to newborn ones, who had not yet been filled with the Spirit, or received their Pentecost. Nay, they had been filled, or sealed with the Spirit before he went to Rome. Compare chaps. 1:13 and 4:30 with *Acts 19:6. The Greek word for “filled” in **Acts 2:4 is different from the one used here, which is also used in chaps. 1:23 and 3:19 and 4:10. It carries the meaning of continuance and permanency. The Apostle is saying here, Be filled continually with the Spirit by whom you were once sealed unto the day of redemption. Thru feeding on the written Word and by frequent times of worship, we keep filled with the Spirit. Thus also, the Spirit keeps us informed as to the Father’s will in doctrine and practice. We behold opportunities to learn and to serve, and are enabled to make purchases that will bring eternal gain to Christ and to ourselves. Everything, every step of progress, every item of our usefulness, depends upon our being filled perpetually with the Spirit. The Greek phrase, “pleroun naun,” means to man a ship; hence, the word for filled means to pilot, or control, or guide. Therefore, to be practically filled with the Spirit, as here indicated, means to be piloted, or governed in daily life by the continued fulness of the Holy Spirit.

To be “drunk with wine,” which figures all kinds of carnal

*Acts 19:6 “And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

**Acts 2:4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

intoxicants, is impossible in such a life. We cannot drink of fleshly stimulants and of the Spirit at the same time. Worldly business, or pleasures dare not intrude. Religious excursions sap the vitality of a spiritual life. Religious stimulants cannot dwell in the same house with the Comforter—for example, pious lectures which entertain the mind, or demonstrative orgies, that simply stir the soulish nature. Everything that is intoxicating apart from the Word and Spirit of God is carnal wine. It is weakening and destructive to saints and abominable to the Lord. Therefore, let us be intoxicated rather with the Holy Spirit. Let us be led by the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, preach and teach in the Spirit, worship God in the Spirit, even “filled with all the fulness of God”—Chap. 3:19. Then we will walk circumspectly, or accurately every day and everywhere, as the three succeeding verses clearly teach. They begin with worship in the sanctuary; then flow out into all our Christian career. Finally, they culminate in the glory by the wedding in the air.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”—V. 19. Worship is emphasized as the first act on life’s drama. Spiritual worship of the living and true God, prepares for efficient service among men. There is no display of musical talent, or of other gifts in this program. Tho’ we address others in psalmody and song; yet the melody is in the heart, and it is unto the Lord. A heart occupied with Jesus as Lord disallows any religious pageantry. Such true worship obtains a present and an eternal reward from Him who is worshipped. Singing to be heard receives, as a reward, the applause of men, or self-congratulation only.

5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

The literal meaning of these different kinds of music is interesting and instructive. The Greek word “psalmois” means strains, or bursts of music, or songs sung to stringed instruments. Therefore, musical instruments are not only permissible, but profitable, when yielded to the Holy Spirit. “Hymnois” means songs of worship, or adoration of Deity. “Odais” means songs in general, odes, strains of music, whether worldly, or religious. Hence, the adjective “spiritual” follows the word songs here. Only spiritual hymns and songs are acceptable to the Lord of glory. “Psallontes,” rendered making melody, in our version, literally signifies, playing on an instrument with the fingers, or singing to a harp. There is a mysterious and quieting charm in music. It seems to clarify the atmosphere, break Satan’s power and bring an audience into God’s presence. An impressive instance is found in 2 Kings 3:15. Elisha obtained the will of God “when the minstrel played;” for then “the hand of the Lord came upon him.” This is beautiful. Our own little hearts, when fully tuned to the will of God, are

each of them stringed instruments on which the Lord plays with His fingers and makes melody to Himself. Then how wonderfully all are mutually blest when the whole meeting yields to the musical operations of the Holy Spirit, and the Triune God is glorified. Therefore, He thrills the saints with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”—V. 20. Not only in meeting, should we give thanks, but at all times. God is not only present with His people when in worship; but He is always with us. He is not only with the Assembly as a whole, but also with each individual. The God, whom we worship, is our Father. We are to be thankful, not only for some things, but for all things, even the undesirable things; for our Father allows nothing to come our way that He cannot turn into good for us. “No evil shall happen to the just.” (*“There shall no evil happen to the just:”—Proverbs 12:21, KJV*) “Our times are in His hands.” (*“My times are in thy hand:”—Psa. 31:15 KJV*) “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according, to His purpose”—Rom. 8:28. Our thanksgiving should be “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then it will be as tho’ He were giving thanks to the Father for the all things. Thus the Father and the Son will bring blessing to us and glory to themselves from every providence.

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” This is the seventh item of the seventh walk mentioned. It is an essential feature of walking accurately. It is a powerful proof of being practically filled with the Spirit, who works this mutual submission in us as we yield to Him. This mutual submission is not confined to the hour of worship in the sanctuary; but it is to be observed always, even as well as giving thanks. Some saints are nice and agreeable in meeting and on Sunday; but elsewhere and on other days, they are distant and selfish. They want their own way, whether it is feasible, or not. Now, is it not interesting, that the exhortation to submission should come in at this point? For the Apostle is leading us up to the Bridehood of Christ. No wonder then, that our submission is to be “in the fear of God.” He sits by to see if we really obey; for He is building a woman for “The Man,” His wellbeloved Son—*Gen. 2:22, margin. To me it is amazing, that our “walk in love,” our “walk as children of light” and our “walk circumspectly” should climax with submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God.

*Genesis 2:22 “And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.”

5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

The Assembly Glorious

Bridal Subjection

“Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord”—V. 22. The last twelve verses of this chapter bring us to the climax of “the mystery of Christ,” because they portray in figure the union of Christ and His Bride. Concerning that union, verse 32 says, “This the mystery is great.” (*“This is a great mystery:” KJV*) They were not written simply to teach married people how to live so as to have happy and beautiful homes. Rather the attitudes expressed here are freighted with truth concerning Christ and His people. Here we learn the deepest and sweetest and most intimate relationships between Christ and His Bride. Viewing them otherwise, we will derive only the commonest benefit from this section.

The wife is a picture of the Bride of Christ; hence, her subjection to her husband is “as unto the Lord.” Of course it is implied here that the husband is a saved man, who likewise is a picture of Christ. Their wedlock is in the will of God, which cannot be said of everyone. The spirit and measure of the submission is “even as the Church is subject unto Christ”—V. 24. This spirit of subjection is the heart-preparation for the Bridehood of Christ. The brethren also must maintain this same spirit of full surrender to the perfect will of God in all things. The wife’s submission to her husband figures the submission of all the saints to Jesus, who purpose to be in that choice company. Verse 21 was leading up to this point. Submission one to another indicates submission to Jesus, because thus we are obeying the Word. This is not arbitrary; but “in love serve one another” (*“by love serve one another.” KJV*)—Gal. 5:13. “Aner” is the Greek word translated husband; for that is the specific meaning of the word. It teaches us that Jesus Christ is more to bridal saints than “anthropos,” a man in general. He is indeed their Husband, their only Husband. Hence, the typical wife submits to “her own husband,” implying that she has but one, even as the Church has only one Head and the Bride has only one Bridegroom.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the Body”—V. 23. Every scriptural husband is a picture of Jesus Christ as Head and Husband of His people. His headship over the wife is shown by his hair being shorn. This truth is amplified in 1 Cor. 11. The husband is the image and glory of God; hence, he prays and prophesies with an uncovered head, which symbolizes Christ’s authority as Head over His Body, the Church. The wife is the glory of her husband and acknowledges her subjection to him by her long hair. Likewise, the submission of the Church to Christ

5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

is symbolized by the women praying and prophesying with their heads covered. They wear a veil, or bonnet, or hat—whatever is the customary garb for the head. Therefore, in this verse, the reason of the wife’s submission to her husband, stated in verse 22, is given. When saints see their relation to Christ with the heart, they gladly hold these attitudes toward one another and symbolize them as Paul teaches. Yes, Christ is the Savior of the Body, the Church; for it is His own Body. Long before it was formed, He called it “My Church”—Matt. 16:18. He said also, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” No; for He is its Savior. He saved each member from sin. Now He saves each member from sickness and error, as we trust Him. The responsibility of a husband to look after his wife and provide every need and comfort for her is here implied.

Bridegroom Love

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it”—V. 25. The love here enjoined is not simply a common, ordinary marital affection. It is not superficial and selfish. Nay, it is EVEN AS Christ loved. And how much did He love the Assembly? So much, that He gave Himself up for it. Typical husbands give themselves to seeking the greatest good and fullest comfort of their wives. They relieve their burdens and heap blessings upon them, not for any selfish purpose, but for very love. And this they do for Jesus’ sake, to show forth His unbounded love for His people. Such bridal devotion does not admit of yielding to passion to satisfy carnal lust at the expense of his companion. The Apostle says, “that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God”—1 Thes. 4:4, 5. It does not allow flippant remarks that sometimes pass between husband and wife, stinging the one and then the other. Just as well might we make smart remarks to our blessed Lord and grieve His tender heart. Does He ever joke with His loved one? I marvel at the fleshly flings that fly from Spirit-anointed people, whom God has ordained to adorn the Gospel of grace by their fervent love one to another. Sister, remember that your husband is “the image and glory of God.” Brother, bear in mind that your wife is your glory for Jesus’ sake. Do we actually believe that what Paul has written is God’s Word? Then husband and wife will so love each other that the presence of Christ will be manifest without any effort on their part. They will be “not without law to Christ,” (*“not without law to God,”—1 Cor. 9:21 KJV*) the warm, spontaneous rule of perfect love.

5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

For what purpose did Jesus give Himself up for the Church? “That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the washing of water with the Word”—V. 26. R.V. This giving of Himself up for us was before stated in verse 2. See the notes on that verse on page 77. Jesus’ prayer (John 17:19) explains Paul’s words here—“And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.” Those Ephesian saints were already “cleansed” in the laver of the Word. They were born again, or “saved by the washing (laver) of regeneration” (“*he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*” *KJV*)—Tit, 3:5. But they should be wholly separated from every defiling thing which might mar their fellowship with Christ, or dim their vision of their relation to Him, or hinder their spiritual growth. To this end, Jesus prayed for the disciples—John 17. To this end, He gave Himself up for the Church, Paul declares. He set Himself apart and offered Himself up as a whole burnt offering to God in our behalf. He was a sweet smelling savor for us. That is, we are accepted of the Father in Christ as sanctified. We smell sweet to the Father in His Son. Let us see ourselves in Christ and accepted in Him. Let us see Christ in us, walking in us, as our very life. Let us count ourselves complete in Him. Then the Spirit will actually work in us, God’s perfect will and separate us from everything, as Jesus was separated. We will know no man, no object, no interest after the flesh. We will possess and enjoy a complete inward separation unto Jesus Christ alone. Then the outward sanctification will result therefrom unconsciously.

Sanctification is not obtained by voluntarily laying all on the altar, as some teach. Sanctification is not a sudden cloudburst of dynamic power blowing the old man into atoms, or destroying him root and branch. They, who teach thus, do not know the meaning and process of sanctification. It is not a cleansing from the least and last remains of sin and the carnal mind, as my early teachers taught. It is entire separation unto Christ, as said before. Sanctification is practical and progressive. It begins with the new birth and continues thru-out life. This separation is particularly in view of our being members of the Bride of Christ, who shall be as thoroughly sanctified from all things carnal and as devoted to God as was Christ Himself. If indeed we take Him to be our sanctification, such it will be. Beloved, have you not read, that “Jesus was made unto us sanctification?” (“*Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;*” *KJV*)—1 Cor. 1:30. Why then not take Him as such and be scripturally sanctified?

Purpose of Sanctification

“That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”—V. 27. The original is very emphatic and unique—“That He might present it beside Himself the Assembly glorious.” (*“That he might present it to himself a glorious church,” KJV*) The whole Church was espoused to Christ (*2 Cor. 11:2); but only a small portion of it accept that espousement, because the separation for the Bridehood is too clean-cut. Hence, only a select company will have that intimate place, “by the side of Himself.” Jude saw a wonderful place for the saints; but it seems that he did not see what Paul saw here. Jude says, that God is “able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (*“able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” KJV*)—Jude 24. But the Bride company will have a more glorious place than that. As “the woman (wife, Gr.) is the glory of the man” (1 Cor. 11:7); so the Bride saints will be the glory of Christ. And Jude’s company will appear before the presence of the Bride, Christ’s glory. Literally, they will be presented right over against, right opposite to, the Queen, who will sit by the side of the King, as “His glory.” John speaks of a wonderful company “in the midst of the throne and round about the throne,” which doubtless refers to “the Assembly glorious,” of which Paul wrote. But he speaks also of a “great multitude, which stood before the throne and before the Lamb.” (*“great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,”—Rev. 7:9 KJV*) See Rev. 4:6 and 7:9. Jude no doubt addressed the latter company in particular.

Of course the people who will occupy that highest and nearest and dearest place to Jesus, the Bridegroom, will be held in highest repute, or honor. They will be superlatively glorious. Hence, they must be without “spot,” or stain now, and free from contamination with all that defiles. Now they are “cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear” (*“let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—2 Cor. 7:1 KJV*) of the free from freckles, moles and blotches, which would mar its beauty and suggest bad blood. It is an index of good health. Bride saints cannot be disfigured with any kind of blots, not even pious freckles, which may be the most subtle. Their sanctification is perfect here. “Wrinkles” suggest age and infirmity

*2 Corinthians 11:2 “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.”

5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

creeping on. With them may come loss of appetite, or poor digestion. Bride saints have none of these. Their appetite for Truth never wanes. They love God's Word increasingly and eat it with unbounded relish. Their step becomes firmer and more agile. Their youth is renewed like the eagles. If they should die, as to the body, they fall asleep at Jehovah's command, as did Aaron and Moses, or at the "time of their departure," as did Paul. They are not victims of death. They are ripening for glory, not for the grave. If living, when Jesus comes, they are ruddy with resurrection life and bridal love and ready for translation. Like Enoch, such saints have this testimony that they please God now.

What a standard! What a goal! What a culmination! Too good to be true; too great to be possible, some one exclaims. But "all things are possible with God: all things are possible to him that believeth;" (*"all things are possible to him that believeth."*—Mark 9:23 KJV) said Jesus. "Holy and without blemish," or blame, is the high water mark of bridal saints. The faith of Christ in us looks above and beyond our own imperfections and beholds the Perfect One. Thus, by beholding Him, we are changed from glory to glory. For this very purpose, He reconciled us in the body of His flesh thru death, "to present us holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." (*"to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight."* KJV) (Col. 1:22)

In these citations, no reference is had to our standing, but to our state. We were justified once forever. We are saved forever, and cannot be lost. But our state, our walk and talk and all our manner of life, is here under consideration. Therefore, this perfection is conditioned upon our faith, not the faith of justification, but the faith of glorification. "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard"—Col. 1:22, 23. "The hope, which is laid up for us in heaven" (*"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,"* KJV) (Col. 1:5) begat in us faith to run for the Prize. That faith sanctifies, or separates us unto Christ. It perfects our holiness in the fear of the Lord. "Every man that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (*"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* KJV)—1 John 3:3. But we must continue in that prize-seeking faith, which purifies our walk and work in the Lord. Satan would remove us from the hope of being like Jesus and of enjoying His highest glory. Hence we must continue to believe for that place, "fight the good fight of faith." Thus, we become grounded and settled in the blessed hope. And when Jesus comes, He will find us "without spot, or wrinkle,

holy and without blame,” (*“not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” V. 27 KJV*) and will seat us by His side, “the Assembly glorious.”

Women cover the spots on their faces with powder; but they are still there. The vanity box does not remove them. People try to hide their religious spots and wrinkles by pious forms, holy airs and sweet words; but their pious vanity box fails. Flour washes off easily. But our heavenly Ornamenters uncover the spots and wrinkles and removes them. As we yield to the Word and Spirit of God, everything superfluous, all that would mar our spiritual beauty, all that would jar on fine spiritual taste, all that grieves the sensitive Dove, the Spirit, disappears. Christ grows up in us. “We increase with the increase of God.” (*“increaseth with the increase of God.”—Col. 2:19 KJV*) The Truth becomes incorporated in us. We become like the Book we eat. Do you know, that excessive swine-eating tends to coarseness, rudeness and dullness in the natural? Do you know that eating fruits and vegetables also tends to make people finer grained and livelier in the physical? How much more do saints become Christlike by feeding on Christ in worship and thru believing His Word. We grow more even and gentle, tender and kind, beautiful and loving, mellow and mild, and yet more fervent in spirit, more loyal and uncompromising. Finally, we become, “in His sight,” free from spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, not having even a resemblance of a spot, or wrinkle. We become, here and now, “holy and without blame before Him in love,” to which He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world—Chap. 1:4.

The Measure of Marital Love

“Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself”—V. 28, R. V. Again, we exclaim, What a standard! Observance of Paul’s instructions here certainly purifies, beautifies and ennobles the marriage relation. I fear that few saints study and heed them. The Church is Christ’s Body. He loves it as His own Body. He never indulges in any flirtations. He knows only one people. Organized systems may claim to be the Church; but Jesus does not know them as such. He “knows no man after the flesh.” (*“know we no man after the flesh:”—2 Cor. 5:16 KJV*) If any persons in such systems are saved. He knows them as His disciples, and seeks to bring them “without the camp” to Himself. That is the way husbands should love their wives, even as their own selves; because their affection figures the love of Christ for His own. Furthermore, he that loves selfishly, really hates and injures himself. The wife is a vital part of the husband—“They twain shall be one flesh.” Hence, he that

5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

loveth his own wife loveth himself. The next verse expresses the reason.

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church”—V. 29. No, it is unthinkable that any man should hate his own flesh; but cares for it like a mother cares for her children. The word translated nourish means to rear for oneself. The word rendered cherish means to foster, to warm in one’s bosom, to inflame. A true, loving husband watches over and looks after his wife with the unchanging tenderness of a mother. With flaming love, he presses her to his bosom. He comforts her in sorrow, heals every wound, shows her every attention and supplies her every need. That is a typical husband; for so the Lord treats the Church. He nourishes it, feeds and trains and makes it to grow for Himself. The Lord fosters His people tenderly. He holds them in His loving arms, comforts them in His bosom, dries their tears, allays their fears, and abundantly supplies all their needs, spiritual and material. He knows our frame any remembers that we are dust, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Jesus has us on His heart. The adverb, “as, or even as,” occurs seven times in these last 11 verses.

“For we are members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones”—V. 30. All who believe on Jesus during this age are members of His mystical Body, which is called the Church—Chap. 1:22, 23. Some would eliminate the last two phrases. Why? Does not our Lord have a body of flesh and bones in heaven? Did He not ascend thus?—*Acts 1:11. Of course His are glorified flesh and bones; that is, a glorified body. Natural “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50); but Jesus said also, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have”—Luke 24:39. Even our flesh and bones are reckoned glorified, because “the redemption of our body” is assured—Rom. 8:23. God calls the things that be not as tho’ they were. Our old, corrupt life, represented by the blood, was poured out in the death of Christ. There is no blood in His body now. There will be none in ours then. We will have glorified flesh and bones, even as Jesus now has.

Marriage of the Lamb Symbolized

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh”—V. 31. The purpose of the wedding in Eden was to typify the wedding in the air. This is the meaning of every scriptural wedding, as this verse

*Acts 1:11 “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

declares. Adam “is the figure of Him that was to come”—Rom. 5:14. Likewise, Eve is the figure of a company of saints who shall be His Bride. As a man leaves his parents and is joined to the one he loves; so God’s Son left Him to be joined to His Eve. Adam was a full-grown man; but he was alone. Therefore, “the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make an help meet for him.” (*“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”—Gen. 2:18 KJV*) Adam gave names to the cattle and fowls, etc.; “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” His like could not be found among the creatures, which he named. He had no fellowship with them. He needed a companion of like intelligence and wisdom with himself.

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Then He took out one of his ribs. From this rib, “He builded a woman and brought her unto the man.” (*“made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”—Gen. 2:22 KJV*) We are not drawing far-fetched conclusions from the narrative in Gen. 2. We are simply pointing out that Paul used that marriage to illustrate the marriage of the Lamb and His Wife in glory. Indeed, the Holy Spirit employs those identical sayings to teach us concerning this great mystery. “Adam said, This (Eve) is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;” and in Ephesians we read, “We are members of His (Christ’s) Body, of His flesh and of His bones.” Verse 30 is almost verbatim as Gen. 2:23. And now, lest we should see only the natural relationship here, the holy penman announces, “This the mystery is great; but I speak concerning the Christ and concerning the Assembly” (V. 32), that is, “the Assembly glorious” (*“glorious church” KJV*)—V. 27.

It is profoundly significant that at this time believers are growing up into Christ and looking forward to be in the glorious Bridehood of the Lamb. Only recently, “the sleepy disease” was upon the world. A similar religious sleepiness is over believers today. The Laodicean condition grows denser and denser over Christendom as a whole. Even so-called spiritual saints are overcome with the religious drowsiness of the times. Any marvel that in this very chapter (V. 14), we hear the loud cry, “Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee?” (*“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” KJV*) Saints are sluggish toward divine things. They are not hungry for the Truth. Some are not thirsty for the “rivers of living water,” the Holy Spirit—John 7:38. Many talk and write about Jesus’ coming, but do not act as if they believe it. And some teach, and live as they teach, that all believers will be in the Bridehood, no matter how

young in the Lord they are, or how much they flirt with religious lovers.

But God be praised, some saints are running for the Prize by qualifying for the out-translation. Now the Bride in mystery is doubtless being builded. Now the election out of the elect is going on. People are finding their respective ranks, in spite of the fact that some do not believe in ranks. Now “the choice one of her mother” (*“she is the choice one of her that bare her” KJV*) (S.S. 6:9) is hearing the voice of her heavenly Solomon, saying, “Arise, my Love, my Fair One and come away.” (*“Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” KJV*) Just as truly as God took a rib out of Adam’s body while he slept; so He is separating a company of believers from the Church, the Body of Christ today. The Body does not believe it and does not realize it; but it is true. Did Adam marry his entire body? Nay, only “a rib,” a strong, durable, small portion of his body, Out of that rib, divine power “builded a woman.” See Gen. 2:22, margin. The Bride of Christ is being builded of saints, who are weak in themselves, sheeplike, helpless, dependent on God. They boast only in Christ and the Cross. They have “a little strength,” being “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” They are self-denying, wholehearted, deeply devoted saints. They have “a single eye” to God’s glory. Christ fills their vision and satisfies their hearts. They know “no man after the flesh.” Bride saints “count all things refuse that they may win Christ” (*“count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”—Philip. 3:8 KJV*) as their Bridegroom. They yield to no compromises with semi-spiritual people. They have swung out into full sympathy with “present truth,” and declare it with no uncertain sound. Their hearts are enlarged to believe “all that the prophets have spoken,” and their mouths are also enlarged to proclaim it.

Many half-hearted, or quarter-hearted believers, who are intellectual and worldly-minded, seek for a proof that they will be a part of Christ’s Bride. But they are not willing for the separation and training, mentioned above. Hence, they are far behind in the race. When will they catch up? Never. “All run; but one receiveth the Prize” (*“a race run all, but one receiveth the prize,” KJV*)—1 Cor. 9:24. Surely, only those who love as indicated by Paul in this chapter will win the Prize. Certainly, only those who, with Paul, “press toward the goal for the Prize of the upward calling,” (*“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Philip. 3:14 KJV*) will share the highest glory with Christ. If we do not “so run that we may obtain,” how can we hope for it? If our devotion, our loyalty to Jesus, our spirituality are not at high water mark, how can we expect to occupy the highest place in the glory? If our separation unto Christ and our

yearning for Him are not extraordinary; if we are not intensely imitating Paul as he imitated Christ, what scriptural ground have we for hoping to be in that highly favored rank? If the Candle-stick Examiner does not find us blameless Philadelphia overcomers, how shall we obtain the super-excellent reward promised to such saints? Study very patiently every line, every statement of Rev. 3:7 to 13.

The Divine Panoply

Chapter Six

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right”—

V. 1.

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

The first nine verses of this chapter properly belong to chapter five; because they continue and conclude the family relationships as figurative of the great family of God. The four leading words of this section are: “Children,” “fathers,” “servants” and “masters.” The instructions to each are very plain, so that we need not comment upon them. We need rather to consider that they are true types of the same relationships in the “household of God.” They are the final teaching in this epistle of the ranks among believers. God is our Father; we are His children; and children are of various ages and grades and experiences. The Apostle John, in his first Epistle emphasizes this truth. First, he addresses his flock, as “My little children,” because he was quite aged in the natural and, hence also, quite a father to them in the Lord. Then he recognizes three distinct grades, or spiritual ages, which he distinguishes as “fathers,” “young men” and “children.” See 1 John 2:1, 12 to 14. Certainly, these distinctions are not natural, but supernatural. He witnessed these three degrees of experience among the believers in his congregation. And Paul taught the same truth.

Jesus is our Master. Saints are His servants. Some servants are of greater use to Him than others. Some grow faster than others. Some are more yielded to His will than others, being more whole hearted. And other some do not seem to grow at all. They remain children all their days; and such spiritual children are sure to be carnal. Observe how these different relationships are held sacred by the phrases, “in the Lord,” “of the Lord” and “as the Lord.” This fact, if appreciated, will induce saints to develop out of their spiritual childhood state. Therefore, all the cautions, exhortations and instructions thru-out Paul’s epistles are for the purpose of perfecting them in the Lord. This perfecting is for the climacteric purpose of presenting a company of full-grown saints, as a spotless Bride, to the Lamb, or by the side of the Lamb in the glory. The coming King must have a Queen like Himself. In order for Adam to have proper dominion over all flesh, he needed a wife, whom Jehovah builded for him. How much more shall the King of kings have His Bride, who shall reign with Him, as Queen of queens. Beloved, are you letting the Holy Spirit work in you the needed preparation to be in that charming company?

The Ephesian Contest

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”—V. 10. Verses 10 to 19 are a very marvelous portion of Scripture. In this place only, is set before us the whole equipment with which to meet our arch-foe and his servants. And why? Because only those who see and hold their seat in the heavenlies with Christ, can have any correct conception of the devices and power of the devil. Ephesian saints learn by experience, as no others can, that there is a real devil. Others have trouble with themselves, with their petty weaknesses and with other people; but Ephesian believers have indescribable fights with Satan himself. It is because they take the realm by faith—even the heavenlies—which Satan claims as his central dominion. They expect to dwell there some day. Hence, he contends against them on earth, knowing that their persistent faith will finally oust him from his present place and dominion in heaven. It is evident, therefore, that we need to be panoplied from on high, which means far more than being initially filled, or sealed with the Holy Spirit. However, this sealing, or anointing with the Spirit is the absolute pre-requisite for wearing the armor here described. Paul wrote these urgent exhortations to Spirit-anointed saints.

In chap. 1:3, we saw that God has blessed us already in Christ “with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.” (*“with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” KJV*) We are blessed provisionally even as Christ is blessed, because we are in Him. We saw also that God has already “made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ,” (*“and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:”—Chap. 2:6 KJV*) having “set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies” (*“and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,”—Chap. 1:20 KJV*)—Chaps. 1:20 and 2:6. And we learned that the divine purpose of all that, was, “that now, unto the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies, might be known, thru the Church, the multifarious wisdom of God” (*“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,” KJV*)—Chap. 3:10. Most people think that our testimony and holy living effect the inhabitants of the earth only. Nay, Ephesian testimony and triumph seriously affect the inhabitants of the heavens. The holy angels are amazed and gaze down upon us aghast; while unholy angels are disturbed and enraged against us, because we are taking their dominion away. Our conflict is no sham battle. Then we learned (Chap. 5), with overwhelming astonishment, that God will present to His well beloved Son, a Bride, the deserved product of His sacrifice and toil,

who shall adorn and glorify and satisfy Him forever and forever. Hallelujah!

These ten verses are poorly understood, being, little read and studied. We learn here that there are organized bands of wily foes in the heavens—wicked, dark, mighty and desperate. They inhabit the very region which God has given us as our eternal abode. By faith, we are “seated in the heavenlies,” (*“sit together in heavenly places”—Chap. 2:6 KJV*) that is, we accept our Father’s promise and rest upon it; but Satan tries to disturb our rest. Tho’ our members are on earth, yet our fight is as if we were where Satan now dwells. Therefore, the first and basic admonition—“be strong in the Lord.” We have no strength in ourselves. We cannot cope with the devil. Some people ignorantly imagine that they can withstand the foe. Especially after they receive the Spirit, they think that by speaking in tongues vigorously, or by pronouncing the name of Jesus, or “pleading the blood” vehemently, Satan will retreat. If our faith is in God and His Word, the enemy will flee; but if it is simply in some vigorous self-resistance, we will be defeated. To be strong in the Lord, means to hide away in Him, trust Him calmly, rest on His Word solely, count on His presence and sufficiency. Then at the needed time, the Holy Spirit will move us, if He will have us to act. Then Christ, the new man, will be in evidence.

6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Paul admonishes us to be strong “in the power of His might.” Human words melt before Satan. Human logic, or argument, fail. Learning, or craft, or physical force avail nothing. Numbers, influence, wealth, intelligence all quail before the armed forces of darkness. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal”—2 Cor. 10:4. “Not by might (an army), nor by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” (*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Zech. 4:6 KJV*) Therefore, the Apostle adds, “Put on the whole armor of God.” And he names seven invincible parts to this divine armor, which we will consider later.

1. What is the primary feature of our combat? It is defensive. “Stand; wrestle against; withstand; stand; quench fiery darts.” (*“stand...wrestle...withstand...quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”—V. 11-16 KJV*) Satan is the aggressor. We have been seated by Christ’s ascension in our blood-bought abode. By faith we have laid hold of our rightful possessions. We would not need to fight if the devil would not disturb us. Our conflict is not to obtain our inheritance, but to hold it. It is already ours in Christ; hence, we maintain it by a fight of faith. Saving faith brought us into “the kingdom of His (God’s) dear Son, or the Son of His love” (*“Who hath delivered us from the power*

of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” KJV (Col. 1:13), the principle part of which is “His heavenly kingdom”—2 Tim. 4:18. But fighting faith contends for our heavenly governmental rights in the kingdom. Note the first named obstacle—“the wiles of the devil.” Study the notes on chap. 4:14. The word “wiles” means methods, cunning craft, artifices. Satan does everything by diabolical method. Our first act of resistance is “to stand against the methods of the devil.” (*“stand against the wiles of the devil.” KJV*) For this, we need to be arrayed in the whole armor of God. Then our resistance will be simple and without method. The Lord does not act by method; neither do His people who move as panoplied from on high. To fight and work methodically in divine things, is to attempt to be strong in one’s own might, which means defeat always. Bear in mind that method in religion is satanic; and the more pious and wise it may appear and the more it appeals to the intellect, the more dangerous and destructive it surely is. Method is always subtle, or crafty. Methodical fellows generally have a selfish ax to grind, and expect someone else to furnish the grindstone. Method is the very centre, or hub of the unconquerable wheel of organization. This is why organization in God’s things is so demoralizing, ending in formality, and finally in spiritual death.

2. Who are our foes? and where are they? The Apostle answers in verse 12. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (or governments), against powers (or authorities), against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (lit. heavenlies, as in chap. 1:3.) Our fight is not against the people, tho’ Satan operates thru them. It is against wicked spirits, of which Satan is the chief. Satan is the “god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.” (*“the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”—Chap. 2:2 KJV*) The devil has organized the wicked spirits into “principalities, or dominions,” which are controlled by wicked authorities. John saw these devilish dominions symbolized by “a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads”—Rev. 12:3. And those heads, or authorities, are here declared to be “the world-rulers of the darkness of this age” (Gr.). How tremendously solemn, that Satan is the first organizer. Since I learned that fact from this very Scripture, my whole being recoils from the thought of organizing God’s people. Organization is a blinding snare, a crafty trick of Satanic invention. Saints are fooled by its methodical chains, and never realize its fear-imposing power until they are wholly delivered from it and swung out into the blood-bought “liberty of the sons of God.” (*“liberty of the*

6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

children of God”—Rom. 8:21 KJV) From Genesis to Revelation, we see that God controlled His people by His own voice thru a trusty agency, without the slightest semblance of organization. The headship of Christ is ignored by organization, because one body cannot have more than one head without confusion. The freedom of the sovereign operation of the Spirit is sadly hindered, and the growth of the saints is rendered impossible by organization. I praise God for untrammelled freedom in Christ Jesus, the glorious realm, which very few saints enjoy.

Consider a further word about this age. In Gal. 1:4, we learn that the evil of this age consists in its religiousness; hence, it is termed “this present evil age” (“*this present evil world*,” KJV). The Apostle contrasts divine “spirituals” with the spirituals of the devil—*1 Cor. 12:1, 3. The phrase, “spiritual wickedness,” is “the spirituals of the wickedness,” in the Greek. “The depths of Satan” (Rev. 2:24) means the developed spirituals of the devil, who operates powerfully thru his “sons of disobedience” (“*children of disobedience*,” KJV)—Eph. 2:2 and Col. 3:6. These sons of Satan are very polite, pleasing and religious. They are usually diligent Bible students and teachers. By their unique personalities, inspired by the devil, they mislead many people. Of course, “the darkness of this age” (“*darkness of this world*”—V. 12 KJV) is its religiousness.

At this very time, the god of this world is marshalling all forms of religion to move side by side with the national and political powers. Church and state are coming closer together day by day, and will move hand in hand in a gigantic union against Christ and His people. It is a tremendous fact, that spiritism, theosophy, millennial dawnism, adventism, catholicism, universalism and protestantism are being manipulated by the wicked authorities in the heavenlies. Misnamed Christian Science and Unity are also in the same demon-directed multitude. Every dark den, every dark movement, national, or religious, is directed by wicked spirits, whose head is Satan and whose headquarters is in the heavens. Our constant contest is against the unseen horde of organized evil spirits, which comprise one third of the angels. These are fallen angels, of course—Rev. 12:4. According to Rev. 5:11, they number more than 50 million. Joined to them also are the myriads of religious demons. These systematized, unseen hordes of demons and fallen angels infest and control the religious organizations

*1 Corinthians 12:1, 3 “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant... Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

named above. Do you wonder that our fight is so fierce? Any marvel that so few actually overcome? On the other hand, what are these combined forces before the Omnipotent Triune God? “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” Elisha said, “Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them”—2 Kings 6:16. Yes, with us are two thirds of the angels. Hallelujah!

As intimated before, our warfare is primarily defensive. The enemies fight us; but we stand against them. Observe in these verses, that the word “stand” occurs four times. Hence, the absolute need of the whole armor of God. We are not called onto lay siege against Satan and his movements. We can never change the current of the times. People pray in vain in that direction. We do well to stem the tide and reach the goal in time for the Prize. God has not bidden us to reform the world of debauchery, drunkenness, white slavery and infidelity. He has not sent us to overthrow Christian Science, or Romanism, nor to recover Protestantism from apostasy. But we are to witness to the people, and thus rescue individuals, who may listen, out of these conditions, by inducing them to believe on Jesus Christ. And, as pilgrims and strangers passing thru, we are not to yield to the inhabitants of this world. In doing so, we would be yielding to the devil. “Be not partakers with them.” (*“Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”—Chap. 5:7 KJV*) “Be not conformed to this age.” (*“And be not conformed to this world:”—Rom. 12:2 KJV*) “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: but rather reprove them.” Here is where our fight arises. Our old nature, if not curbed, would readily follow the customs of the world and accept the deceptive religious theories afloat. This is true of beginners in particular. But here is also a wonder. After we go on with the Lord, learn His Word and grow up into Christ, even our very flesh recoils from the alluring things of men and cries out against them. Of course, “it is not we, but Christ living in us,” (*“nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:”—Gal. 2:20 KJV*) and not letting sin have dominion over us.

The tendency of the times is to make spiritual things soulish. Men worship God soulishly, rather than spiritually. They harness divine things in man-made methods, and cause their flocks to “walk as men.” Thus, Christendom has drifted away from the “simplicity there is in Christ,” (*“simplicity that is in Christ.”—2 Cor. 11:3 KJV*) from childlike devotion and a happy, dependent service. Very few, comparatively, are moving on with the Holy Spirit and operating according to the pattern shown in God’s Word. This is too commonplace for the flesh, tho’ it still wants to pose as religious. People clamor for splendor, display, brains and wealth in the churches.

They love form rather than fire. They prefer the fire in the stove, rather than in the heart. They have left the “upper room” and have gone down into the supper room. Therefore, what do we see? The stone cathedral, the pipe organ, the paid choir, the salaried pastor, the trained quartette, the grand orchestra, the squeaking soloist, the stiff programme, the official board, the visiting committee, the educated clergy, the denominational college, the “form without power,” the religious sham battle, the cross without the Christ, the Christ (in name) without the cross, the congregation of sinners, the pulpits staged with atheists, and the rejected Jesus standing on the outside, crying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me”—Rev. 3:20. Thank God for the individuals who hear and invite Christ in, sup with Him, then follow Him out; for neither He nor His followers are allowed to remain. Some are learning to “fight the good fight of faith” and “run for the Prize.”

The Seven-fold Armor

Twice the Apostle counsels us to have on the whole armor of God. It is composed of seven irresistible parts. These are all spiritual weapons, or weapons of the Spirit. They are in no sense fleshly. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”—2 Cor. 10:4. These only are adequate against the foe; and these are entirely sufficient. Only with this divine panoply can saints vanquish the fiendish darkness and cunning tricks of Satan. We need no other equipment.

1. “Your loins girt about with truth.” This is the primary piece of the armor. It is the solid base on which the other pieces rest and into which they are mortised, so to speak. The truth is so essential, that it is also the sixth piece of the armor, expressed by a different figure—“the sword of the Spirit.” The heart is in the region of the loins, which speak of a man’s strength. “The reins and heart” (*“try my reins and my heart”*—Psa. 26:2 KJV) are frequently coupled in the O. T.—Psa. 26:2 and Jer. 11:20. The abdomen is the depository of the Holy Spirit—“Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”—John 7:38. To take in the Word of God with all the heart is to have the loins girt with truth. Some know and admit the truth. It is in their heads; but it is no practical profit to them, because they do not believe it and rest up on it. They have loins; they are strong in themselves. But in the real test, or contest, they fall, being weak before the foe. Oh, the need of knowing and believing the Word of God. Jesus’ fight with Satan is an example of having on this piece of the armor. To meet every onslaught of the devil,

6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...

6:14 ...and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

He exclaimed, "IT IS WRITTEN." He was girded with the truth. He was filled with it. He lived by it; for He said (quoting from Deut. 8:3), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—Matt. 4:4. When the Jews condemned Him for calling Himself the Son of God, He answered them, "Is it not written in your law (the Old Testament), I said, Ye are gods?"—John 10:34, 35. Likewise, if we know and believe the Word, the Holy Spirit will bring it to our remembrance when we are beset by the enemy.

2. "Having on the breastplate of righteousness." When men shoot, they aim at the head, or heart; and so does Satan. But if our head and heart are shielded, he cannot harm us. He knows that we cannot obtain, nor hold a place in the heavenlies by any human righteousness. Therefore, he seeks to condemn us. He finds fault with us. He says that we are not the sons of God, even as the Jews accused Jesus. How, then, may we meet his onslaughts? Again, the conduct of the Lord is cited in Isa. 59:16, 17. "His righteousness, it sustained Him; for He put on righteousness as a breastplate." The Lord is righteous in Himself. That was His defense against the foe. But we must obtain righteousness from Him, having none of our own. And we must walk righteously before God—Chap. 5:8-10. We overcome by faith in the blood of the Lamb, which purchased divine righteousness for us, and by our testimony, that we have put on the righteousness of Christ—*Rev. 12:10, 11. And "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous"—1 John 3:7. This piece of armor is very intimately related to the first: hence, they are named together. We shout it against the enemy, that "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," God chose us unto salvation (2 Thes. 2:13): "for with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; for the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him, shall not be ashamed"—Rom. 10:10, 11. The truth that Christ died for our sins and rose for our justification is an impenetrable breastplate against the cunning insinuations of the devil. Hallelujah! We quote also 2 Cor. 6:7—"By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Compare **1 Thes. 5:8.

3. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of

*Revelation 12:10 "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

**1 Thessalonians 5:8 "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

peace.” Indeed peace comes with righteousness. “Being justified by faith (reckoned righteous), we have peace with God”—Rom. 5:1. The proclamation of “peace on earth, good will to men,” (*“on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:14 KJV*) introduced this age. Christ died for us, “making peace,” and now “He is our peace”—Eph. 2:13-15. In Psalm 85:10, we hear a melodious song by a quartette. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Then peace runs on fleet and happy feet, fittingly shod, and proclaims the incorruptible truth and unsullied righteousness of God thru Christ, in the face of all that hate peace; for we dwell indeed in the midst of those who are for war, as we speak peace—*Psa. 120:6, 7. The effective way to foil the foe is to be filled with the Gospel of peace. “Feet shod” simply means to be prepared to go with God’s message, in “a peaceable and quiet spirit;” (*“the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,”—1 Peter 3:4 KJV*) for “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The way of peace they know not.” Therefore, we are to hasten and proclaim His Word—“Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him”—Isa. 57:19-21 and 59:8. There will be no slipping, no falling. We will go in the way of good will to men, preaching peace, making peace and living in peace, as much as lieth in us, with all men; because “the God of peace” dwells in us. They, who are thus shod, are no strife-makers, nor malicious talebearers, but “peace-makers” always. “Love as brethren” is burned into their hearts. They practice what they preach, by eating their own words, even the words of peace, which they vehemently proclaim. No marvel that of them it is written, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace”—Isa. 52:7 and Rom. 10:15.

6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

4. “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” In the seven-fold archway of the divine panoply, faith stands in the middle, at the highest point—“above all.” It reaches back to the girdle of truth, to the breastplate of righteousness and to the shod feet. And it reaches forward and connects vitally with the three remaining parts of the armor. Every manipulation of every weapon is by faith. Faith in divine truth makes that truth practical and powerful in our lives. Faith in the righteousness of Christ enables us to walk uprightly in this evil world, so that Satan cannot condemn us before men, and God cannot “disapprove” of us (1 Cor. 9:27), nor be ashamed of us at last—1 John 2:28. Thus we

*Psalms 120:6, 7 “My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I *am* for peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.”

“run, not as uncertainly, and fight, not as beating the air.” (*“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:”*—1 Cor. 9:26 KJV) Our impenetrable shield of faith wards off and quenches Satan’s burning darts of ridicule, criticism, accusation, condemnation and reproach. His kindled darts are his most painful attacks. Thank God, faith in the precious Word rises and overflows them all like a stream of water that extinguishes a flame.

5. “And take the helmet of salvation.” We have a fine comment on this portion in 1 Thess. 5:8—“Putting on for an helmet the hope of salvation” (*“and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”* KJV). We are saved by faith, as to our justification, or standing now (*Rom. 5:1); but “we are saved by hope,” as to our full salvation, which includes “the redemption of our body”—Rom. 8:23-25. In Thessalonians, reference is had especially to being kept from passing thru the tribulation. We are saved by hope; that is, we hope in God to escape those dreadful days. Hence, this piece of the panoply has to do particularly with our bodies. The enemy attacks them with sickness and pain. He would crush the life out of us and make us leave this sphere of action before our appointed time. He would induce a premature death. But the helmet of salvation, the hope of translation, overcomes Satan’s assaults against our bodies; for we insist on departing without dying, even as did Enoch. “Moses died according to the Word of the Lord” (*“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.”* KJV) (Deut. 34:5); and so did Paul, who had “fought a good fight, finished his course and kept the faith.” (*“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:”*—2 Timothy 4:7) So may we die in God’s will, if we die at all. But the coming of Jesus is so near, that we hope to live to be taken by way of translation. Therefore, if the enemy assails our bodies and insinuates that our career is ended we can hoist our “helmet, the hope of salvation” from dying by disease, the hope of being translated, the hope of being kept out of the hour of trial that shall come upon the earth—**Rev. 3:10. Here again the shield of faith stands forth. It couples with the helmet; for faith in the plain promises of God drives the foe from the field and holds us on our way, going and growing, running and hoping, ready to hear the first trumpet blast.

6. “And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

*Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

Revelation 3:10 “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**”

6:17 And take the helmet of salvation...

6:17 ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The first weapon named is “the Truth,” with which we should be girded. We should be filled with a knowledge of God’s Word, rightly divided. We saw that the Truth was the base for all the other weapons. The Greek term, here translated “the word,” is not “logos,” which is the usual word thus rendered; but it is “hrama,” which means “a saying.” The definite article is not expressed. It does not read, “ho logos,” the word, but “hrama,” a word, or saying. When a word is needed for our defense, or to rout the foe, the Holy Spirit finds it lodged in our heart, and hurls it at the enemy. This shows us the advantage and necessity of being stored up with a correct understanding of the Bible. This weapon is named here, because the Spirit employs it in connection with all the other pieces of the armor and against every attack. He enables us to use the Truth with which we are girded. He enables us to use our breastplate of righteousness. He makes us to run on our fittingly shod feet, and wield the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. The Holy Spirit alone knows how and when to use the armor, and prompts us to use the particular part needed at each particular time. He “brings to our remembrance” (“bring all things to your remembrance,”—*John 14:26 KJV*) the appropriate “hrama”, or saying of God, that will vanquish the power of the devil. We are weak; but He is mighty, even almighty. David said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.” Thus by one simple verse, or sentence, we may be delivered from a terrible attack of Satan.

When the devil tempted Jesus to convert stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, as if His Father were neglecting Him, He answered, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (“hramatl,” Greek) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”—*Matt. 4:4*. Jesus’ loins were girt about with the Truth, having been instructed by His parents from His youth. See **Deut. 6:7*. He also read the Scriptures for Himself. Therefore, when He needed a “hrama,” a word, to foil the foe, the Spirit found one in His trusting heart. Thus *Isa. 59:19* was fulfilled in the life of Christ. “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him,” or put him to flight. And thus it is fulfilled also in our lives.

We said at the outset, that our warfare is primarily defensive. We put on the whole armor of God, that we may be fully able to stand against the methods, or cunning artifices of the devil. We are plunged into a wrestling match against the fiendish forces of organized wicked spirits in the heavenlies, whether we are bound. Six times the

*Deuteronomy 6:7 “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

preposition “against” occurs. We stand and fight against the devil and his hosts, because we are determined to have the place as our eternal abode, which they now inhabit. But our combat develops into an offensive contest. The phrase, “having done all,” suggest this. The original for this phrase, means “having conquered all things.” We cannot be passive, and let Satan run over us and crush us. Our firm stand becomes an aggressive engagement in which we conquer every opposing thing and power. “We do more than overcome” (“*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*” *KJV*)—Rom. 8:37, Gr. We take the spoil of the enemy and the heavenly country by a vigorous fight of faith, and “STAND” until the trumpet blows and calls us home. Hallelujah to our Victor, Jesus anointed King of kings and Lord of lords.

7. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” This is the last weapon mentioned; but it begins to be in use with the first—“praying always.” Men have written essays and books on prayer; but there was no life, nor power in them. Here we have an invaluable compend on real, intelligent, effectual prayer. After all, the way to understand prayer is to pray after the fashion indicated in these verses. Pray and you will learn how to pray. Observe the time of prayer—“Always.” The quantity is “all prayer.” Its intensity is “supplication.” Jesus said, “ask, seek, knock.” (“*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*”—*Matt. 7:7 KJV*) He said also, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Real prayer bears down on the promises of God and comes boldly to the throne of grace; that is, the throne which has authority and power to grant all that the redemption of Christ has purchased for us who believe on Jesus. Hence, the exhortation is emphasized by saying, “and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication.” Saints faint and fail in the use of this everyday weapon; hence, they lose many victories. Satan gets the ascendancy over them, and laughs at their defeat. The purity of prayer is “in the Spirit.” Oh, how many vain and unscriptural petitions are offered. People do not know the Bible; hence, they annoy the Lord with a thousand things in which He is not interested. Also they cry to Him to do things, which He has done already, and which they are invited to receive by simple faith. And because of ignorance, some saints actually pray against the foretold purposes and judgments of God. For example, some imagine that by praying, they can set aside the tribulation days and the calamities prophesied long ago.

Of course, such praying is not “in the Spirit;” for He indites no petition contrary to the written Word. Beloved reader, do you see

6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

the absolute necessity of being filled scripturally with the Holy Spirit? Those Ephesian saints were anointed, or sealed with the Spirit. Yes, they were filled after the pentecostal pattern; for “they spake with tongues and prophesied”—Acts. 19:6. Only Spirit-anointed believers can learn to pray in the Spirit. Then follows the guard of prayer—“watching”—which also is by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the chief object of prayer—“all saints.” All who believe on Jesus with the heart constitute the children of God, the household of faith. Paul instructs us to pray for the whole family. Whether they be saved under the ministry of James, Peter or himself, he loved them and sought their highest welfare. He was in no sense sectarian.

6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Think it not strange that the Apostle added, “And for me.” No selfish motive prompted that request. He was the primary and most necessary messenger of the mystery. The enemy withstood him fiercely; hence, he was in prison, even when he wrote this epistle. Why did he ask for intercession in his own behalf? He says, “That utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel”—V. 19. To the Colossians (chap. 4:4), he added, “That I may make it (the mystery) manifest, as I ought to speak.” Dear reader, let this speak to your heart. As you value the truth of God’s grace and of the mystery revealed thru Paul’s ministry, you certainly will pray for his successors, as outlined above, that they also may speak boldly. Satan will tie the tongues and padlock the mouths of the messengers of divine grace, who speak in the power and liberty of the Spirit, if he can. Will you, by fervent and persistent petitions, do your part in preventing him? Will you do your part, “helping together by prayer,” toward disseminating this glad message? We cannot dispense with the first six pieces of the armor of God and hold the victory in our own lives. Likewise, we dare not neglect the last one, which is so essential to help other saints to obtain and hold the victory and for the rapid running of the Truth. And what need we more than this sevenfold soldier-dress, whose last named weapon is made up of seven parts? Certainly, with such a divine panoply, we are fully able to withstand and repulse the foe and his hosts.

Paul’s Personal Conclusion

“But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose.” The name Tychicus means “fortunate.” He bore Paul’s letter to Ephesus. He was indeed fortunate to hear the Gospel of grace and be associated with Paul. The latter also felt himself fortunate to have such a choice spirit

6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

6:23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

Romans 16:1 “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

16:2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

with him. He could not call every brother in the Lord, “a beloved brother.” Neither can we, tho’ they be in the Lord. Even some grace preachers, so-called, are unbrotherly. They have no scruples, if they think that they can undermine a brother and take his flock and crown from him. Tychicus was not that kind. Nay, but he was “a faithful minister”—faithful to his spiritual father and faithful to the saints, because he was faithful to the Lord. In Col. 4:7, he is also styled a “fellow-servant in the Lord.” He moved side by side with the Apostle in his self-sacrificing labors in divine things. Hence, Paul entrusted him with a similar message to the Colossians as to the Ephesians. He was so beloved and faithful, that he was one of the seven workers, who were with Paul when he wrote to the Galatians. See *Acts 20:4 and **Gal. 1:2. His whereabouts are mentioned in ***2 Tim. 4:12, and he carried greetings to ****Titus (Chap. 3:12).

Let us, as ministers, profit by Tychicus’ example. We too should be ambitious to be faithful ministers and brethren beloved and fellow-servants with Paul. Such successors of the Apostle are needed greatly today, that his Gospel may be published wisely and boldly and in the Spirit. Who will dare to be a praise-worthy imitator of Tychicus and a loyal bond-servant of Jesus with Paul?

The Divine Perfection

Rom. 16:1-20 with Rev. 3:12

There are several clear evidences, that the first twenty verses of Romans 16 belong properly with the Ephesian letter, and not to the Romans. This being true, gives a beauty and finish to this Epistle which its character and purpose demand.

1. Brother Paul sends greeting to 27 particular friends, whose names he mentions in these 20 verses, besides certain unnamed brethren—Nereus’ sister and certain other saints—Vs. 14, 15. These friends were not in Rome, but in Ephesus, or in that vicinity. He had no acquaintances in Rome till after he went there. Four of those friends cited were his “kinsmen” in a closer fellowship in the Lord than some

*Acts 20:4 “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.”

**Galatians 1:2 “And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:”

***2 Timothy 4:12 “And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.”

****Titus 3:12 “When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.”

16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

16:4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

16:5 Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

16:6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

16:8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

16:9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

16:10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

16:11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

16:12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who laboured in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

others. Compare *Rom. 16:21, where Timothy is called a kinsman; but he was only Paul's spiritual son. Several of them had been special helpers with him in the Lord.

2. The Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila was not in Rome, but in Ephesus, where they assisted Paul in planting that assembly and gave Apollos such wise counsel. "He left them there" (*"And he came to Ephesus, and left them there:" KJV*)—Acts 18:18-28. We have no account of them ever leaving Ephesus, or having an assembly in their house in any other city.

3. Epaenetus, which means "laudable," was the "firstfruit of Asia," and not of Achaia. Compare verse 5 with **1 Cor. 16:15. R.V. Paul visited those points in Asia, working out from Ephesus (Acts 19:10); now, writing to Ephesus from Rome, he sends greeting to all those round about Ephesus. Of course, he would not omit his "beloved Laudable, his firstfruit of the muddy, boggy land;" that is, Asia.

4. Observe verse 20—"The God of the peace will crush the adversary under your feet in a short time." (*"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."* KJV) To whom can these words be addressed more appropriately than to Ephesian saints? Being seated in the heavenlies, and being instructed that their conflict is against Satan's organized forces, and being armed to cope with them; they are the very company of saints to whom especially this promise shall be fulfilled. Appropriate statements and promises are always made by the Spirit to the appropriate parties. Others would not understand them; hence, would not receive them.

5. ***Verses 21 to 23 of Rom. 16 are just as plainly not addressed to Ephesus. They are indeed a portion of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul wrote that letter in the home of Gaius in Derbe. Compare verse 23 with ****1 Cor. 1:14 and Acts 20:4.

*Romans 16:21 "Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you."

**1 Corinthians 16:15 (KJV) "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)"

***Romans 16:21-23 "Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother."

****1 Corinthians 1:14 "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;"

Acts 20:4 "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."

16:13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

16:14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

16:15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

16:19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.”

The Value Of The Chapter

This record of names is of no little importance. It is a very fitting finale to the Ephesian Epistle. Consider the following reflections.

1. All these parties, to whom the Apostle sends greeting, were held in highest esteem by him, not in the natural, but in the spiritual. They were choice saints. True to his teaching, he knew no man after the flesh; but he loved them dearly in Christ. Four times we have the phrase, “in Christ;” six times, “in the Lord,” and once, “unto Christ.” He speaks of three of them, not simply as helpers, but as “co-workers with him” (“*workers together with him*”—2 Cor. 6:1 KJV)—Vs. 3, 9. He calls four of them, “My beloved.” The word “greet, or salute,” means to welcome warmly by embracing gladly. Paul requested the Ephesian Assembly to extend the fervent love of his heart to all these representative Ephesian believers.

2. Note the significant number 27 in all—3x3x3, divinity thribbled. The indispensable and invisible number 3 expresses the number of the Godhead all thru the Scripture, and is especially made plain in the New Testament, as being the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Salvation is altogether of grace; the members of the body of Christ are the result of God’s call of sovereign grace. The Church of Christ, “the Mystery of God,” is altogether divine. Hence, this thribbled number of Deity is profoundly illustrative of “the man full-grown, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Anointed One” (“*unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*”)—Eph. 4:13. This number 27 can be divided by no other number than 3, the number of Deity, or its multiple 9. God set the members in the body as it pleased Him; He holds them together; and He only has the right, or power to make separations. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand” (“*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*” KJV)—John 10:27, 28.

Eighteen Typical Men.

The first man is Aquila, “eagle,” or the ascending one, who, with his wife, Priscilla, “the ancient one,” “laid down their necks” (“*laid down their own necks:*”—Rom. 16:4 KJV) for Paul’s life. Of course, Christ is the Ancient, and the Ascending One; but full-fledged

saints partake of these elements in being “partakers of Christ.” Study the biography of this devoted couple. Then note the last of the 27 names—Olympas, “heavenly,” and marvel at them, at their meanings and order. Jesus came from heaven; and went back to heaven. We are born from above; and we shall ascend whence we came. Observe closely the meaning of each of these names, bearing in mind that all these characteristics were necessarily true of Christ, the Head of His Body, the Church; and they must also be true of the Body as well. Doubtless, each one of those who constitute the Bride of Christ have all of these qualities; because they share jointly with the Head in all things. Following is each name and its meaning, with a fitting comment.

Aquila,—“an eagle,” the ascending man, referring primarily to Christ, then to all His people. “Looking unto Jesus,” they become:

Epaenetus—“laudable,” the praise-worthy man.

Adronicus—“a man excellent,” suitable for the throne. It appears to be derived from “aner,” man, and “nicao,” to rule; hence, excelling in reigning qualities.

Amplias—“large,” the full-grown man, expressive of the “perfect, or full-grown man” (“*unto a perfect man,*” *KJV*) in Eph. 4:13.

Urbane—“pleasant,” the agreeable man—*James 3:17.

Stachys—“an ear of corn,” (“*ears of corn*” *KJV*) the fruit-supplying man.

Apelles—“without a receptacle.” There was no room in his heart for the world; hence, he was “approved in Christ.”—V. 10.

Aristobulus—“best counsellor,” the very necessary man. Comp. **Isa. 9:6.

Herodion—“valiant,” the most highly-praised man. ***Comp. Matt. 17:5 with 2 Cor. 4:5.

*James 3:17 “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

**Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

***Matthew 17:5 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

2 Corinthians 4:5 “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Narcissus—“astonishment,” the wonderful man. Comp. Psa. 71:7—“I am as a wonder unto many.”

Rufus—“red,” the blood-sprinkled man. How marvelous! Calvary is not overlooked in this beautiful array.

Asyncrites—“not to be mixed, incomparable,” the fully separated man.

Phlegon—“burning, glowing, ambitious,” the very zealous man. Comp. Psa. 69:9 and John 2:17—“The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

Hermas—“gain,” the prize-winning man. Comp. *Heb. 12:2 with Philip. 3:8, 14. Hermes in this same verse has the same meaning. It may be the female of Hermas.

Patrobas—“paternal,” the fatherly man. In the body of Christ, Paul especially holds this place—**1 Cor. 4:14.

Philologos—“a lover of the word,” the scripturally-taught man.

Nereus—“son of the sea,” the resurrected man. The new creation is not only the result of Calvary, but also life out of death. And hence, finally:

Olympas—“heavenly,” the supernatural man. Note here that there is a remarkable gradation in the first eight names. Ascending, or looking up, is laudable, and increases to excellence, and finally into full-growth. Of course, a full-grown man is agreeable and is sure to be fruitful. Of course, such a man has no capacity for carnal things; hence, he “is approved in Christ.” And having come up thru these different degrees, how fitting for him to be the “best counsellor,” the necessary man. Finally, this man becomes Herodion, “The valiant,” or the one whom the whole Church lauds, that is, Christ.

Further amazement meets us in the fact that Narcissus,

*Hebrews 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Philippians 3:8, 14 “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ...I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

**1 Corinthians 4:14 “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.”

“astonishment,” should next appear on the stage. And what is this, but 2 Thess. 1:10—“When He shall come to be glorified in His holy ones, and to be wondered at in all them that believed.” (*“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.” KJV*) Angels in heaven and men on earth will be overwhelmed at the transcendent glory that will envelope the saints in that day. What a climax reached by these ten names!

But the “blood of the Lamb” was necessary to produce such a wonder; hence, Rufus, “red,” or the sprinkling of the blood, comes next from behind the screen. He is called, “The elect in the Lord.” Thank God for Calvary, where our sins were put away forever, where the world was crucified unto us, and we unto the world. Viewed numerically, we stand aghast. Rufus is the eleventh character here. Eleven is the fourth number that cannot be divided. Christ died once for all men; all men died once in Christ. That which cannot be divided stands as an eternal divider between the world and believers. Therefore, the “incomparable” Asyncrites comes forth, forever separated unto God. Of course, he becomes Phlegon, “burning with zeal” for the truth (John 2:17), which makes him the “paternal,” or fatherly Patrobas. Do you marvel that this man develops into Hermas, who is destined to “gain” the prize? Certainly, the following trinity of qualities are absolutely necessary to gain it. Philologus, the “lover of the Word,” the resurrected Nereus, “offspring of the deep,” and the “heavenly” Olympas.

Thus Calvary, represented by eleven, seizes the ten preceding, ten being the number of ability and responsibility, and develops them into the concluding seven, which begins with the separated man and ends with the heavenly, or supernatural man.

Eight Typical Women

There are eight women in this wonderful company of twenty-seven. Eight is the new creation number. Their character and conduct, together with the meanings of their names, make them fittingly to indicate the Bride of Christ, builded out of the Body of Christ, typified by the whole of the 27 names of this chapter.

In the meanings of the names, lie the climaxing marvel of the chapter. The first woman and the first man, as well as each of the others, have each the proper place.

Phoebe, “the radiant one,” whom Paul calls “our sister,” was a servant, or deaconess of the Assembly in Cenchrea, which means

“small, like a millet seed.” She was not ashamed to minister to a little flock. She was also “a succoror of many and of myself,” says the Apostle. That word succoror means “a first rank protectress.” How expressive of the teaching of ranks, and that those in the first rank are indeed “radiant,” because of an inward glory. Phoebe went before many, served many, even protecting the Apostle in her service of love. She possessed the Spirit of Christ. See *Heb. 2:18. Phoebe always shares with Christ in His service and suffering here, and will share with Him in His radiant glory hereafter.

Priscilla, “the ancient,” received her life and call from “the Ancient of days,” and was in the first rank laborers with brother Paul. By running with him, she was qualifying to “gain Christ.” With her husband, she laid down her neck for Him, in doing so for the Apostle. And the Priscilla folk are doing the same today.

Mary, “the exalted,” is the first rank benefactress of God’s servant. “She bestowed great labour upon us,” (*“Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.”—Rom. 16:6 KJV*) exclaimed Paul. How she reminds us of Mary, who was first at the tomb, seeking to minister to her Lord. “He that is servant is greatest of all;” (*“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”—Matt. 23:11 KJV*) and “she hath done what she could.”

Junia, “the youthful,” is the first rank sufferer, having been “a fellow prisoner with” (*“Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners,”—Rom. 16:7 KJV*) Paul, no doubt in Caesarea. See **Acts 24:27. Our encouragement—“If we suffer with Him; we shall also reign with Him.” (*“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—2 Tim. 2:12 KJV*) “Thy youth is renewed like the eagles.”

Tryphena, “the luxurious liver,” learned to feed on Christ and grow fat and flourishing. She is the first rank “partaker of Christ.” “He that eateth me, shall live by me,” (*“so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”—John 6:57 KJV*) said Jesus. The Triphenas are a small company. Few saints feed on God’s Word.

Tryphosa, “the thrice shining one,” expresses the culmination of the inward glory, which makes us “luminaries in the Lord” (*“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” KJV*)—Eph. 5:8. The radiant Phoebe develops into

*Hebrews 2:18 “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”

** Acts 24:27 “But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”

the thrice radiant Tryphosa. How she reminds us of “the holy city, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband” (*“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” KJV*)—Rev. 21:2. And immediately follows,

Julia, “the downy one,” who “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”—Tit. 2:10. Finally the climax is reached in the invincible.

Persis, “she who destroys, or cuts thru.” She presses thru the crowd to touch the Healer; she destroys all her father’s idols; she cuts thru all laodiceanism; and finally, joined to her Lord, she will overthrow the beast and the false prophet, “whom the Lord will consume with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the outshining of His presence” (*“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:” KJV*)—2 Thess. 2:8.

Eight expressive characters, forcefully figuring the company of full-fledged overcomers who shall reign conjointly with Jesus for ever. Oh, the wonder of God’s holy Word! How little we had supposed that all these precious things were hidden in the afore mentioned names. Any surprise that Satan tried to confuse Bible students by causing translators to misplace this name-chapter? And is it not unanswerably evident now that this chapter completes the Ephesian Epistle? Is it not glorious that what is taught in type for our hope in Eph. 5:22-33, is prominently set on an embellished pedestal of eight pillars, eight pronounced Christian characters? And do you now wonder that the seventh P in our Ephesian Pod should be, “The Divine Pillar?” for it is written: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and My new Name” (*“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” KJV*)—Rev. 3:12. Who is this overcomer but the Bride of the Lamb?

If these lessons are enjoyed by the reader one tenth as much as the writer has enjoyed them, he shall be unspeakably rewarded.