

THE DIVINE PERFECTION- A.S. Copley

Faithful Followers at Ephesus

Romans 16:1-20 with Revelation 3:12. There are several clear evidences, that the first twenty verses of Romans sixteen belong properly with the Ephesian letter and not to the Romans. This gives a beauty and finish to this Ephesian epistle which its character and purpose demand.

1. Brother Paul sends greetings to twenty-seven particular friends, whose names he mentions in these twenty verses, besides certain unnamed brethren - Nereus' sister and certain other saints - Romans 16:15. **These friends were not in Rome, but in Ephesus** or in that vicinity. He had no acquaintances in Rome until after he went there. Four of those friends cited were his "kinsmen" in a closer fellowship in the Lord than some others.

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

3. Epaenetus, which means "praiseworthy" or "laudable," was "the firstfruits of Asia" and not of Achaia - Romans 16:5 R.V. Paul visited those points in Asia, working out from Ephesus - Acts 19:10. Now, writing to Ephesus from Rome, he sends greetings to all those round about Ephesus. Of course, he would not omit his beloved Epaenetus - his "firstfruits" of the muddy boggy land; that is, Asia.

4. Observe Romans 16:20 - "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." 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. Romans 16:21-23 is just as plainly not addressed to Ephesus. This is indeed a portion of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul wrote Romans in the home of Gaius in Derbe. Compare Romans 16:23 with I Corinthians 1:14 and Acts 20:4.

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: These parties, to whom the apostle sends greetings, were held in the 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 fellow-workers with him - 16:3, 9 R.V. He calls four of them "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.

Note the significant number of names - twenty-seven in all - three times three times three. The indispensable and indivisible number "three" expresses the number of the Godhead all through the Scripture; and it 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 Christ," is altogether divine. Hence, this number of Deity is profoundly illustrative of the "full-grown man ... the stature of the fullness of Christ" - Eph. 4:13 R.V. This number "twenty-seven" can be divided by no other number than three - the number of Deity - or its multiple nine. 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 man pluck them out of My hand" - John 10:27, 28.

NINETEEN TYPICAL MEN

The first man is Aquila, "eagle" or the ascending one, who with his wife Priscilla, "the ancient one," "laid down their own necks" 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 twenty-seven 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 praiseworthy man.

Andronicus - "a man excellent," suitable for the throne. It appears to be derived from "aner" man, and "nicao" to rule; hence, excelling in reigning qualities. Andronicus also means "victory of man." (Kinsman of Paul)

Amplias - "large" or "enlarged," the fullgrown man. This is expressive of the "perfect" or "fullgrown man" in Ephesians 4:13.

Urbane - "end of the way," the heavenly city.

Stachys - "an ear of corn," the fruit-supplying man.

Apelles - "without receptacle." There was no room in his heart for the world; hence, he was "approved in Christ" -Romans 16:10.

Aristobulus - "best counselor," the very necessary man. Compare Isaiah 9:6.

Herodion - "valiant," the most highly praised man. Compare Matthew 17:5 with II Corinthians 4:5. (Kinsman of Paul)

Narcissus - "narcotic," producing stupefaction. Not affected by the things of the world and the flesh.

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

Asyncritus - "not to be mixed, incomparable," the fully separated man.

Phlegon - "burning, glowing, ambitious," the very zealous man. Compare Psalm 69:9 and John 2:17 - "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up."

Hermas - "gain," the prize-winning man. Compare Hebrews 12:2 with Philippians 3:8, 14.

Vs. 1

I commend unto you **Phebe** our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.

Vs. 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 succorer of many, and of myself also.

Vs. 3

Greet **Priscilla** and **Aquila** my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Vs. 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.

Hermes "teacher for gain." This name is related to the one above.

Patrobas "paternal," the fatherly man. In the Body of Christ, Paul especially holds this place - I Corinthians 4:14.

Philologus - "lover of the Word," the Scripturally taught man.

Nereus - "a water nymph," the resurrected man. The new creation is not only the result of Calvary, but also life out of death.

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 looking at eternal things and is sure to be fruitful. Such a man has no capacity for carnal things; hence, he is "approved in Christ." Having come up through these different degrees, how fitting for him to be the "best counselor" - the necessary man. Finally, this man becomes **Herodion**, "the valiant," or the one whom the whole Church lauds - that is, Christ. Narcissus illustrates the one who, like Paul, was dead to the world and the flesh. He denied everything that would hinder his fellowship with Christ.

"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 "chosen 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" Asyncretus comes forth, forever separated unto God. Of course, he becomes Phlegon, "burning" with zeal for the Truth; 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 is absolutely necessary to gain it - Philologus the "lover of the Word," the resurrected Nereus "a water nymph" or offspring of the deep, and the "heavenly" Olympas.

EIGHT TYPICAL WOMEN

There are eight women in this wonderful company of twenty-seven. Eight is the new creation number. Their character and conduct,

Vs. 5

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved **Epaenetus**, who is the firstfruits of **Achaia** unto Christ.

Vs. 6

Greet **Mary**, who bestowed much labor on us.

Vs. 7

Salute **Andronicus** and **Junia**, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Vs. 8

Greet **Amplias** my beloved in the Lord.

Vs. 9

Salute **Urbane**, our helper in Christ, and **Stachys** my beloved.

Vs. 10

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

Vs. 11

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

Vs. 12

Salute **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved **Persis**, which labored much in the Lord.

Vs. 13

Salute **Rufus** chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

together with the meanings of their names, indicate that they represent the Bride of Christ - builded out of the Body of Christ, and typified by the whole of the twenty-seven 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 deacon of the assembly in Cenchrea which means "small, like a millet seed, granular." She was not ashamed to minister to a little flock. She was "a succorer of many, and of myself also," says the apostle. That word "succorer" means "a first rank protector." 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 and served many, even protecting the apostle in her service of love. She possessed the Spirit of Christ. See Hebrews 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 she was among the first rank laborers with Brother Paul. By running with him, she was qualifying to "win Christ." With her husband, she laid down her neck for Jesus Christ, in doing so for the apostle. The Priscilla folk are doing the same today.

Mary is the first rank benefactor of God's servant, the Apostle Paul. She "bestowed much labor on us," exclaimed Paul. How she reminds us of Mary, who was first at the tomb, seeking to minister to her Lord. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" - Matthew 23:11. "She hath done what she could" - Mark 14:8.

Junia, "the youthful," is the first rank sufferer - having been a fellow prisoner with Paul, no doubt, in Caesarea. Our encouragement is that - "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" - II Timothy 2:12. "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" - Psalm 103:5. (Kinsman of Paul) relative

Tryphena, "luxurious," learned to feed on Christ and grow fat and flourishing. She is the first rank partaker of Christ. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me," said Jesus. The Tryphenas are a small company. Few saints feed on God's Word.

Tryphosa, "illuminating," expresses the culmination of the inward glory which makes us luminaries in the Lord - Eph. 5:8. The radiant Phoebe develops into the luxuriating Tryphosa. How she reminds us of "the holy city ... prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband" - Revelation 21:2.

Vs. 14

Salute **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes**, and the brethren which are with them.

Vs. 15

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

Vs. 16

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

Vs. 17

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

Vs. 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.

Vs. 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.

Vs. 20

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

Persis, "she who destroys or cuts through." She presses through the crowd to touch the Healer. She destroys all her father's idols. She cuts through all laodiceanism. Finally, joined to her Lord, she will overthrow the beast and the false prophet - "Whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" - II Thessalonians 2:8.

Julia, "the downy one," who adorns "the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" - Titus 2:10.

These are eight expressive characters, forcefully figuring the company of full-fledged over-comers 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 aforementioned names. Is it any wonder that Satan tried to confuse Bible students by causing translators to misplace this name chapter? 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 Ephesians 5:22-33, is prominently set on an embellished pedestal of eight pillars - eight pronounced Christian characters!

Do you now wonder that the seventh "P" in our Ephesian Pod is "The Divine Perfection"? 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, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My New Name" - Revelation 3:12. Who is this over-comer, but the Bride of the Lamb!