

EPHESIANS
SANCTIFICATION BY
FAITH IN CHRIST

HOME
STUDY

E. S. YOUNG, D. D.



Class PS2695

Book Y6

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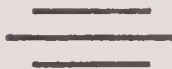
SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST

*manual
printed*

BY
E. S. YOUNG, D. D.

Professor of Sacred History and Theology, Author of
"Life of Christ," and "Acts of the Apostles"; "The
Bible Outline," "The Bible Geography," "The
Old Testament History," "The New
Testament History," "Analysis of
the Books of the Bible."

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman
that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word
of truth."



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BY

E. S. YOUNG, CLAREMONT, CAL.

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SYSTEMATIC BIBLE STUDY

THE Bible Students' League was organized in 1886 and is one of the first Correspondence Schools to offer Bible instruction by mail. The work during the first years was largely experimental from the fact that text books written by different authors had to be adopted, therefore, it was difficult to offer uniform, complete, and systematic courses on the entire Bible.

After some years, the President of the League, realizing the necessity of a systematic course in the study of the sixty-six books of the Bible, prepared four text books known as The Bible Outline, The Bible Geography, The Old Testament History and The New Testament History. These text books give the student a general knowledge of the entire Bible, and are used for class work in many churches, and by Sunday-school teachers and ministers for home study. The students who have followed these books have found them loyal to the Word of God and the means of increasing faith in God and His plan for the human family.

After teaching these text books for about twelve years, many students were enrolled and completed the course, and realizing the advantages of systematic study, repeatedly asked for text books for a Second Course. Two text books were prepared for the Second Course fully in harmony with the system studied in the First Course.

The Life of Christ, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, is a book containing 348 pages. The Scripture given in the Four Gospels is arranged in chronological order. The Life of Christ is divided into nine periods. Each period is illustrated with maps, by which the student can name and locate the important events and places. These give the student a systematic knowledge of the Four Gospels

enabling him to follow Christ's journeys and name the events in chronological order from Christ's birth to His ascension. The Life of Christ is to be revised and published in two volumes giving additional comment upon each period.

The second book, Acts of the Apostles, contains 320 pages, giving the Scripture of one of the best versions, showing the full history of the Early Church and reasons why the Apostles and Early Disciples were able to make such rapid progress although bitterly opposed by the world and the Jewish Church. The book contains a number of maps on which are traced the journeys of the first missionaries and the important events are given in chronological order.

These two books, giving a knowledge of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, have been the means of helping many Sunday-school teachers and ministers, strengthening their faith in the Word of Truth and making them more efficient workers in the church.

The Second Course was introduced in 1915 and a number have completed this course and made a demand upon us for other text books by which the same System of study could be followed. The author of the above text books has been a student and teacher of the Bible for more than thirty-five years, and decided the best and most helpful course to be offered would be text books giving a systematic knowledge of what is presented in the section of the Bible known as the letters written to the seven churches. These letters were written for definite Christian instruction. It is the part of the Bible in which Christ is the author of All-truth, the Holy Spirit the guide into All-truth, and the Apostle Paul the chosen vessel to whom this truth was revealed, who put this truth into these nine letters that man might, through faith in Christ, become justified, sanctified, and glorified.

Although the author at the beginning of his study of

these Church Epistles had the privilege of being under some of the most able teachers and constantly had the help of some of the very best commentators, he found it a task beyond his expectations to complete three text books showing fully the system presented by Christ and the Holy Spirit for Christian education in this age of grace. He does not claim, in the preparation of the manuscript for these books, entire originality, having used at times the very thought given by some of these teachers and commentators, and if their names should not be mentioned in the books, we take this method of acknowledging our indebtedness for any help received in the preparation of the manuscript.

We now in a humble way present to our students these text books: Romans as the first book, showing that all men have sinned and only by faith in Jesus Christ can they be justified; Ephesians, the second book, which admits the student into an advanced class of the School of Grace, so that through faith in Christ he becomes sanctified, dwelling with Christ in the Heavenlies, and realizes what it is to be a member of the Body of Christ; Thessalonians, the third book, written to the members of a model church who found Christ through the teaching of Romans, dwelt in a state of sanctification through the teaching of Ephesians, and were to receive instruction for glorification through faith in Jesus Christ.

The student should learn that only by confidence in the Author of Truth, Christ, and by confidence in the guide, Holy Spirit, can he receive from these text books the help and inspiration that will make him more efficient as a teacher and preacher of the Word. Those who will enter into this most important part of the Bible and be honest with themselves and the Word, will be willing to have answered and incorporated into their lives, the things asked for by the Apostle Paul in the two prayers recorded in Ephesians. (Eph. 1:17-23), "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: 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." (Eph. 3:14-21), "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."

We admonish the student to constantly remember that the evangelists and teachers who are true to Christ and His Word are limited in their mission and must perform the task assigned them as set forth in the following Scripture (Eph. 4:11-16), "And he (Christ) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 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."

EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

THE Apostle Paul wrote nine Epistles which he addressed to seven churches. These have been especially written for the instruction of every Christian. Every word of Scripture in these nine letters is about him and all contain a complete course of Christian education. The other Epistles written by the Apostle are addressed to individuals and not to churches, and are also meant for the Christian and for his learning, but they do not contain the truths concerning the Church of God, the Body of Christ or tell how the Jews and Gentiles are being made one Body in Christ. This presents a marked difference between the Epistles written to the churches and those written to individuals.

I. THE BIBLE A LIVING BOOK

God's Book contains special instruction for each period of the human race. The first book of the Bible contains an Outline of the entire Word of God. During the progress of the human family, God revealed Himself more fully and made plain what was contained in the first book of the Bible by adding book to book until the Word of God was complete in sixty-six books. These contain God's purposes and plans for the human family. It is the only book that God has left with the human race by which her origin, history, and destiny can be known.

II. DIVISIONS OF THE HUMAN RACE

After God created the world He made man, and gave him dominion over that which He had created. In the beginning God's government was universal and included the entire human family. Because of man's failure to

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respond to God and His Word, God called a family through which to reveal Himself as the Redeemer of the world. That family developed and became known to us as the Jewish nation. He made conditional and unconditional covenants with this nation and a very large part of the Bible is given to show the origin of this nation, her history during periods of faithfulness and unfaithfulness and her final destiny. The nation having failed in the mission entrusted to her, became a scattered nation and but a remnant, the elect of God, are worthy to be used in bringing about, through the suffering of this remnant, the Church of God. Therefore, we have three divisions in the human family: Gentiles, Jews, and the Church (1 Cor. 10:32).

III. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

It took sixteen hundred years to write the inspired Word of God which contains special teaching for each of the three classes into which the human family is divided. The Apostle Paul, living during the period when part of this Word of Truth was revealed, understood fully how very important it is to use the teaching in the Word of God for the class to which it was written. The Apostle, who is the author of these nine letters to these seven churches, attended school and was under instructors who were either not honest or were ignorant as to the right division of the Word of God. It was by the use of literature, not in harmony with the Word of God, and by the instruction of unfaithful teachers of the Word that he himself became a bitter enemy of the truth and a persecutor of the Church. Paul met his Lord on the way to Damascus and was told by Him what he must do. He was told that he must follow God's plan and God's truth. By doing so his eyes were opened and he became one of the most faithful writers and expositors of the truth of God.

Paul is no longer a persecutor but a revealer of Christ, and as a chosen vessel, he becomes acquainted with God's

Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit is able to comprehend the Scripture given by God to the Gentiles and Jews and to write these letters to the seven churches for Christian education.

The Jewish church, ignorant of the Word of God, and not able to rightly divide it, rejected Christ as the redeemer of the world. The Jews had a system of religion of their own which was supported by their own literature. Since they were ignorant of what God had promised the nation in the different covenants, they were unprepared to receive Christ, who is so fully revealed in the Old Testament, "He came unto His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not, but as many as received Him (of the Jewish people) to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name," (John 1:11-12). We have learned what the Jewish nation did because ignorant of the Word of Truth and not capable of rightly dividing it. The same results will follow when the last warning given by the Apostle Paul to all Bible teachers is not heeded, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." Humanity does not like what God says, but what man says.

IV. CHRIST'S VIVID PICTURE OF THIS AGE

Christ's teaching and work as Redeemer of the world was constantly opposed by the Jewish Church. The time came for the disciples as well as all His followers to have some knowledge of the progress of the Kingdom when opposed by the world and strongest religious body then on earth. Christ gave this information in seven parables (Matt. 13:1-53). These show the progress, successes and failures of the Kingdom of God in this entire age of grace. This is Christ's prophecy and he interprets the same which has been found true in every century since the parables have been spoken. They set forth man's ignorance and

rejection of the Word, and through disobedience to the Word of God as foreseen by Christ we cannot expect the nations to turn unto Christ and progress be made toward universal salvation.

V. THE CHRISTIAN'S LITERATURE FOR THIS AGE

Christ uttered another important prophecy concerning the literature for Christian education in this age of grace (John 16:12-14), "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: (all the truth) for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Christ uttered this prophecy and we look to Him for its fulfilment. Christ had prophesied sometime before this to His disciples, "Upon this rock I will build my church," (Matt. 16:18). When He said this He was making preparation for His church of the future which could not be organized until after His death on Calvary, burial in the tomb, resurrection, and ascension unto the right hand of God. The church He was to build would then have a Head, Christ, the Author of Truth, sitting at the right hand of God. He told His disciples that He had much unrevealed truth that would not be revealed until He would send the Holy Spirit, the comforter who is the Guide into all truth.

1. **When, Where, and How Was This Prophecy of Christ Fulfilled?** These are the things that Christ promised would happen after the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, was come: First, He shall guide you into all the truth; Second, He shall not speak of (or from) Himself; Third, He shall show you things to come; Fourth, He shall glorify me; Fifth, He shall receive of mine and show it unto you. Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and

the life," (John 14:6). There is only one way by which man may find his way home to God and that is by the way of the cross. Christ is the all-truth. It is this all-truth of Christ that the Holy Spirit is to reveal unto the churches in this age. Christ then is the only source of the all-truth capable to give instruction in the building of His church. To build the Church of God, there was need to have the Gospel of Grace as presented to the seven churches. The four Gospels are the completion of the Old Testament history as well as the beginning of the New. The King and the Kingdom had been prophesied and promised all through the ages. The Jews both rejected the King and the Kingdom and put the King to death. This surely is not good news. God's future judgments for the rejection and death of the King are revealed in Scripture. In the early days of the Christian Church, Christ, through the Holy Spirit and the Apostles, gave to the nation an opportunity to repent of her sins and become reconciled to God (Acts 3:18-21), however they rejected the Holy Spirit's teaching and put to death the message bearers (Acts 4:1-4, 5:17-20, 7:58, 12:1-4).

2. **The Gospel of Grace** is revealed in the Epistles to the seven churches. Christ is the author of the four Gospels given by Him while in preparation for the Church and dwelling in His physical body. He, being the all-truth and at the right hand of God, became the author of these Epistles to the Seven Churches; therefore, the Epistles and Gospels have the same person as author and are of equal weight and importance. No difference can be made between them without jeopardizing the very essence of inspiration. By making a difference in weight and authority, we reduce the Bible to the position of any man-made book and practically question the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. That there is a difference is true, but this difference can only be understood (as we have said before) by a right division of the Word of Truth. We know that the things

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Christ said, while on earth, are necessarily of the highest importance to us dispensationally and show how the Jews rejected God's plan for the nation, thus opening the way for salvation to be offered to the Gentiles. The instruction given to the Jew was intended for the Jew and would be only of historical value to the Church of God, for Christ had not begun the building of His Church and the churches to whom Paul addressed the Church Epistles were not in possession even of the Four Gospels.

The things that Christ taught while on earth are of utmost importance to every Christian, and contain much valuable truth for all in this church age. However, the Four Gospels were spoken by the Lord to the nation to which He belonged, and the Scripture of the Old Testament as well as much of the New will be of great value to the Jewish nation, even after the Body of Christ has been formed and the church age closed. This is not true concerning the letters for the seven churches which contain the real Gospel of God for this age. When the Body of Christ has been formed and the church age closed, the church literature for it, found in the nine letters to the seven churches, will be only of historical value to the Jewish nation as much of the Bible is at this time to the Christian church. We cannot insist too strongly upon all Biblical students accepting the all-truth of Christ, given through the Holy Spirit, using Paul to formulate this truth in nine letters, as the special Gospel of God for this age of grace. We do not mean by this that the literature of Christ, given in the Four Gospels, should be less studied and emphasized, but that more attention by all Christian people should be given to the part of the Bible that contains the truth of Christ by which souls may be saved, trained, perfected, and glorified.

3. **The Arrangement of the Gospel of Grace** found in these nine letters for the building of the church was not given until after Christ's death, resurrection and ascen-

sion to the right hand of God. There are just seven churches addressed by the Apostle Paul in writing these nine letters. Seven is a number of spiritual perfection. Seven is the number frequently used in the Inspired Word. Christ spoke seven parables (Matt. 13:1-53) and gave seven letters to seven churches (Rev. 2:1-3:22). The names of the nine letters written to the seven churches are as follows: Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians. These embody the truths of the Spirit's teaching for the churches. Christ prophesied that when the Holy Spirit was come, He would guide into all the Truth. The Holy Spirit had no truth of His own to give and, therefore, could only give what He received from another (that is from Christ). He was not only to bring this truth which was to be of special value to all who would receive Christ, but the Holy Spirit was to have the privilege of revealing new truths as an inspiration to the members of the Body of Christ. All of this is contained in the prophecies uttered by Christ concerning this church literature, as is testified and experienced by all who know and live this truth.

These nine church letters were not written in the order in which they appear in the Bible, but in almost the inverse order. Thessalonians was written first, and in the arrangement, appears last. In all the Greek manuscripts the arrangement is the same as we have in the Bible. This is not true of all the other books of the New Testament. Even these nine letters may appear in some other division of the New Testament, but the order of the nine letters is always the same. These letters themselves, as well as their order, are of Divine weight and authority. Their origin and arrangement is due to Christ's authority and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. A careful study of each of these letters will help the student to understand why they appear in the order presented. The Holy Spirit knew

which book to place first and last in order that the Christian might begin right and end right. The following classification will help us to understand the systematic order for study that right progress may be made in Christian education. If these books were studied in the inverse order, beginning with Thessalonians and ending with Romans, it would be much more disastrous than for a person to try to master geometry before learning the multiplication table. This no doubt is the cause of so much misdirected effort in the mission of the church, as many of the members of the church are ignorant of what Christ teaches. If a person is ignorant concerning this course of study supplied by Christ for those who accept Him, he must necessarily be an easy prey for every new teacher who presents some speculative philosophy of man. Christ has not only given us this literature, but has appointed teachers, evangelists and prophets to use it for the perfecting of the saints, that they might not be at the mercy of every "wind of doctrine," (Eph. 4:14).

4. **Classification as to Subject.** For man's use the order, number, and purpose is spiritually perfect, and can be studied under three heads. First: Justification through faith in Jesus Christ—Romans, Corinthians and Galatians. Romans is the beginning book in Christian education. Jews and Gentiles are lost and need a Savior. God's wrath is revealed unto all who are dead in trespasses and sins. Adam was disobedient; through one act of disobedience sin and death came upon the whole human family. Through one act of obedience of the second Adam, Christ, even the death on the cross, many are made righteous. Through faith in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, we become justified before God. There is no condemnation or separation from Christ of those who are thus related to God. Paul's Gospel to the Romans is the A B C book in Christian education, which finds man in sin, and through faith in Christ, he stands justified before God. The Holy Spirit

closes this first text book by calling attention to the Gospel mystery (16:25-27). This mystery is taken up in the second text book (Ephesians) written for an advanced course in the school of grace.

Second: Consecration Through Faith in Jesus Christ. The Christian's salvation has been completed at the cross as presented in Romans and he is now ready for the study of the book of Ephesians. Romans gave man a picture of his sinfulness and showed how to obtain God's righteousness. The Holy Spirit in Ephesians shows God's part in salvation, that even before the foundation of the world, Christ had been called, and when He was called, those who are in Him were called. God had two great purposes; one to establish a Head and the other to establish a Body. This Body is the mystery (The Church) as revealed in the third chapter. In this advanced course we are told that our Head is dwelling in the Heavens, and therefore, we who are in the Head are also dwelling in the Heavens. This book contains the doctrinal teaching for those who are in Christ Jesus and who are dwelling in the state of sanctification. Having reached this place in Christian education, the student is ready for the last text book in the course.

Third: Glorification Through Faith in Jesus Christ: Thessalonians. This, the Apostle calls a model church. We would have many model churches at the present time if the members were trained in this course of Christian education given in Romans and Ephesians, as was this Thessalonian Church. The Thessalonian Church had heard from Paul himself, the truth he later embodied in the Roman letter and in the Ephesian letter. There has always been some opposition to this advanced spiritual teaching found in Thessalonians. This is true because persons have failed to follow the course outlined by the Holy Spirit to prepare for this truth of the church. A person may be a good student of the Old Testament, even of the Life of Christ, as presented in the Four Gospels, but ignorant of Romans

and Ephesians, and therefore not prepared to understand this advanced truth which comes only to those who know and experience the truth of Christ as found in Romans and Ephesians. In Romans we are in sin; in Thessalonians crowned. In Romans we are lost and in ruin; in Ephesians we dwell in the Heavens; and in Thessalonians we are glorified.

5. Four Text Books for an Advanced Course in Bible Study. These four text books include the important teaching, Romans: Justification Through Faith in Christ (two volumes); Ephesians: Sanctification Through Faith in Christ; Thessalonians: Glorification Through Faith in Christ. The other four letters, written by the Apostle to the churches, will not be included in this course, but will appear in book form and will be given their proper place among these nine epistles. Corinthians and Galatians follow Romans, and were written to show that these churches did not fully comprehend and practice the teaching of Romans—Justification by Faith. The Corinthian Church had failed to practice the teachings of Romans, while the Galatians had failed in the doctrinal teaching.

Paul wrote three epistles while in prison. The Ephesian letter contained in a large measure, the all-truth on Sanctification. In writing to the Philippian and Colossian churches, Paul clearly shows that those churches had not fully understood his instructions in the book of Ephesians, because the Philippian Church failed to practice this teaching and the Colossian Church failed because of not fully understanding the doctrine.

INTRODUCTION

THE book of Ephesians was written by the Apostle Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome. Perhaps at no time in the Apostle's work for Christ was he suffering more intensely for standing true to the Master whom he served, as during this period of imprisonment in Rome. The Ephesian letter written by the Apostle Paul in this time of persecution is setting forth what is so much needed for advanced training in the school of grace by those who have accepted Jesus Christ through faith and, therefore, stand justified by God. They are the Christian men and women who have found Christ through the study of the first great Church book of the seven Church Epistles, known as the Book of Romans, whereby all must receive their standing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this letter to the Ephesians the Apostle sets forth the plan that God had even before the foundation of the world that those who are justified by faith in Romans might realize in the study of Ephesians that they have been saved because God chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world. So three Church Epistles have been placed in the Bible preceding this important one for beginners in Christian education to prepare them for these more advanced lessons as set forth by the Apostle in this Epistle.

In the Book of Romans the Holy Spirit has pictured man in his lost condition, without hope, and therefore, set forth how, through the death of Christ and faith in the risen and ascended Lord, man might be justified by God.

The Corinthian Church to whom Paul wrote two letters did not fully understand the doctrine set forth in the Book of Romans and, therefore, was in need of instruction to correct the errors that had crept into the church. The Corinthian letters were written especially that the practices in the church

INTRODUCTION

might be fully in harmony with the doctrine set forth in the Book of Romans.

The Galatian letter was written because the Church of Galatia had also failed to comprehend the fundamentals of religion as set forth in the Book of Romans. In that short letter the Apostle calls attention to the influence the false teachers had in the Galatian Church. The Galatian letter calls attention and reproves the Galatian members for failure in the doctrine. The Apostle had taught them personally while he was traveling through this country of Galatia. There is a marked difference between the letter written to the Galatian Church and the Ephesian letter written by the Apostle Paul while in prison, which gives advanced instruction for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The Philippian and Colossian letters were also written while Paul was in prison and also show Paul's advanced thought and Christian experience. The Apostle calls attention in writing to the Philippian Church that their practice is not fully in harmony with the instruction for practical Christianity as set forth in the Book of Ephesians. The Apostle in writing to the Colossian Church shows clearly that they did not fully understand the doctrine set forth in the Book of Ephesians concerning Christ as the Head, so the Colossian Church needed further instruction concerning doctrine. Therefore, the Ephesian letter is the second text-book set forth by the Apostle Paul to show that Christ is our Head and we dwell in Him in the Heavens and that He is in us and we in Him—forming for Himself a Body, the Church, in this age of grace. The Book of Romans, in a measure, shows man's part in securing justification. The Book of Ephesians was written to show God's part in the salvation of man and what He did that we might enjoy Spiritual life.

These text-books for the church are to be studied in the order in which they have been placed in the Bible by the Holy Spirit. It is not possible for us to get the lessons intended for the Christian from the Book of Ephesians without first mastering the lesson presented by the Holy Spirit in the Book

INTRODUCTION

of Romans. The Book of Romans is the place where the sinner finds Christ and begins his preparatory work in order that he might be able to appreciate and in a sense comprehend the advanced lessons set forth in Ephesians. This book is especially intended to deepen man's spiritual life, to show his relation to God, and to reveal what God has done that he might enjoy this blessed hope.

Romans finds us lost in sin and without hope. It shows that by faith in a crucified Christ we are justified by God. The Book of Romans (16:25) hinted at the secret held in the mind of God from before the foundation of the world. It is this great secret of God that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul sets out in the Ephesian letter for the development and training of Christian men and women for the higher church life.

TO THE MANY MEMBERS
of the
Bible Students' League
Who Have
So Often Spoken and Written
Words of Inspiration and Cheer to the Author
These Books
on the
CHURCH EPISTLES
Are Affectionately Dedicated

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

PART I

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Ephesians

PART I

DOCTRINAL AS TO OUR STANDING

(1:1-3:21)

I. The Purpose of God in Himself Concerning Christ, the Head, 1:1-23

1. SALUTATION, 1:1-2

Ver. 1. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Paul is the author of this letter written about A. D. 62, during his first imprisonment at Rome. The Apostle was absolutely definite concerning his call to the Apostleship. He heard the voice of the Master on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:5), and he was as sure of his call and that it was through the voice of Jesus as were the Apostles of the Jews who were called during the time that Christ was upon the earth. He believed that it was by the will of God and thus his call excluded all human choice and self-will. He represented himself as one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:8), and that, while a Jew, he had a similar relation to the Gentile world as the twelve Apostles had to the Jewish (Gal. 2:9). In the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles he is always represented as one delegated by the Master for some special and specific work in building His Church, the Body of Christ.

This letter is written to the church already existing. It is addressed here to the saints which are at Ephesus. The Apostle

Paul had spent about three years in building up the Church to which this letter is now addressed (Acts 19:10). It would be very natural for the Apostle to want to write a letter to a church to which he had given so many years of his ministry, especially one which he had built up under such tremendous opposition as he had met in the church at Ephesus. It seems strange, however, that no more of that personal relationship is brought out in this letter, if the letter were intended especially for this Church at Ephesus. There has been considerable controversy concerning the title "Ephesus" as it appears here in this verse. Ephesus is omitted in a number of the very best manuscripts.

The Apostle has heard of the faith which prevails amongst his readers, not only that they had heard about Christ, but also that they had accepted Christ and were taught in Christ according as the truth is in Jesus. The Apostle hopes that by reading this Epistle they will be able to understand something concerning the mystery of Christ (3:2-4). The Apostle had addressed the Ephesian elders at Melitus (Acts 20:17-18) a number of years before writing this Epistle at which time he called attention to personal feelings and sympathy that he had with the individual members of the Ephesian Church. Now in this letter, that sympathy and fellowship is not brought out as fully as one would expect from one writing to an individual church of which he was the pastor and builder. We called attention to the fact that some of the manuscripts in the fourth century omit the word "Ephesus." Some of the church fathers, by their writings, also show that they believed the letter was to be a general letter to all the churches and not to the individual church at Ephesus. It is supposed, upon very good authority, the letter was destined for a number of churches in Asia Minor which Tychicus was directed to visit in the course of the journey which took him to Colossae. When taking the other letters he was intrusted with this more general Epistle intended for the Christian community in Asia as well as "to all the saints in Jesus Christ." The Apostle in closing

the Colossian letter directed the Colossian church to procure from Laodicea a letter in exchange for the letter he was sending them (4:16). It may be possible that the Laodicean document, thought to be lost, is the general epistle we are now studying. It has been suggested that the place was left blank for the name and that when different copies were made of this letter, the name of the church to which the letter was sent was inserted. It might be well then to insert in the first verse of the letter these words, "The General Epistle of Paul to the Churches in Asia."

This letter is written to Christian believers as men consecrated to God in Christ. The Apostle, therefore, wishes to be understood that when he speaks of the saints, he means those who were true and steadfast members of the Body of Christ. The first verse then tells us that we are not sinners but saints; that we are not faithless but faithful unto Christ Jesus. If this be true as we open this wonderful letter brought to us by the Holy Spirit, then the wonderful things of God will be unveiled unto us. His plans concerning his purposes as the Head of the church, over all, and concerning the building up and completing of the Body of Christ—the faithful saints in the Lord—will be revealed.

Ver. 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The opening words in this book are like the opening words in Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, and Philemon. In these salutations grace is the free and unmerited favor of God in its Spiritual efficacy. This is what the Apostle wishes to have unveiled and experienced by the readers of this letter. Peace is especially the complacency and reconciliation with which He regards His people through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ that we are brought into that binding peace with God our Father.

"The message of Ephesians is *initially* in the Will of God,

inclusively to those in the Son of God, *instrumentally* by Paul the Servant of God, and *ultimately* to all the Saints of God.”

QUESTIONS

Who is the author of this Epistle?

When and under what circumstances was it written?

What Epistle must we study before we can understand the advanced lessons in this book?

For whom is this letter written?

Give meaning of grace and peace as presented in the second verse.

What is the source of grace and peace?

2. GOD'S PART IN SECURING OUR STANDING IN CHRIST THE HEAD, 1:3-14

The Apostle Paul is showing to us, his readers, God's purpose concerning Himself in the establishment of the Head over all, which is Christ. This is the mystery of God concerning Himself which was in His mind before the foundation of the world. Much of this letter is occupied with doctrine. One-half of this letter emphasizes two great purposes that God had from before the foundation of the world. The first great purpose is that God might establish a Head for Himself over all, which is Christ. The second great purpose is that God might, through Christ, make from individuals of all nations, a mysterious body (one new man) known as the Church of Christ.

Ver. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

This verse is the key of the whole Epistle. If you understand fully how to use the key you will be able to unlock the doors opening into the rooms that contain the treasures of God. The Apostle tells us that the sphere of these blessings, therefore, is heavenly, for they are in Christ. The Apostle said that when Christ was here on the earth, they knew Him after the flesh,

but now since His death, resurrection and ascension, He has entered into heavenly places and we who have our standing in the Head are there in Him. We learn in the study of the Scripture that God, when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together and made us to sit down together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus (2: 5-6).

Christ came from the Heavens according to the purpose of God. He laid aside His royal robe of glory, came down, humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of man, and after thirty years of absence, going about in the flesh of man, he paid for us the price of redemption on the Cross, arose and ascended into the Heavens.

“Blessed be God.” This is the perpetual statement of the Old Testament from Melchizedek down to David, of Daniel in his triumph and Job in his misery, but never before could man say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” surpasses and outshines them all.

“Who hath blessed us.” This gives us to understand that the foundation of all blessings is in the purpose of God Himself. We come in possession of Spiritual blessings. God transfers these rich things to us who are faithful to His Son. These blessings of God surround and overflow the faithful in Christ Jesus. There are no blessings that you can name which God has not in some way or another bestowed upon us. We are looking at God’s part in our salvation. God is the source of all our blessings and no sinfulness on our part hinders this outflow, and no merit on our part calls it forth. Notice, readers, that the Will of God is the source of all our blessings. There is but one channel through which these blessings come and that is through a crucified Redeemer.

The agent through which the Apostle Paul and all the early saints came in possession of these blessings was through the infilling power of the Holy Spirit. These specific blessings enumerated here and bestowed by God Himself can only be

secured and enjoyed by those who are in His Son through death, burial, and resurrection and seated with Him in the Heavens. It will be of utmost value to every student, to allow the Holy Spirit to bring him into the truth and enjoyment of the blessings that come by dwelling in the Heavens with Christ. The child of God dwells in a physical body, but must speak and act, walk and talk as a member and citizen of the Heavens.

Ver. 4. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish (blame) before him in love.

The Apostle is about to present seven great elements or truths concerning God's part in our salvation. This verse gives the believer to understand that he was chosen by God in Christ before the foundation of the world. Paul means to say to us, that God, in laying His plans for the world, had then in His mind, the purpose of redeeming grace. The different dispensations presented to us in the Word of God were developed in different periods of the history of the world, but all of these had their purposes and plans before the foundation of the world. The Head of the Church, salvation through grace, the Church, the Body of Christ, and the believer, lie as deep as the creation itself. The provisions for these were eternal and the secret of them hidden and much of it never revealed unto this age of grace. There is nothing unprepared, nothing unforeseen in God's dealings with mankind. His wisdom and knowledge are as deep as His grace is wide.

The Apostle Paul tells us that he was but an agent in the hands of God to set out and make some of these plans plain to the human race: "It pleased God to set me apart from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15). The world is a system. It has a method and plan, therefore a foundation. Before the foundation there is a Founder whose purpose for all creation was that man might have a home. God had in his mind to redeem fallen humanity through the death of His own Son. He chose us that we might, through the call

of His Son, be without blame before Him in love, just as a sacrifice would be without blemish.

We are told in this verse that we are chosen—chosen of God, chosen in His Son. If we want to prove to the world that God has chosen us, we must be willing to be brought under His redemptive blood, die unto the world and rise with Christ.

Ver. 5. Having foreordained (predestinated) us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

The previous verse tells us that we are blameless before Him in love. Now in this love he predestinated us and even all this was before the foundation of the world. This is the effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass. He does not only predestinate, but He does bring to pass the very thing He plans and foreknows.

Paul, in writing to the Romans, says (8: 30), "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." He predestinated us that we might secure His sonship. It is through God's own choice and by the determination of His mighty will, that this choice is put into operation and takes effect. He has determined seasons and appointed bounds to human habitation. God foresees everything and allows for everything. As God's ways justify themselves in part, so they do universally. Our little spark of intelligence glances upon one spot in a boundless ocean of unmeasurable depth.

God's sons must be holy and holy men are His sons. For this end we were elected of God before the beginning. With this very end in view the world was founded and the human race came into being. Now in the age of grace, the Church is being formed, and is to be presented at last faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. In the fourth verse we were chosen by God; in the fifth verse we were adopted. We belong to His immediate family. This was all in the mind of God before the foundation of the world.

Ver. 6. **To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

The object of the praise in this verse is the glory, but not glory in Himself or God's glory, but in His grace that through this grace, praise may accrue unto His free manifestation of the glorious nature of this grace of adoption, which He freely bestowed upon us, as set forth in the previous verse. Think of it, we are accepted as His beloved ones. We must indeed be loved or we would not be known as adopted children. We could not be adopted into the family of God if our relationship was not right with the First-born (Heb. 12:23), and so we must acknowledge that in His call we are called, and in His own beloved Son, we through Him become beloved. Our acceptance is through His acceptance.

The Apostle in the last three verses has been using the pronoun "us." The Apostle must be thinking of individuals who are included in the term "us" as recipients of saving grace. It may refer to individuals who have been in the mind of Christ from before the foundation of the world, but more likely the "us" refers to the collective family of God as the object of his loving ordination, the Body of Christians who are called out and made one new Man.

Ver. 7. **In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.**

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the Apostle Paul declares to the Church at Rome to be the means by which we are acquitted in the judgment of God, from the guilt of all past transgressions, and this redemption has been brought about through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, the sacrifice wherein we are included and accepted through faith. The Apostle shows us clearly here how our redemption is secured. There are not many ways, but only one way. Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." All the writers of the New Testament point to that one way which is faith in a person who has set us free by His own sacrifice.

In the time of Christ the Jews were trying to find some other way and when Christ did show them the way they would not receive Him. In every period of the Church, there are leaders who are not satisfied to take the way of Christ, the Apostle, and the teaching of the Word of God, but try to find some way more suitable to the human race. Some say we must have a new religion, we must have a new Bible. Leaders of this new method have selected from the Bible the parts that would be more in harmony with their new religion. The shorter Old Testament and the shorter New Testament, if now adopted, would in a hundred years have to be revised again, and in the course of time, the Bible would be eliminated entirely from the religion wanted by the human race. The claim is that we must suit the Bible to our times instead of suiting the times to the Bible.

The Apostle Paul teaches us that there is no redemption except through the blood of Christ. There is no forgiveness of our transgressions except through the blood of Christ. All this, the Apostle says, is according to the riches of His grace. Are we ready to accept God's riches, and to enjoy His favor by accepting His Son as our Saviour and be washed in His blood?

The belief in the world today is that God is too merciful to deal with humanity in harmony with His Holy Word, but we must learn that we have not a God who is more merciful than the God of our fathers, nor a God who is less righteous. He is a God who is righteous and He does hate sin and transgression. If He did not, He would have never given His Son to die that we might be free from sin and transgression and come into peace with Him through His Son. Why should we not, in this age of civilization and education, believe in the inspired Word of God? We are living in an age of great unrest and great awakening, but all this can only be settled and satisfied by a knowledge of Him and obedience to Him who rules and overrules all. Think of a God that would allow His Son to go to the Cross to save the souls of men from sin and death,

and not in some way revenge himself upon those who crucified Him and now still live in opposition to the things that God has done to save them.

Ver. 8. Which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

These two words, "wisdom and prudence," breathe the highest intellectual and moral wisdom. Both are elsewhere in the Scripture predicated of God with reference to the creation. His grace to flow abundantly in us is the gift of all wisdom and prudence. Our safeguard against intellectual perils, lies not in ignorance, but in deep heart knowledge.

Ver. 9. Making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him.

The Apostle expresses the same thought used in some of the former verses. He speaks not only of himself but of all who had received the adoption in Christ. He says, "Having made known unto us." Through wisdom or prudence we are permitted to know the mystery of His will. All whom God has called in his Son can be exalted into fellowship with God in His future purposes. Wisdom and prudence must lie in the knowledge of God's will, which He declared to be a mystery. It is this secret which is revealed unto the Apostle Paul, henceforth no longer a secret to the regenerated and redeemed. God has kept in Christ the secret, until the proper time for its revelation which he purposes in Himself. God's plan is clearly worked out in His own mind. Just as the building to be erected is clear in the mind of the architect before the building is begun, so this entire plan of God was clear to Him before it was made known and revealed in the different dispensations represented in the Word of God.

"Which He purposed in Him:" that is, in His Son. The purpose of the Father was in the Son, to make Him the Head over all, and the mystery is concerning the Body that was to be formed out of Jews and Gentiles and made one new man—these are the great purposes of God. It is a great privilege and

blessing to be granted the opportunity of fellowship with God through His Son in the great things that He has to accomplish to complete His purposes. All the regenerated who have their standing in the Head are numbered among those who are enjoying this special fellowship with God and His Son concerning the future purposes.

Ver. 10. Unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him.

The Apostle means to say that in harmony with the Divine plan, God has purposed in Himself to gather together into One (that is, in His own Son) all things. Those who are acquainted with the human family know how scattered mankind is and that it has no head under which its members may organize themselves. We are informed here by Scripture that God has a purpose and a plan that in the course of time, known to Himself, He will have one Head to be known as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Saviour is the one to appear in the fulness of time and His Body will then be gathered together.

Heaven and earth have become places of sin (6:12). Heaven is known to be the first place of rebellion. Part of the angels on account of disobedience, fell from Heaven and the presence of God (2 Pet. 2:4). Then these fallen beings began to do their work of sin and death. This opposition against God continued in the Heavens. Satan has had his way in the human family since man began to disobey God, which has resulted in sin and death. We are working towards a New Heaven and a New Earth wherein dwells righteousness. In the purpose and mind of God, this is the age of grace in which there is forming a new society, a new Head, and a new Body, to dwell in this New Heaven and New Earth.

Ver. 11. In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.

In this verse we have the conclusion of what was said in the former verse regarding the gathering together of all things in Heaven and upon the earth in Christ, in whom we obtain our inheritance. This inheritance is according to the purpose of God, "who worketh all things after the council of His own will." We have been chosen by God, predestinated, accepted, adopted, received into fellowship with Him, and here, participate in an inheritance bought through the sacrifice and death of the Son of God. Christ is Himself the believer's wealth, both in possession and hope. This inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us (1 Pet. 1:4).

We are told here that it is after the council of His will and that the purposes of God's will were before the foundation of the world. After the creation of the world there was a council no doubt by the members of the Trinity, when it was said, "Let us make man in our image."

The Apostle having spoken of the inheritance in the eleventh verse, is now trying to bring us across the border that separates the present and the future that we might dwell upon the gifts which God will bestow upon those who are faithful to Him and thus present to us the greatest possible incentive to Christian service.

Ver. 12. To the end that we should be unto the praise of His glory, we who had before hoped in Christ.

This is the final purpose with which believers in Christ are permitted to hope and receive the earnest of the sacred inheritance. "That we should be unto the praise of His glory," both we who have long since this hoped in Christ, and those who became believers as soon as they heard of the Word of Truth. The good news of our salvation and the sealing with that Holy Spirit of promise was made known, which is the "earnest of our inheritance."

Paul in these verses offers a subject of supreme interest to himself and the Gentiles, who are by faith in Jesus, united with

Spiritual Israel. The thought of the heirship of believers and of God's previous council respecting it, brought before his mind the distinction between Jew and Gentile and the part assigned to each in the Divine plan, therefore, he says, "That we might be to the praise of His glory. The Messianic hope, in its fulfilment is yours (Gentiles) as much as ours."

Ver. 13. In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

"In whom ye also (as Gentiles)" as contrasted with "we," Paul's Jewish brethren. It may be possible that he refers first to "we," the Jewish nation, which by faith looked forward for this hope in Christ, and the "ye" who are afterwards brought in. These are the old and new believers, or the Jews and the Gentiles. The Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation was proclaimed to these people. They accepted it and were saved. They are the people who believed God's Word, had faith in Jesus Christ, and as such have Heaven's seal, the seal given by the Holy Spirit.

When Christ was on the way to Transfiguration He asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" After hearing the opinion of others, Christ asked His disciples to give the answer. Peter gave the answer that satisfied the Master, who then said, "Upon this truth will I build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." He also said unto Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in Heaven." He means to say to Peter, "If you are so in communion with the Father and receive such revelation, it will be safe for me to give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

It was on the day of Pentecost that the first opportunity presented itself to use the keys that Christ had given him. He used these keys to open to his own nation the door of hope. Three thousand were added unto the believers when the Holy Spirit came from Heaven on the day of Pentecost to possess, guide, and give power to the disciples of Christ. Peter again

had opportunity to use the key to open the door of hope unto the Gentiles at Caesarea when Cornelius and his household were admitted into the church on the same terms with the Jews.

In this verse, all who are regenerated are sealed with the Holy Spirit. This means that Jews and Gentiles who have believed through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been received into fellowship with Christ, are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise and have Heavenly authority for their protection. Those who are sealed are under one guide and are of one mind and Spirit with Christ.

Ver. 14. Which is an earnest (pledge) of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Believers receive the certainty that they are heirs and have an inheritance in eternity, not through an assurance from without, but through the teaching of this Holy Spirit by whom they are sealed. The earnest is the seal and something more. This seal by the Holy Spirit is contrasted with the natural seal of circumcision in the flesh which marked the children of the old covenant from Abraham downward, previous to the fulfilment of the promise (Gal. 2:12-14). We bear this in the inmost part of our nature where we are nearest to God. We are sealed by the Spirit as sons. A seal is a token of proprietorship put by the owner upon his property.

“Unto the redemption.” The saints already have a redemption, in the radical sense of acceptance—rescued from condemnation through sonship—but they still look forward to a redemption that will take away the limits that are now upon them through the physical body when they shall come in possession of the glorified body.

“The purchased possession.” This is God's own possession. We become God's own personal property. This is the Church, the New Man, the Israel of God. It is the property of God for His eternal use and purpose. We who are God's wealth and God's purchased possession do not wait in ignorance as to what the Father purposed in us as to our future state, because

through the Holy Spirit, life and immortality has been brought to light. It is indeed a great privilege to know what God has done for us in making us His wealth and His inheritance.

This verse contains some of the most profound truths for minds to think upon and hearts to ponder: (1) God has chosen us, (2) Predestinated us, (3) Accepted us, (4) Redeemed us—made us His Sons, (5) Brought us into fellowship with Him, (6) Gave us an inheritance, (7) Sealed us by the Holy Spirit of promise. These are the seven great signs of the believers' present possession received from God through Christ.

QUESTIONS

What is the key verse of this Epistle?

Where was Paul when he wrote this Epistle?

Why is it necessary for the Christian to dwell in the Heavens?

In what sense are we moved into an advanced class as we take up the study of this Epistle?

From whom do we get redemption?

What privilege does the Christian enjoy as to the mystery? (Ver. 9.)

What was it that God purposed in Himself?

Explain the unity presented in Ver. 10.

Why do Church members not have the conviction enjoyed by the early Christians? (Ver. 13.)

If the inheritance is as expressed here, why are Christians not more concerned about it?

3. PRAYER FOR THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF BELIEVERS RESPECTING GOD'S PART OF OUR SALVATION, 1:15-23

There are two great purposes of God set out by the Holy Spirit in this important Church letter. We have learned (1:3) that the will of God is the source of all our blessings, and that the foundation of all blessings is in the purpose of God Himself. The work of Christ is the channel through which these blessings come to us. The witness of the Holy Spirit is the power of its manifestations. It is through this inexhaustible

grace of God that we come into these privileges and blessings enumerated by the Apostle Paul. Now the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ is the mystery or secret of His will (1:9), which is here made known. It is made known as far as possible by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, taking us unto a Throne of grace and there pleading with God that this secret or revelation might be made clear unto all believers. The prayer here will have very little meaning to the believer in whose interest it is offered unless he enters into the study through the Holy Spirit of God's special purpose for him.

We have before stated that in this book there are two great purposes and each of these purposes is followed with a prayer. The first purpose and prayer is as we have it in this chapter, and the second purpose of God in Christ Jesus concerning His Son (3:1-12), is followed by the prayer of 3:14-19.

The purpose of God was two-fold as presented in the first and third chapters. God's great purpose from the beginning was concerning Himself personally and, therefore, He made Christ the Head over all things. All things in Heaven and earth are ultimately to be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ver. 10). Now in the third chapter we have presented the secret of the purpose of God which is revealed in this age of grace concerning the Church as the spiritual Body of Christ and the members of that Body made one in Him. Let the student realize that there are great blessings in store for all who can enter into communion with God through this prayer, and God is ready to answer the things asked for by all who are worthy of His confidence and trust.

Ver. 15. For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye shew toward all the saints.

This verse shows that Paul had confidence in those to whom he was writing. This he also shows in the former verse when he says, "Ye believe." Because of this interest in their salva-

tion and in order to further comprehend the beauties and glories that God has for all who are willing to pay the price, he goes through the channel of prayer to the source where these can be obtained. The Holy Spirit has already led the Apostle into the great truths that we have studied, and now, all who are members of the Body of Christ, are to be led more fully into that union by the comprehension of the blessings enumerated before.

God before the foundation of the world chose us, predestinated us, accepted us, redeemed us, unveiled the mystery unto us, and made us partakers in the inheritance, and sealed us by Heaven's authority. These are the great needs for all believers in Christ and, therefore, the Apostle and all true members of the body of Christ, pray for wisdom and enlightenment.

Ver. 16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

Paul gives thanks to God for all who come in possession of and study this great letter of his on Church doctrine. It is this company of believers whose faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. In this way Paul's love goes from church to church to unite the bonds of faith between land and land. This is a general church letter that is passed from church to church and through a careful study of such purposes of God and prayers that are offered, religious belief will be harmonized, the power of God will be manifested and souls will be won into the Body of Christ.

As we continue to study this prayer we discover that the great subject is power—that surpassing power of God in carrying out His purposes in sending Christ to be the Head of the Body and over all things for the Body.

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

Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the

Father (Rom. 6:4). Here the Apostle is speaking of the Incarnate One, the God Man, to whom God is God, the Father full of glory. We are in Christ, we have our standing in Christ, our possession is secured in the Head, and this is really the subject of this first prayer. We are united with Paul that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might enable us to see what has been set out in the former paragraph by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. We already know in part something concerning our privileges in the Head, but we want to get a little deeper experience and this still clearer vision concerning the special blessings and privileges that are ours in this age of grace concerning a full knowledge (Epegnosis) of Him. In coming in possession of the gifts asked for in this prayer, we will be able to advance from truth to truth and from knowledge to knowledge. This is all beyond what man himself can reason and think out. The things that Paul asks for here can only be received by those who have accepted Jesus Christ through faith and stand justified, therefore, before God to become worthy of further wisdom and revelation.

We know Christ as our Saviour who saves us, however we realize that we are not as fully and completely abiding in His personality as we should be, and, therefore, we long for a fuller knowledge of Him that we may enter more fully into this mystery and purpose of God in order to enjoy these higher blessings offered us here through this prayer.

Ver. 18. Having the eyes of your heart (understanding) enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

He prays that through this revealed knowledge his hearers may have their eyes enlightened to see the grandeur and wealth of their religion. It is a vision disclosed not to the physical eyes, but to the eye of the heart, which is the true discerner. There may be two men seated side by side in the same house of prayer and at the same gate of Heaven. The one sees Heaven opened. He has the pleasure of hearing the eternal

song in the Spirit and the temple is filled with the glory of God. The other hears the same praise, but in a different aspect of the first worshiper. He may hear the music of the organ, and hear the voice of the preacher, but as to anything beyond, he feels no music and drawing from another world. It is no more to him than mere exercise of worship and the music appealing to the outside of life.

Those who obey God's will will have their hearts opened and God daily manifests His love and greatness and the heart responds and breathes out the same attributes received from God. Other hearts do not respond. By not responding to the influences of the eternal they become hardened, their life is of less value and the world is no better for their having passed through it.

"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." This is a very important petition in this prayer. We have asked for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. We are all the time in need of this wisdom and revelation in which things of God and the eternal things of interest to the heart are made more clear, and they are not withheld from any who will each day come into greater possession of the knowledge of Him. Then, with all these blessings, we must be able to know and to comprehend something concerning the hope of His calling. It is knowledge in Him, it is knowledge in His calling, it is knowledge in His inheritance in the saints, and we need knowledge of His power to usward who believe.

What is the hope of His calling? This calling was before the foundation of the world and we are here, not so much concerned about our calling as His calling, because in His calling is our calling. He was called according to the eternal purpose of God from before the foundation of the world and, therefore, while we live in this age of grace, yet our calling is before the foundation of the world, because in His calling we are included. Think of it! We have hope in our Redeemer's calling. If we follow the hope of His calling we are always praying that we may know something of the riches

of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. His calling included our calling; His inheritance included our inheritance; His wealth in the saints made our spiritual wealth secure before the foundation of the world. God's inheritance in the saints here is that which makes Him rich. Christ's death gave Him a right to the inheritance. Our death in Him gives us a right to share His inheritance. This inheritance is God's habitation. He is building for Himself through the Head, Christ, and the Body, a dwelling place. God sets great store by us, His children, and counts Himself rich in our affections and our service. How deeply it ought to effect us to know that God's inheritance is in the saints and His possession in believing men. It is true that God spared not His own Son for our salvation, and now He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. He did all this before the foundation of the world that we might be His saints, and He must set upon these saints an infinite value. The saints that were and are in the earth are earth's riches.

Ver. 19. **And what the exceeding (surpassing) greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to that working (energy) of the strength of his might.**

The exceeding greatness of this power is a worthy object of a profound insight to those who believe. It is only those who admit and consent to these conditions set out by the Apostle in the Scripture who can be counted of real value to God and numbered with His inheritance.

Paul is praying here concerning this mighty power of God and that the saints might have great knowledge concerning God as to eternal life, future inheritance and specifically and definitely about God's power. This no doubt refers to the power that God manifested in raising Christ from the dead. The same or similar power, according to the teaching of the Word (2:5), He exercised upon us in raising us up who were dead in trespasses and sin.

Ver. 20. **Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him**

from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Christ was raised; we were raised. This ought to give us a new insight into the value of our standing in Jesus. You are not in Christ Jesus through that which is natural, but supernatural. Just as God's mighty power was required to lift the body that was put to death on the cross out of the tomb that was sealed by the Roman Government, so God's mighty power was exercised when we were dead in trespasses and sins in lifting us out of sin and death. If Christ's rising from the dead was miraculous, our rising from the dead was miraculous and thus through our union with Christ we have eternal life.

God not only used His power in raising His Son from the dead and in raising all the members of the Body from the dead, but He also set His Son at His own right hand in the Heavens, and since Christ our Redeemer has gone back unto the Father and is a citizen of the Heavens, then we who are in Christ, raised from the dead, are also, by the power of God, seated with His Son in the Heavens (2:6).

Ver. 21. Far above all rule (principality), and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age), but also in that which is to come.

Two thoughts are conveyed: First, subordinately, the existence of orders and authorities in the angelic (as well as the human) world. Then primarily, the imperial and absolute headship of the Son over them all. The additional thought is given (as by Col. 1:16) that He was also, in His preëxistent glory, their Creator, but this is not in definite view here where He appears altogether as the exalted Son of Man after death. He was exalted above all the Heavenly beings and there seated by God at His own right hand. Our Risen One now abides in the Heavens. Christ was seen of His Apostles forty days after He had risen, and when He ascended they stood gazing up into Heaven and were told by Heavenly messenger that he would return again (Acts 1:11). Paul's faith saw the

risen Christ as passing through and beyond successive ranks of angelic powers until there was in Heaven no grandeur which He had not left behind. Christ is the founder of this new creation, this new society of which He is the Head, and as He rules, all are interested in Him as the ruler of the Body with thrones and principedoms beneath His feet. Christ is given to the Church, the Head over all things, the Lord of the created universe, therefore He is no longer subject to any rule, or any principality, or any power or might, being supreme over all powers that be. In the closing up of this age and the age to come, all authority will be in His hand.

Ver. 22. **And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.**

We have the Christ exalted to universal authority. God made Him Head over all things as He is of the Church.

Ver. 23. **Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

The prayer invites us to participate and enjoy the fellowship in the heights of His glory. He is the Head of the Church, His Body. No matter where Christ is, we are in Him and He in us. Christ prayed on the night before He was crucified, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

We have studied this prayer. We can only get from the prayer our own needs by allowing the Holy Spirit to pray this prayer for us. In this way we come into possession of the knowledge of Him and fully understand the greatness of His power to usward who believe. Our Saviour's brow, once crowned with thorns, now wears the diadem of universal sovereignty and that hand once nailed to the cross now holds the scepter of unlimited power. He who once was bleeding on the cross and lay in the tomb, has ascended to His Father's throne. He is to be above all and to have all His enemies put under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25). He whom the world crucified—the second Adam—has become worthy through death, resurrection,

ascension, and dominion to receive from His Father's hand the seal which no one can break. Adam, through sin and death, lost the inheritance of the world and Christ, through death, resurrection, ascension, and dominion is made worthy and receives from His Father's hand the inheritance forfeited by the first Adam. All who are in Christ are made worthy to participate in this inheritance because of His sacrifice and our faith in Him.

QUESTIONS

- What reason had Paul for giving thanks? (Ver. 15.)
- What did Paul think these Christians needed? (Ver. 17.)
- What gifts may be obtained through prayer? (Ver. 17.)
- If we have wisdom and revelation, whom may we know better?
- Why do we need to be enlightened?
- Whose calling is referred to in Ver. 18?
- What was God's real inheritance?
- Who raised Christ from the dead?
- Are you alive in Christ through God's power?
- Where is Christ since His ascension?
- Over what has He dominion?
- Of what is He the head?

II. Ourselves as Christians, the Objects of God's Purposes and Paul's Prayers, 2:1-22

After the Apostle made his petition for enlightenment respecting the glory purposed from eternity and already beginning, and God calling out of this purpose His Church to Christ, the Body of which He is the Head, in such a manner as presented in the conclusion of the first chapter (1:23), he again turns to his readers to notice the mighty working of the Father in bringing those who make up the Body of Christ, through death and resurrection, into membership of the Body, His Church. First of all he is moved by a glance at the similar condition of death in the case of the Gentiles and of the Jews, and then by the thought of God, who out of mercy has quickened and blessed the wretched—the transgressor, with and through

Christ. This chapter is put in between the two great purposes and the two great prayers which indicate that the believers, the members of the Body of Christ, are really the object of the purposes and prayers.

1. FROM DEATH TO LIFE, 2:1-6

In the first chapter we have been looking at the purpose that God has in Himself concerning Christ personal. We were shown clearly what God did to establish a Head and what He did that we might have our standing in this Head and dwell with Him in the Heavens. In these verses our attention is called to the mighty working of God through Christ in believing men. The chapter begins with men in sin and under the dominion of the ruler who destroys. The chapter closes with a complete change, and those who were on the road to destruction and death have become regenerated, secured a position in the Head, Christ, and have become material in the building that God has for His own habitation.

Ver. 1. And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.

In the former paragraph (1:20) we learned that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of God, so by the power of God we are instructed here, that the believer is raised from the death of sin and becomes the adopted son of God. The believer will realize a great help in knowing his true position in Christ when he begins to appreciate just how he was quickened and how he was raised. The Christian is in the world because of the miraculous power of God. The same powerful hand that was laid upon the body of the dead Christ and raised Him from Joseph's tomb to the highest seat in Heaven, was laid upon your soul when you were in sin and death; you have been quickened and raised and already enjoy a foretaste of what it is to dwell with Christ in the Heavens.

All those making up the Body of Christ were, at one time, under the dominion of sin and death. God found these under

the power and dominion of Satan and quickened (regenerated) them. The next two verses describe what is meant by sin and death.

Ver. 2. Wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world (age), according to the prince of the power (ruler of authority) of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons (children) of disobedience.

Jesus Christ came into a world under the dominion of sin and death. He was the one man alive in body, soul, and spirit, alive to God in this world and not according to the course of this age, according to the principles of the present period of existence in which fallen man is living, or according to the prince of the power of the air. Satan is the evil spirit and the evil person who now prevails. He is the head of wicked man and holds dominion over him. He is the ruler of evil spirits whose empire is in the air, ruling in the hearts of men who dwell upon the earth, and his spiritual forces are described in the closing chapter of this book (6:12). These evil spirits were cast down from Heaven and have not yet been consigned to the lower regions. They have their empire in this lower air. These same spirits are still at work in the children of disobedience.

All the regenerate who are made so secure and dwelling in the Heavens, as described in the former chapter, at one time walked as those now walk who are under the wrath of God. "This age"—this present sinful order of things as characterized by discord with the will of God. Think of the many walking dead ones, standing in the relation of slaves in Satan's Kingdom, who remain in the depth of misery and death as long as they are without help from above. They have in Satan a prince who works and rules in opposition to Christ, the Head of the Church. There is a strong prejudice in our time against the recognition of Satan's personality. To the Lord and to the Early Church he was surely no mere personification of evil, but an evil personality.

Ver. 3. Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Paul includes himself among his fellow believers who were at one time dead in trespasses and sin. They were known at one time as children of disobedience, whether Jew or Gentile, until the day in which they were adopted into the family of God. They fulfilled at one time the desires of the flesh, and of the mind. The impulses and wishes of the unregenerate mind have the nature of sin as much as those of the flesh, however much they differ in respect to refinement. Pride and malice belong to the unregenerate state of death as much as sensual indulgences.

He speaks of those who were by nature the children of wrath. This is the direct statement of the doctrine of original sin. Men are sinful and therefore are under the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18). Every man is either under the righteousness of God or under the wrath of God. What is the Divine wrath? Not arbitrary or intemperate passion in the Eternal, but the antagonism of the Eternal holiness to sin. "The forgetfulness of the present age of the doctrine of the wrath of God has exercised a baneful influence on the various relations in which man holds the place of God, and especially on the government of the family and of the state." We have either the nature of Christ or the nature of Satan. That which provokes the wrath of God is not only in the individual but in the race and in the nature. A greater mystery we cannot state, but neither could we name a surer fact. The very nature of man is faulty and corrupt since the fall of man.

Ver. 4. But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us.

These words refer back to 2:1 and that verse is connected with 1:20. God is rich in mercy. This is the ultimate motive of the work of regeneration. It is simply the Divine mercy. No claim or obligation is in the question, nor right inherent in

the alienated race, nor fitness of things in the abstract; only the uncalled and supremely free choice of the God of mercy.

We have a number of illustrations in the Bible concerning the miraculous power of God. We read about the resurrection of Jarius' daughter coming from death unto life and able to look upon the face of her deliverer. Lazarus who was dead four days comes forth out of his tomb. It is more miraculous to read and know about the Prince of Life, the Christ, coming from Joseph's grave, going forth into new risen glory. These have been refreshed from slumber; however, there are things no less Divine which take place upon this earth day by day. Human souls are awakened from trespasses and sins when the love of God is poured into the heart that was cold and empty. The Spirit of God breathes life into a spirit lying powerless and buried in the flesh. Through the power of God this is as true a rising from the dead as when Jesus, our Lord, came from his sepulcher. We are delivered. God and the soul have met in Christ and are reconciled. The examples given to us in the Word of God of all who were miraculously healed, raised from death unto life, brought out of sin and trespasses into the glorious presence of God, compel us to cry out, "God is love and rich in mercy."

Ver. 5. **Even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved).**

The Apostle said in the first verse, "You hath He quickened," and in this verse says, "Even when we were dead in sins." He means to say, "you" and "we" and if he refers to different nations, then he emphasizes the same truth he had taught in the Book of Romans, that all have sinned, Jews and Gentiles, and come short of the glory of God.

The Apostle teaches us that all are included in God's love and God's riches. The individual Jew and the individual Gentile are quickened together, made One new Man in Christ. They come into fellowship with the Risen One. The spiritual life in this world is imparted to us because we are sealed Chris-

tians by the power of God. The Holy Spirit will not allow us to get away from the fact that we are saved by grace. Nothing that we can do within ourselves makes us worthy of salvation. We are not allowed to base our salvation on anything we can do. The Holy Spirit is positive and definite concerning the method of salvation and so has presented it in the Book of Romans. It is through God's love and God's riches that we are sealed and our hope is confirmed by the infallible Word of Truth. This dismisses all thought of claim and merit on the part of man. We are saved through faith in Christ and that faith is a gift of God.

Ver. 6. **And raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.**

The Apostle tells us in the sixth chapter of Romans that we are planted together, and if we are planted together with Christ, then we are raised up together, and if we are now planted together and raised together, then we are instructed by the Holy Spirit that nothing can separate us. We must then be with Christ wherever He is, and since we are instructed here that He is in the Heavens, we must be seated with Him in the Heavens. Our union is with Christ in His celestial life and our union with each other in Christ as members of His Body makes us sharers in common of that life. Christ, therefore, reconciles us in one Body unto God. Then we do not sit alone, but we sit together in Heavenly places. Here we have the expression of fulness of life, completeness of salvation, and hope of glorification.

QUESTIONS

Why say, "and you did he quicken"?

What was the condition of all Christians at one time?

Who is the Prince of the power of the air?

What shows God's great love?

How are we saved?

What is the Christian's great privilege as a member of the body of Christ? (Ver. 6.)

2. WE ARE SAVED FOR A PURPOSE, 2:7-10

God's purposes and Paul's prayers are specific and definite. They help us to understand God's side of salvation and the attainment man may reach through answered prayer. We learned in the last paragraph that Jew and Gentile, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can sit together in Heavenly places. Only Christians can reach this exalted relationship, secured in this age and perpetuated in the age to come. This is all brought about through the surpassing riches of His grace. God's mercy and the riches of His grace make it possible for unregenerate Jew and Gentile to be transformed and regenerated, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, obtaining a righteousness unknown to all who live the unregenerated life.

Ver. 7. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

All the races of mankind in all future ages are embraced in the redeeming purpose and are invited to share in its boundless wealth. The highway of this new life has been in building since time began. This redeeming purpose to bring about this boundless wealth was thought out before the beginning of time, as we learned (from 1:4). We see how boundless and how limitless is the range of purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before time began. These exceeding riches of His grace accomplish such wonderful results, as pictured here in this chapter. This is set over against the wrath of God and the power of Satan. We are assured of the triumphant, superior power.

Twice the Apostle has exclaimed, "By grace ye are saved." In the first verse of this chapter the Apostle speaks of the condition of his readers while in their unregenerated state and cries out (Ver. 5), "By grace ye were saved." He repeats this in the same language, after calling his reader's attention to the fact that they were not saved by works and therefore they had no reason for boasting, but it is by grace, through faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ, that they were brought into favor with God (Ver. 8).

We are here on very familiar ground after having studied Paul's emphasis on faith in the Book of Romans, and now the Apostle emphasizes the riches of God's grace to these Ephesian brethren. It is "His" grace and "His" kindness towards us through Jesus Christ. These exceeding riches of His grace are shown to us in the gifts of God. The character of God is presented in the Gospel under the most delightful aspect. It is God's mercy or kindness which is expressed in His Divine pitifulness towards feeble, suffering men. The God of all the earth, who hates sin and transgression, is gentler than the softest hearted mother, rich in mercy as He is grand and terrible unto wrath. Grace and kindness are love's executive. Christ is the embodiment of grace and the cross its supreme expression, the Gospel its message to mankind and Paul himself its trophy and witness. The Apostle sees future ages gazing with wonder at its beneficence to himself and his fellow believers. God's kindness is in the touch of His hand, the aspect of His voice, the cherished breath of His Spirit. It is the gift of Christ, the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15-18). In this age of grace God is preparing, through Christ as the Head over all things and the mystical Body, the Church, that which is His possession, and wealth, and building, by which He may show the occasion of this grace in all future ages.

Ver. 8. For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

The teaching of this great evangelical epistle is condensed in the brief verses of 8 and 9. The reason is here shown for God's dealing to man by the way of gifts and making him the absolute debtor; "lest any man should boast." This teaching is forced upon the Apostle's mind by the stubborn principles of legalism. It is stated in terms of identity with those of his letter to the Romans. Men will glory in their virtues before God. They hold up the rags of their own righteousness, if any

such they possess, even the slightest remnant of them. The sinners are a proud race and our pride is frequently the worst of our sins. He makes to us a free gift of His righteousness and excludes each contribution for our store of merit, for if we could supply anything, we would inevitably boast as though all were our own.

“By grace are ye saved.” Not, “ye will be saved,” or “ye are in the course of salvation,” but Paul says, “By grace ye are saved.” We have redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. This is the Christian’s assurance. Christ Himself said, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life.” We know that we are in Him. We know that we have passed out of death into life. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

The organizers and leaders in the early Church believed that they were in possession of a present salvation and this gave them conviction which made it possible for them to override all evil and add constantly to their number and make the Christian foundation sure. Anyone with faith hesitant, distracted, contaminated with doubt, cannot plant a firm foot anywhere. Nothing can prosper in such a soul or in the organization to which he belongs. Oh, that we might come in possession of that clear accent, the ringing joyful note of Apostolic assurance! We need a faith not born of sentiment, or human sympathy, but that which comes from the voice of the living God, a faith whose rock and cornerstone is not the Church, but the Christ, founded upon God’s own authority and in harmony with the inspired Word.

Ver. 9. Not of works, that no man should glory.

If man being guilty and being unable to win a pardon, simply receives it; if being dead he gains life only as a Divine endowment; if favor and nothing but favor has originated his safety, the only possible act on his part being that of reception; if all this be true then surely there can be nothing farther from him than boasting, for He will glorify God for all things.

When a man is helpless and undone, with neither means nor strength to change his condition, then if his condition be changed, it must come from that of another and it is entirely through favor so there is no occasion to boast.

Ver. 10. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

The former verses expressed the Christian's assurance and now we have presented to us a part of the practical life of the person saved by the gift of grace. It is very comforting to live in this assurance, with the hideous evil of the world oppressing us and the air laden with the contagion of sin, where the faith of the professing Christian wears a cast of doubt, where death we know is confronting us, where the Anti-Christ is more fully presenting himself, and where we can hear hundreds of voices saying in mockery and grief, "Where is now thy God?" This is a day for Christians to recover again their radiant strength and have their assurance reaffirmed by the living Word of this Epistle.

We are the property of another. We are His workmanship. Salvation, therefore, is not of works, for those who are saved are saved by the workmanship of another. We are the product of an artist, the chair of the carpenter, the jar of the potter. Man is but a mere creature of God, while it follows that any good thing that emanates from man really rises from God as the author. This is rather the re-creation than the original creation that is now used as a ground of argument. It is the new life to which the Christians are born and are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and are created unto good works. Paul is the last man in the world to undervalue human effort or disparage human work of any member, only we must let this end be suited to God. Ours and other men's doings must be the fruit and not the root of salvation. The Church had and must have an end in view that reaches beyond itself and is worthy of the founder, worthy of the magnitude of His plans and measureless love. God has thus prepared good works

and with the design that we should walk in them as prepared before by God. These good works, although they do not secure salvation, are by God's eternal purpose essentially conditional with it and must be done in harmony with His direction.

QUESTIONS

- What age is referred to in Ver. 7?
- Tell us about the exceeding riches of His grace.
- What means are presented for salvation?
- What is the gift of God?
- What causes men to boast?
- How are we God's workmanship?
- What is the purpose of service?

3. THE GENTILES IN POSSESSION OF NEW NATURE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, 2:11 13

In these verses we have the summary of what the Apostle presented in the former paragraph. We are reminded here of the privileges to which the Gentiles had attained by the adoption in Christ.

Ver. 11. Wherefore remember, that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands.

Who belongs to this new creation? Gentiles who have been saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle calls the Gentiles' attention to their condition before they were called into fellowship with Christ. "You Gentiles who were dead in your unregenerate life. You were sunken in corruption, living in opposition to God and held under the power of the wicked one, the Devil." All of us, no matter what race we belong to, who have experienced what it is to enjoy the Spiritual life, remember how we were held under sin and death. We are conscious of the wonderful possibilities that are yet ahead of us in the ages to come. The grace that has done so much for us already is unlimited in power as to securing that which the Word of

God holds out in promise. It makes little difference what influence may be brought against us, we must hold firmly to Christ Jesus in the face of all opposition and we are sure of victory all along the way.

Ver. 12. That ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

The Apostle is enumerating the losses of the Gentiles compared with those of the Jews. The Gentiles were without the expectation of the Messiah. They were not included in the covenants of God. They did not have any hope of a life to come, and they did not have the help and security which was claimed by the Jews.

“Covenants of promise.” These are the various covenants of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of these covenants God had made with the Jewish nation in which were the promises of the Messiah and of His inheritance.

“Having no hope.” The hope of Israel, which Paul preached to the Gentiles, was a hope for the world and nations as well as for the individual. They had no hope as expressed here in this verse. They were without God in the world. The heathen are represented as living in the wicked and weary world, and having no full assurance of God’s providence.

The description given here of the condition of the Gentile world is very similar to that given in the first chapter of the book of Romans. They did not live up, even to the privileges that they had of knowing God, and so the Gentiles, steeped in sin and transgressions, were helpless. Their condition became more serious and their guilt was constantly increasing.

Ver. 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.

It is through faith in Jesus Christ that this nation had hope. The Apostle shows the contrast in individual heathen between their state of sin and transgression and their union with Christ.

The Gentiles realized more fully the security and help received from the Messiah and that they belonged to Him, and so it seemed easier for the Gentiles to get into fuller possession of the blessings of God than the Jews, who were trusting in the law and therefore in a state of blindness as to Christian possibilities.

These Gentiles were once far off, aliens and strangers to this great privilege, but now their relation is changed. They are brought into communion and fellowship with God through the blood of His Son. "What is it that has brought this difference that has transported you from the wilderness of Hell to the midst of the city of God? It is the blood of Christ. It is the sacrificial death that brought thee from far off into the midst of God's favor." It was in Christ Jesus that God reconciled, not a nation, but a world to himself.

The Greeks, during Christ's last week on earth, desired to see Him. He exclaimed (John 12:32), "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." The cross of Christ is to draw humanity around it by its infinite love and sorrow, by the perfect apprehension there is in it of the world's gift and need, and the perfect submission of God's law to the cross that man might be made free from sin.

The Jews, who had seemed nigh unto God, the chosen people, the people who enjoyed the greatest privileges of any nation, which was so miraculously saved from Egyptian bondage, supplied for years with Heaven's manna, has now lost its nearness through disobedience, and a new people, a new creation, is given the nearer place in God. This means that any individual, Jew or Gentile, may have an opportunity to become a member of this new people that is nearest to God through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

What were the Gentiles to remember?

Name the Gentiles' condition presented here?

Why say they were far off?

What has changed that relation?

4. JEW AND GENTILE BECOME ONE BODY IN CHRIST, 2: 14-18

In these verses we have the blessed work of Christ in making peace between Jew and Gentile and between man and God. The hostility of Jew and Gentile was removed through Christ's death and resurrection. The occasion of quarrel between Israel and the world was destroyed, the barrier dispersed that had for so long fenced off the privileged ground of the sons of Abraham. The Apostle is a student of prophecy. The Old Testament holds the record of prophetic utterances that are fulfilled in the different dispensations, and the man who is acquainted with the inspired Word of God, can in a measure at least understand the conditions necessary to the fulfilment of the things prophesied. God's promise to His scattered people, Israel, in the time of the exile (Is. 57:19) was peace. Peace to those who were far off and those who were near.

Ver. 14. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition.

The Apostle goes beyond what the prophet says about the far off and the near, into a larger and more distant field than that foreseen by the prophets. Christ is our peace, not for the divided members of Israel alone, but for all the tribes of men. He brings about a universal peace.

There is a wide difference between the two great peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles. Only by the power of God could these two be made one. In this he broke down the partition wall or fence which was set up between the two. The Gentiles were without the promise and covenants of God while the Jews were the people of promise, which contains in itself the notion of separation. The Jews were insignificant and had scarcely counted among the great powers of the world. Their religion alone gave them influence and importance. Their enmity existed as a wall between these two peoples and is still there. It is only through Him who died to make it possible that all

people by accepting Him may get rid of that which causes this division. It is only through God's power that this enmity can be overcome and peace can be made. This is really the end of Christ's mission. It is the victory of the cross over strife that brings about this peace.

Ver. 15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace.

Christ took down the wall of hatred existing between the two peoples by coming into the world, and taking upon Himself flesh and blood. In this way we are told this enmity was overcome, by His coming in the flesh and dying on the cross.

"Even the law of commandments." This law owes its origin to God alone, who purposed by it, when He gave it from Sinai, the complete separation to Himself of His chosen people from all the rest of the world. Israel never fully submitted to this law of separation from the surrounding nations, but constantly disregarded it and broke through. They did not want to be a peculiar people and for this reason God punished them again and again. For a faithful Israelite to associate with the Gentile was sin. This is what "enmity" means: a holy difference between God's chosen people and the world about. It developed into race antipathy or hatred, religious fanaticism or bigotry. God who raised this wall of separation, now removes it, that He may bring together Jew and Gentile and create in Himself of the two, "one new Man."

Ver. 16. And might reconcile them both into one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

This is the second part of God's work as a peacemaker. First, he united Jew and Gentile, then He makes them into one body. The one body is formed by the combination of Jew and Gentile. This was all done by the cross. It is the cross which is the instrument by which mankind is reconciled unto God. It must be the cross that reconciles man to man. We cannot have a fatherhood of God until we have the cross to reconcile

us to God. We cannot have a brotherhood of man until the cross of Christ makes that brotherhood through the blood unto reconciliation. It is the cross that cleanses. At the cross reconciliation is found. Peace is made between man and God and man and man.

Ver. 17. And He came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh.

He that reconciles by the cross, preached good tidings of peace. Christ did not only effect peace but He joined both man and God and in this way He is giving us the good news of peace which He made Himself. This was Christ's mission in His own person and it is this which is to be accomplished by his messengers whom he now commissions. He speaks here to the Jews who were nigh and to the Gentiles who were far off. He speaks to those who are within and without the Church. Christ was preaching the good tidings of peace through the words and lives of His 10,000 messengers. All those who have been reconciled at the Cross of Christ are Epistles read and known of all men.

Ver. 18. For through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.

This is the gospel of peace, that He has delivered them by the indwelling Spirit and through Him all mankind may be delivered. We are to come in one Spirit to the Father. The reconciled join hands again with each other. You will be able to say to the man who hated you the most, "Beloved, if God now loves us, we ought also to love one another." Individually, now, those who are regenerated can say this. The teaching through the prophets makes it clear that nations will have to say it some day, even as regenerated man now says it.

QUESTIONS

In whom do we find our peace and how?

How is it possible to make the Jews and Gentiles one?

What means were used to break down the wall or fence between the Jews and Gentiles?

What is meant by "the law of commandments"?

Who came to preach peace to those who were near and those who were far?

5. GOD'S TEMPLE IN HUMANITY, 2:19-22

We have been reconciled through the cross of Jesus Christ. Peace has been made between us. We are instructed that we have access through one Spirit which shows us God's ways with mankind, and in this way Jews and Gentiles are being brought together into one and compacted into a new humanity. Now this new humanity has a new Head in whom we have protection and confidence. The old humanity is still under the former head, Adam.

Ver. 19. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

The church is being built for an occupant. Jesus said to His disciples, "Upon this rock will I build my Church." He is the Builder. He inspects all the material that is used in the construction of the Church. It is built to suit Him who is to inhabit it. He says to Himself, "Here will I dwell for I desire it."

We have been reconciled. We are under the direction of the new Head, we belong to a new society, we are citizens of another country, we are members of the family of God. Paul says to the Corinthians, "You are God's temple and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." God delivers individually, Jew and Gentile, through faith from sin and death. The principalities and powers and world rulers of darkness are gradually losing their power since Christ, by His sacrifice, has bruised the head of Satan. The saints are citizens of a higher order because they belong to the Body of Christ, formed by the Word of God, a new humanity in Christ.

Among the saints we are to include only those who have been thus termed from the beginning by the Apostles as Christians. This distinction the Apostle is constantly emphasizing,

that it can only be those who have been transformed by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are constantly under His direction. God has a chosen people, a chosen family, known as the household of God. They are the ones who belong to the house, to the family, whose Head is Christ. They have a relation, a fellowship with the saints, and have become God's habitation.

Ver. 20. **Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.**

This Church shows that it is built upon a strong foundation. These are churches founded in some of the great cities and have, no doubt, some congregational differences with one another. The context would admit only of their preaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself was the foundation and they therefore would not be permitted to preach anything but Jesus Christ crucified, risen, ascended, and glorified.

The Apostles had a special mission in the Early Church and we can well understand what their duties were in the organizing and carrying forward of the Church in that period. The prophets here referred to were associates with the apostles and are the New Testament prophets. Paul spoke of these in the Book of Romans, so the Apostle speaks here of the founders of the Church being known as preachers and teachers in this age of grace. These were founders under one and the same spirit. They could labor together at a distance and with methods extremely various with confidence in each other and with an assurance of unity in results, which their teaching and administration would exhibit. These different places of worship were directed by the same spirit and formed one body known as the Church of Christ. Where there is the same Spirit and the same Lord, men do not need to be scrupulous about visible conformity. There is but one foundation and that foundation is headed by Jesus Christ, and no matter what other foundation may be laid, all will come to naught but that which God has authorized, and that only will He accept.

There are two heads. One is the first Adam, who, because

of disobedience, became the head of the unregenerate races, and the second head, the second Adam, Christ, who has become the head of the regenerated, the new humanity, made over through the power of God by the individual having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This new creation is now forming and will in time be completed, but no material will the builder allow to go into the structure that has not been regenerated, made new. This is not a work of reformation, but a work of transformation.

The Apostle James gives us the warning in the time when he lived, and the same warning is needed in this age, that we should contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, by the apostles and prophets. If we get away from the faith that comes through the direct influence of the study of the Word of God we may be among those who are being deceived and the deceivers of others. Christ is now the foundation and the third person of the Blessed Trinity is gathering material for the building.

Ver. 21. In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.

Christ is the person on whom the building rests and by whom it is fitly framed together. It is the building fitly framed together which groweth into the holy temple of the Lord. The individuals who make up this building are growing into each other step by step, and by a natural and vital growth. Because of the invisible communion, they are one in their underlying faith. Here we have every organ of the Body in its own degree becoming perfect and holding its place in keeping with the rest. This includes more than the individual members' perfection. It is the perfection of the members of the Body which is being formed. When the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church, is a unit, as presented here, there will then no longer be weakness and sins and internal conflict. There will be a going forth of united forces with irresistible energy. The Kingdom of Darkness will be assailed

and the world will be brought under the subjection of Christ. Christ prays for this (John 17:17-26). He looked beyond the end of the age. He foresaw the day when the wounds of His Church would be healed, and through the unity and faith of love, his people and all mankind would come to acknowledge Him and the Father.

“Fitly framed together.” Here we have the description of the ideal church, the actual church. No matter what dissension may be expressed, it will remain Christ’s Church as long as it continues to rest upon Christ as its foundation. It has been in building for a number of centuries. Much has been gathered from the world, polished and admitted as material into this new building. This building is becoming greater and more substantial from generation to generation. This body, the Church, becomes the holy temple of the Lord. The Christian himself, as an individual, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Here the Church, the members of Christ’s body, are declared to be the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16).

Ver. 22. In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Ye that were especially (2:11) strangers (2:19), and dead in trespasses and sins (2:1), and now built in as living stones with others for a habitation of God through the Spirit. It is God who through the Spirit dwells in you—in His Church. The Holy Spirit is the Agent in securing and polishing material for the building of His Church. He, the Holy Spirit, is the supreme witness of Jesus Christ.

The tabernacle and temple were the buildings erected for God’s dwelling place among His people. He no longer dwells in buildings made of material that perisheth, but through His Son, Jesus Christ, a new house is being fashioned for Himself. Christ is the chief cornerstone upon which this building rests and the Holy Spirit is to inspire and control the material that goes into the building. The foundation was made and the church was builded together for a habitation of God, hence it

is important that her ministry should be in the hands of wise and faithful stewards of God in this dispensation of grace. "The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner" (Ps. 118:22). The work has been tried by fire and by flood. It abides and Christ Himself said that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). The Rock of Ages stands unworn by time, and unshaken by the conflict of the ages.

We have been washed, we have been cleansed, we are members of the Church, the family of God, the habitation of God Himself. The only union of man that can abide is the Church of Christ that makes one family and one household. Since the establishment of the Church, God needs no longer any distinction of nations. All have access to God the Father through Christ by one Spirit (Ver. 18).

"Hast thou transformed every chamber and hall, nook and corner, all the heights and depths of this inner man, to Him for a pure Spiritual indwelling? Art thou His temple?"

QUESTIONS

Who are the strangers and sojourners?

Give the meaning of, "Fellow citizens with the Saints."

What is the only foundation the Bible upholds?

Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." Is this the meaning of Ver. 21?

Why call Christ the chief corner-stone?

For whose dwelling place is the Church built?

What is the Holy Spirit's purpose in this age?

III. The Church a Mystery Hidden from Past Ages, 3:1-21

1. THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN CHRIST CONCERNING CHRIST MYSTICAL, 3:1-13

This chapter reveals a secret that was hidden in God from before the foundation of the world. Through Christ we have entered the school of grace where the Holy Spirit is the

teacher. The first great lesson He taught us in the Epistle to the Romans was about ourselves. We were dead in trespasses and sins and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we received forgiveness and through union with Christ we have our position and standing in the Head. The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul moves us into an advanced class and permits us to study these advanced lessons presented by the Builder of the Church in this great text-book that we are now studying. The first great lesson we learn here is about God, just what God did that we might come into possession of these Spiritual blessings and to have Spiritual life imparted unto us. We have been taught that we died and have risen in and with Christ. We have learned how He was substituted for us and now how we are identified with Him, therefore we are raised up together with Him and we are made to sit together with Him in Heavenly places.

We have studied the first great purpose (1:3-14) where we have learned what He has made Christ to be unto us. We are now beginning the second great purpose as we open this chapter—what He has made us to be in Christ—members of His Body. The Apostle concludes chapter two by showing that Jews and Gentiles are one Body in Christ (2:16). They become so united through the power of Christ that they are builded together for an habitation for God through the Spirit (2:22). The Apostle thinking of this wonderful mystery of God brought about through the members of the Church, of which Christ is the Head, building a habitation for God says, "For this cause I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." He feels his great need of communion with God in prayer. He is not a prisoner for the world or a prisoner for the Roman government, but a prisoner of Christ that Gentiles might become members of the Body of Christ and become material in this building and a habitation of God. However, the Apostle utters but a few words of prayer and in the act of doing so, the great subject of which his mind is full—the secret, the mystery that God was about to fully reveal through

him—was forcing itself upon him and he holds back his words of prayer until this secret of God is first made known.

Verses 3:2-13 are in the form of a parenthesis. The material contained in these verses is very weighty and important. They contain much of the unsearchable riches of God. The foundation of all blessing is in the purpose of God Himself. The will of God is the source of all riches and grace. This eternal purpose, the mystery of His own will (1:9) is here made known. This eternal purpose, so much of a secret to many, is followed from Ver. 14 to the close of the chapter with a prayer that he might reveal this purpose. It is what God does and we are not able to see it through reason and mind, and so the Holy Spirit by prayer takes us to the throne of grace, showing us that no human wisdom is able in any sense to comprehend the great purposes of God as set forth in this great text-book for the Church.

Ver. 1. For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles.

In the fourteenth verse, the Apostle repeats the same phrase, "For this cause." The Apostle has been set apart unto the Gospel of God. He has been given a definite and specific mission. He is the Apostle of the Gentiles and Christ made him a prisoner that the Gentiles through faith might become members of Christ's Body. He here speaks of his own imprisonment. He realizes the fact that he is one whom Christ has put in chains. Christ, when He was about to be nailed to the cross, was conscious that He could have at His command legions of angels that would protect Him and that He would not need to go to the cross. However, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross that through faith in that cross and Christ a union might be formed between Jew and Gentile who were enemies. A great wall was between them that only through sacrifice and death could be destroyed. And the same Spirit that was in Christ, that made him willing to go to the cross, is now incarnate in the Apostle, and he becomes a

prisoner, not because Christ did not have the power to keep him out of prison, but because he must suffer as the Master suffered that Gentiles might know the Spirit of the Christ. He is therefore put in chains for the express purpose of bringing blessings to the Gentile world. Christ was put to death on the cross that blessings might be brought to the whole world.

When he thinks of being in chains, and in chains for the purpose of Christ, that Gentiles might be saved, his imagination is set on fire and it awakens in his heart a passion of gratitude. Who could desire a more honorable title? This title was given to the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit and has inspired thousands to greater stability in Christ's service. The Gentiles are made to see and feel that Paul was suffering imprisonment from the Lord that salvation, sanctification, and glorification might be theirs.

Ver. 2. If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation (stewardship) of that grace of God which was given me to youward.

The Apostle knows that they are in possession of this information. It is the dispensation of the grace of God. The grace is the thing that is emphasized here. The grace is explained by Romans (1:5). It is grace and apostleship. It is the living gift of commission and inspiration to preach Christ among the Gentiles. It is the Divine dispensation whereby the grace of God was freely bestowed upon the Apostle that men in darkness might be brought unto the light and knowledge of God. This grace was given to the Apostle. It is this particular thing that Paul means to express in these verses and he emphasizes the grace of God that is shown to the Gentiles.

He calls attention to the unsearchable riches of Christ, "given to me to youward." He is especially set apart by the Holy Spirit and put in possession of this gift of God's grace that at this particular time members of the Body of Christ might come into a more complete knowledge of this mystery. Paul means to say that a study of the truths set forth in this Epistle and a comprehension of the blessings God has for those

who are in union with Christ, will make for steadfastness, unity, and harmony in Christian life.

Ver. 3. How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in a few words.

The Apostle heard the Master's voice in that memorable journey on the way to Damascus. He was not appointed by any human agent to this great work of the Church. This call came to him from Christ himself. His was a holy call, and just as he was called by the Master Himself, the Master now makes revelations to him. He became a chosen vessel set apart by Christ, the Builder of the Church. He was an Apostle to the Gentiles and yet related to his Jewish brethren in the flesh. His great mission, therefore, was to be used as an instrument to break down the middle wall of partition, to get rid of every prejudice and tradition in order to make known how the mystical Body of Christ was to be built. For this very reason God revealed to him this secret—that which was hidden and kept a secret from the foundation of the world. This secret is nowhere revealed in the Old Testament; however, in the Book of Romans Paul spoke of it briefly (Rom. 16:25-27). This paragraph takes up that which Paul began to tell in the Book of Romans. This mystery was revealed and communicated unto Paul. It is no longer a mystery, it is no longer hidden. Paul was separated unto the Gospel of God, which is not a secret; however, in addition to the news unfolded by the Apostle that all who were sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, must accept Jesus Christ by faith in order to have eternal glory, the Apostle before closing the Book of Romans speaks of an additional revelation, a "my Gospel" which was the secret that was hidden. The Jews, to whom were intrusted the oracles of God, had through traditional teaching been blinded to their own possibilities and now here one of their own number, the Apostle Paul, discovers the great secret of God that the Gentiles are incorporated in the Body of Christ and that through individual Jews and Gentiles He is making One new Man, His Body, a mystical Body, the Church.

Ver. 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may perceive my understanding in the mystery (or secret) of Christ.

The mystery of Christ was the mystery which has the Christ for its object and purpose; the mystery revealed is that Christ is in us and through us, forming for Himself a body. The Holy Spirit is here to help us understand something concerning this secret. Give Him His way in your reading and allow Him to show you this secret or you will not be able to understand what Paul says in these verses. This Epistle is to be read in the different churches. Had the Apostle been addressing the Epistle alone to the Ephesians, he would no doubt have appealed to a previous passage in this epistle rather than to their personal knowledge for proof of his insight into this mystery.

Ver. 5. Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

What is it that was not made known? This secret, the eternal purpose of God as to what He made His people to be in Christ. Some interpreters limit this text or mystery to the fact that the Gentiles would be brought into the blessings in connection with Christ, and yet all who are acquainted with God's Word know that this never was a secret hidden in God and now made known to the sons of men until we find it here in Ephesians (3:9). That which God had in mind concerning the Head, Christ, the mystical Christ, the Church, was kept a secret hidden in God. Israel is without excuse and was absolutely responsible for the rejection of the offer of salvation through repentance made by Christ's servant, Peter.

Why was this kept a secret, a mystery? It is not for us to speculate as to what might have happened had Israel accepted the Christ instead of rejecting Him. We know that God had His purposes before the foundation of the world. He foreknew and had in His mind everything connected with the purpose of the ages. God does not, in His great plan, do what men do when they begin to erect a building—take away part

after it has been built, or make additions never thought of by the architect before. God's plans are set out in His Word, and here we have one purpose of His kept a secret for centuries and when the proper time came He revealed it to man in order that His plan concerning the human family might be known, developed, and continued.

God's Word clearly teaches us that salvation through Jesus Christ—justification by faith—was the subject of Divine revelation all through the ages. Regeneration through faith, as set forth by the gospel, was God's plan beginning with Adam (Gen. 3:15). That good news—salvation by faith—made known to Abraham, was not hidden by God but was promised and was referred to (Romans 4:2) in the Gospel as witnessed by the apostles and prophets (Rom. 1:2). Israel was to be a blessing unto the Gentiles and that was revealed in God's Word. It was said to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Holy men of God, in speaking and writing, frequently call attention to the Messianic promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." These promises concerning the coming of the suffering Saviour are set out more clearly from one book to another until the Old Testament closes.

What, then, is this great secret? It is that individuals shall be taken out of all of these peoples, Jews and Gentiles, and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ be made one body, a mystical body (Eph. 3:9), of which Christ shall be made the glorious head in Heaven, His people here, the members of that body on earth. This is what was revealed to the apostles and prophets in the Spirit. The prophets, concerning the mystery, are associated with the apostles. The Old Testament prophets looked from the hilltop of Christ's suffering to the other hilltop of His glory. The Apostle Peter speaks of this great truth emphasized in the Old Testament (1 Peter 1:10-12). The prophets inquired and searched diligently concerning salvation. The Old Testament prophets looked forward concerning grace. The Jehovah Spirit was in them, testifying even before

the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. These are some of the secret things, partially made known unto the prophets, but the mystery that we are discussing here is something that was hidden and never made known to the prophets and apostles until revealed to the Apostle Paul.

We know that the suffering of Christ was not a secret and that the glory that should follow was not. The Jews emphasized the glory and forgot the suffering, and because of emphasizing the glory and not willing to become partakers of the suffering, they became the instruments through which Christ was made to suffer. The prophets, however, conscious of the inner life directed by the Spirit, were concerned as to how long the period should be between the suffering of Christ and the glory which was not clear to them. We do not yet know the length of this period between Christ's suffering and Christ's glory or Christ's return. This period between the suffering and the glory would not have been long if the message of reconciliation that Peter offered on the day of Pentecost to the Jewish nation had been accepted. Israel would have then been accepted as a nation instead of rejected, remaining a scattered people until the Body of Christ, the mystical Church, is completed.

Old Testament prophecy began to be fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-22). The Spirit was poured out just as was foretold and a definite offer made to Israel as a nation (Acts 3:18). The things God foretold by the mouth of the prophet, that Christ should suffer, were then fulfilled. God was not mocking His people when He called to them for repentance. There are different passages in the New Testament that show that the apostles were associated with prophets in this age of grace (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20, 3:5).

Ver. 6. That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

They are to be fellow-heirs and this assures all Gentile readers of their final redemption and Heavenly glory. They are included in Christ's inheritance. Now Paul says here that

they are of the same body and are part of the building described in the close of Chapter 2, where Jews and Gentiles were used as material for a habitation of God. The Gentiles are fellow-heirs and members of this body and now the Apostle emphasizes the fact that they are fellow-partakers of the promises. The Gentiles receive every privilege enjoyed by the Jewish believers when brought into this Body of Christ, or in making this New Man. They receive the same privileges, enjoy the very same blessings as those to whom the oracles of God were given. This is certainly a great mystery that can only be received by those who are regenerated out of this Jewish nation. The Jewish nation remains blinded to these blessings to be enjoyed by the Jew and Gentile alike.

Ver. 7. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power.

Paul was made a minister of Christ. He speaks here of the grace that was given him to preach to the Gentile people Christ's unsearchable riches. Paul, a regenerated Jew, has a great task before him. The Apostle is raised up at this critical period. It pleased God to reveal His Son in Him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. What boundless wealth in Christ is in store for this Gentile nation, brought to it through a converted Jew, discovered for it in the Jewish Bible. The Jewish nation will have to learn some day that their greatness is in Christ and that the light which lightens the Gentiles is their true glory. The mystery that the Jews and Gentiles are to participate in Christ is now revealed unto the sons of men. Let us make ourselves worthy that the veil may be lifted that now hides this blessing from the heart of Israel.

Ver. 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable (untrackable) riches of Christ.

He no doubt knew of the part played by his brethren in putting Christ to death. He was a bitter antagonist to the

Church; the one who stood by when Stephen was stoned. Is it any wonder that he says, "Who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given." The secret of Jesus is with them that fear Him and they endure through Christ's covenant. Such was the rule of revelation. He is the man who seemed to be at one time the greatest opposer of God and Christ, but who has become, through God's power, the man to accept Christ and has the conviction to stand. You can hear him say, "Here I stand; no matter what others may do, I will be true to Jesus Christ." It is to men of this type, who have conviction, to whom God can reveal His secrets. To such Christ says, "The pure in heart shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). "If any man will do his will he shall know the doctrine" (John 7:17). The pure eye sees the true light. There are riches and wealth unsearchable and untrackable. We cannot enter into its depths, we cannot even experience its fulness, no matter what our relation may be with Christ.

The Bible, the Book of God, was written by holy men under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Men and women could come into possession of this great Book and search it and discover the riches of Christ foretold at least in part in the Old Testament. But we are taught here that there are unsearchable riches in this Word, "Unsearchable" occurs twice; here and in Romans 11:33. The Apostle cries out, "Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." This means that which cannot be traced or tracked. It is a way that cannot be fully discovered. In Romans we are told that it is past finding out, and here in Ephesians we find it is unsearchable.

Now these untrackable riches of Christ, which the prophets could trace out, are not the mystery, because they were not concealed. Many prophets revealed the truth concerning the Gentiles. These unsearchable or untrackable riches of Christ are not merely the blessings that are for the Gentiles (Acts 15:3-4), but the taking out of individuals from different

nations to form a body for Christ. The Apostle calls attention to this mystery in Romans 16:25-27 and in Colossians 1:24-27. The Apostle also speaks of his ministry being for a specific and definite purpose, that a mystery which hath been hidden from the ages was to be made known unto the saints, and that God would make known the unsearchable riches of the glory of this mystery. We are frequently reminded of the blessed hope of the regenerated who are the members of the Body of Christ.

Ver. 9. **And to make all men see what is the dispensation (stewardship) of the mystery (or secret) which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things.**

Paul, as well as all ministers of the Gospel, has a great commission. They must first see themselves before they can make other men see. The more we have to do with God and His Word, the more our own nothingness is emphasized. The more we feel the need of the power of the Spirit to help us out of our weakness into these greater things that God has for our hearts to feel and to know, the better we are prepared to help other men into this union with Christ.

Just what is the duration of this present interval? (1 Pet. 1:11.) What do we know of the creation of the Kingdom and its consequences? (Matt. 11:12.) These are some more things that are kept secret. We do not want to lose sight of the secret or mystery which is Christ mystical, the Body, and that is what the Apostle Paul says he was unveiling and making known unto the saints of God. Paul teaches (1 Cor. 12:12), "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body being many, are one body, so also is Christ." When we talk about Christ mystical, we mean the Body of Christ, the Church of the invisible God, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks" (1 Cor. 12:13). Christ, the Church (the Body of Christ), is the great secret, and if we bear this in mind, light will come to us on other Scriptures that are not clear to our minds.

The Head of this Body is already in glory. As the members of this Body, we have now only to be received up into glory. The Christian, having died and risen in Christ, is seated in the Heavens with Him (Eph. 2:6). Death may come to some and not to others. If Christ should come, then those living on the earth need not die. Death is absolutely certain unto all those who are unredeemed and remain under the direction of the first Adam. However, those who are in the second Adam, Christ, have already died and if they are living when Christ comes, they will not die again, but shall be translated. We are further taught about this mystical Body of the Christ, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26). When our Head suffered and died, all the members of this Body suffered and died with the Head. If the Holy Spirit leads us in this great secret (mystery), then we can fully understand what death means to the Christian. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul said, "For I am already being offered, and the time of departure is come" (2 Tim. 4:6). The Apostle said (1 Cor. 15:51), "Behold I tell you a mystery (behold I tell you a secret) we shall not all sleep (die)." That is a blessed secret that we will all be changed, and all appear with the Head and be caught up to meet the Head in the air.

The Church is here called the Body of Christ. The husband and wife are one in the flesh (Eph. 5:31; Gen. 2:24), so Christ and His Church are one in the Spirit. The Head of the Body had His appointed suffering and death and the members of the Body now have theirs.

"Who created all things." Thus God is marked as the creator of the universe with all there is of Heaven and earth. The same power which created all things, and made a world so complete that man was created and given the privilege of all the blessings, now offers the mystical power of redemption to man, and thus, just as through God a world was created and given unto man as an inheritance, so God has brought redemption for man by His own power and all His redeemed ones are promised "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled

and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

Christ had suffered personally as he finished His part of the work in redemption. Paul and all the faithful ones in Christ Jesus, as members of Christ's Body, are now suffering. The early Church made progress through sacrifice and suffering and thus emphasized the fact that they and the church were in direct opposition to the world. This in a large degree is not true of the modern Church. The modern Church is searching for similarity and prone to emphasize the things that are similar instead of the things that make the Church stand out as an absolute instrument different from the world. The afflictions of the members of the Church are for the benefit of the Church as a body. Any sorrow which any one of us may experience is for the sake of other members who are of the same body. The body is one and so we speak of the unity of the body which the Scriptures teach. It is not the unity of the visible Church or any bodies of men. This unity in Christ is a unity which exists in spite of all contention, division, and factions which mortal men may have made. Men have tried to make a visible unity and have miserably failed. God has made an invisible unity in Christ and it is a glorious and eternal creation. Now this union, the Body of Christ, is something that cannot be lost or broken. No man can experience or get in possession of what is here expressed except through the gift of faith.

Ver. 10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through (by means of) the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

Paul is setting forth here the breadth and grandeur of the dispensation of grace, the infinite range of the Divine plan and operation of which it forms the center. Its secret was cherished in the Divine mind, and Paul is here, in a measure, telling what God has done for fallen humanity, and he is doing everything through the Spirit to set it forth that his readers might, in a sense, comprehend what God has prepared for those who

make up His habitation. The Apostle says this in order that through the Church there might be made known unto the principalities and powers the wisdom and secrets of God—the secrets that were never made known until the age of grace. Jesus says, “There is nothing covered which shall not be made known.” This is in the plan of the ages which was developed through Christ. God designed, by our redemption, to bless higher races along with our own. The purpose of the revelation of the mystery being the manifestation of God’s wisdom, the time was to come, when in some mysterious, powerful way the same privileges were to be granted unto Jew and Gentile, and supernatural power brought to bear upon both in making One new Man, one Body.

To the Gentile was granted the gift of adoption. Some of the Jews were enlightened upon this great principle, while others are still blinded because unworthy and disobedient to the Word of God. God’s plans are still a mystery to them and they look upon the Church and do not understand in it the unfolding of the wisdom of God. It is through the Church that God is manifesting this wisdom. God has given unto the individuals of all nations an invitation to receive His Son through faith and become fellow-heirs of the same body and partakers of the same promise. It is the manifold wisdom.

Everything that the Apostle says tends to exalt our Redeemer and to enhance our confidence in Him. In His own hand is the key of the mystery. He himself is the center of Israel, Israel of the unknown ages.

Peter said on the day of Pentecost, “Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted—He hath poured forth this which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33). The resurrection from death, the demonstration of the Holy Spirit proved Jesus Christ to be that which He claimed to be, the Saviour of men, and the eternal Son of God. The angels with their intelligence could not penetrate God’s intentions concerning this world. The incarnation, the cross, the proclaiming of the Gospel, the resurrection, the ascension, the outpouring of the Spirit, were

all full of surprises to the Heavenly watchers. The angels sang at Bethlehem. They hid their faces and shrouded Heaven in darkness at the sight of Calvary. They bent down in eager observation, searched for, and desired to look into the things made known unto men (1 Pet. 1:12).

The Apostle, as he writes on this great subject of grace, feels that there are other eyes bent upon him than those of his fellow men, and that he is acting in a grander arena than the world. The Saviour's mission on the earth created a problem for the angels, the development of which they followed with an earnest and sympathetic interest. How they must be watching the conflict between good and evil, and the progress of God's Eternal Purpose among men.

Ver. 11. According to the eternal purpose (according to the plan of the ages) which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul hastens to say that the manifestation of God's wisdom, now revealed through himself, was no result or accident of circumstance, but was purposed by God from before the ages. The purpose existed before the universe was created, and was fulfilled in and by Christ. God made man in His own image, placed him in the garden and gave him dominion over everything. He lost his place as the head of the race through disobedience. It took many centuries to prepare the world until Christ the Head of the new race appeared. Out of the material that was then upon the earth, Christ through His death and resurrection made it possible for a new race, a new, regenerated humanity, to come into possession of the redeemed earth. It is this eternal purpose, forming this new Body from Jew and Gentile that was Paul's part in this age of grace to make known unto the Church. It is this purpose of God which has been worked out through Jesus Christ. God has a purpose to make known in every dispensation and this was a specific, definite purpose made known through the Apostle Paul, which can be known when we are in Christ and Christ is within us.

Ver. 12. In whom we have boldness and access in confidence (with assurance) through our faith in Him.

The Apostle Paul heard the Master's voice. He knew Christ as his Redeemer. He believed that He had bought him. He believed that through His death and resurrection he received his deliverance from sin and death. It was such knowledge as this that gave him his boldness. Without the Christ, the Mediator, man feels himself estranged from God and hides himself from Him. Through the knowledge of Christ, a knowledge of His death, suffering, and resurrection, we come into conviction and confidence. Through faith we realize our union with Him. When we have such a knowledge, we come to God with the confidence of a little child. Faith always begets confidence and confidence begets boldness in which we approach Him. This holy confidence in God is illustrated often in the Acts and the Epistles. If the reader will turn to these passages and make this inspired Word his, he will go in conviction and confidence to God (Rom. 8:11-15; 8:38-39; Acts 4:13; 4:29-31).

Ver. 13. Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you (in your behalf) which are your glory.

"Wherefore"—seeing that I have been the means of bringing you into this state of sonship. If this be true that we are adopted and fellow-heirs, this itself ought to be a matter of glory and inspire confidence. The Apostle knew how his friends were fearing and worrying over his long captivity and because of this he writes to the Philippians, "I would have you know, brethren, that the things which have happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:12). In writing the letter to the Colossians he expressed joy in that he was able to suffer for their sake (Col. 1:24).

The Church was no doubt concerned about Paul's persecution and impending death, especially the weak of the Church who would be influenced by this imprisonment and perhaps become more indifferent as to individual service. The Church, however, which was so dear to God and for which God gave His own Son to die that He might make Him the Head of the

members who had faith in the Head as a Body and habitation, is grounded in His eternal purposes. If this be true, then let all friends of Christ take courage, and even if some have to go into prison as Paul did, let suffering and imprisonment be only the means of our giving additional service that others may know the Christ. The Church is the greatest institution on earth, and an institution freighted with such fortunes cannot sink. Paul was a prisoner and became a martyr for Christ. All those who love Christ and know His sufferings for our salvation, who realize what it cost Paul to bring us this valuable message, should boast rather than grieve over afflictions.

This paragraph opens with prayer (Ver. 1), which is not continued until after we come to the close (Ver. 13). The Apostle sets forth in the former chapter the wonderful blessings enjoyed by the Christians, and in another place he says, "The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward" (Rom. 8:18). Now Paul, with this thought in mind, after setting out before us the eternal purpose of God concerning this mystery, takes us into the following paragraph in communion with God in prayer, that the Holy Spirit might more fully unveil these great truths and secrets of God through grace to those who love and serve Him.

QUESTIONS

What was the cause of Paul's imprisonment?

Why does he say, "A prisoner of Jesus Christ"?

What is the meaning of dispensation?

What was the purpose of God in the first chapter? (1:3-14.)

What is the purpose of God in these verses? (3:2-13.)

What is the meaning of apostles and prophets in Ver. 5?

What was hidden from the foundation of the world and revealed unto Paul?

How did Paul obtain his ministry?

Tell us something about the unsearchable riches of Christ.

What is the mystery of Ver. 9, and the fellowship of the mystery?

What persons would weaken in faith because of Paul's imprisonment?

2. FILLED UNTO ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD, 3:14-21

In verse fourteen the prayer is resumed which the Apostle was about to offer at the beginning of the chapter when the current of his thoughts carried him away. As before stated, the book contains two great prayers following two great purposes. The first prayer (1:15-23) is offered there by the Holy Spirit after setting forth what God did that we might have our standing in Christ, showing that we were in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. Now through the Apostle Paul we are told what God did for us that we might have our blessings through His Son who is the Head of the Church. To make these things clear to us, to enlighten us and open the eyes of our understanding, the Holy Spirit takes us to God who is able to answer our prayers.

The chapter we are just now studying sets forth the second great purpose of God concerning the mystery in Christ, the mystical Church. This is another eternal purpose of God, and just how individuals living in sin, no matter to what nation they belong, can be delivered from sin and death and united through faith in Christ into this mystical Body to become a habitation for God, is as difficult to understand as the matter presented in the first chapter. So again, Paul through the Holy Spirit takes us unto God whose children we are, that he may, through the Spirit, help us to come into a deeper fellowship and a more pronounced experience as members of the Body of Christ.

Ver. 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father (of our Lord Jesus Christ).

This prayer opened with the first verse of this chapter, and it is continued here. Verses 2-13 are in the form of a parenthesis so the reader could read from the first verse omitting all and beginning again with the fourteenth verse.

The Apostle told us his part in disclosing this secret unto

the world and of the interest it excited among those who dwell in Heavenly places. The Apostle is conscious not only of the fact of those dwelling with him who are flesh and blood, but knows that above him are dwellers who are interested in what is accomplished among men as to redemption.

The Apostle calls our attention to the attitude of prayer (Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60). This is in perfect harmony with the boldness and confidence expressed in Ver. 12. The words, "of our Lord Jesus Christ," are used in some very ancient documents, including the Syrian and Latin versions, but the Church fathers omitted them, believing that the Latin copies were in error.

In introducing the two prayers, two relationships are announced at the outset—God and the Father. "God" has reference to creative power and that is for whom the prayer was offered in the first chapter, and the prayer is introduced by "Father" and refers to covenant relationship and the grace. In this prayer we have reference to what God has purposed in Christ concerning us in the making of one family in Him, members of His Body, sons and heirs in Christ and with Him in all His glory. Hence the second prayer commences with this title. The first prayer is addressed to God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer we are now studying is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 15. From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

The prayer is unfolding the mystery that Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ Jesus and are spiritually descended from one ancestry as they have become joint-heirs or partakers in common of the promises made to the descendants. They are of their Father's house, of the habitation of God, and angelic beings are included in it (1:10). This increases our confidence to know that whether we belong to earth's redeemed family or the Heavenly redeemed, that even in name we are not forgotten.

Ver. 16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of His glory (wealth) that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man.

We have all confidence that God will grant unto us the things the Holy Spirit here sets before us if we have not betrayed His trust. Paul is praying that we might receive from God according to the riches of His glory; that God, who is the source of all our wealth and who has purposed everything, should give us not only according to His riches in glory, but in addition to the riches of His glory, strength with His might.

The Apostle himself is in prison. He has already cautioned his brethern not to faint because of his tribulations and here he carries his readers—the same persons—to God and asks that they might be strengthened with God's strength. Christ said to his disabled servant, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Never did Paul rise to greater heights than at the very time he was smitten and all but destroyed by persecution, when through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, he prays that all who read his message may enjoy the riches of His glory and may be able to endure with the strength from God.

The Apostle emphasizes the inner man as the seat of invigoration. The world buffets, stones and imprisons, and murders the Christian, while God gives victory and joy by infusing his Spirit with power and strength. The tired, weary and persecuted body of the prisoner Paul was a mark for the world's scorn; however, there lives a strength of thought and will mightier than the empire of Cæsar, a power of the Spirit.

Ver. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.

Here Christ's residence in the heart is to be viewed, neither as the result or antecedent of the strength given to man. This is a unity effected by petition which results in His coming and making His abode within us. The heart of the Christian and the Church are both the Divine dwelling place. Faith is the condition without which neither the Spiritual life nor the indwelling of Christ can exist. It must be the faith of submissive

trust in the Promisor which is the effecting and maintaining act.

“That ye being rooted and grounded in love.” This must be closely connected with what precedes. Whoever is made strong by God’s Spirit must necessarily be rooted and grounded in love. Love is another name for the ordinary working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man, and where God’s Spirit is, there is love. Love is the soil in which the Christian is rooted and the foundation on which he is grounded.

Ver. 18. (That ye) may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.

In this part, the Apostle is calling our attention to the fact of our membership in the great family of God and that God is rich and is able to make us rich according to His glory. Not only is He rich, but He is mighty, and the inner life can constantly be strengthened. Paul prays that we might have a wider range, a mighty strength of thought and faith and as redeemed, be perfectly assured of our footing. We ought to be able to understand in some respect this minute and very careful change that has come over us.

Paul prays that we may be able to comprehend the depth of this Divine love—that which has just been named, the love of Christ, the love of God. It is this love expressed in the eternal and sovereign purpose of God, that no matter to what nation the individual may belong, and no matter to what depth of sin and degradation he may have sunken, a union is being formed by the miraculous power of God, to bring him into fellowship with this mystery.

Ver. 19. And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

“The love of Christ”—that which he did for love’s sake. All this passeth human understanding. However, we may know something of it, and know it more and more as we are strengthened by His Spirit, enlightened by faith, and rooted and grounded in this love.

We have really come to the climax of the prayer offered

here that all who are Christ's through His death and resurrection might be filled with all the fulness of God; that we might be filled with grace to approach more and more towards the perfection with which God alone is filled, "That ye may be so filled as God is filled."

"That which passeth knowledge," if it is to be enjoyed by man, must come to him through some other channel than by the communication from man to man. This can come only from a superior to an inferior.

Ver. 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.

We know something about the power of God through His creation and redemption. The God who works within us is helping us to know what we do not know, and thus leading us on to greater knowledge that we could not realize without Him, and in this we can gain some idea of His omnipotence which is able to do and will do that which we cannot ask for or even think of. The Apostle knows that we ask for some things and we can think about some things, but he is beginning to realize that the Christian is in need of something he cannot ask for. He is in need of something that he cannot think of, and now he leads us into the confidence and conviction that even that is open to the Christian. This God who is ours, who has so miraculously set forth our Head and brought about a Body, the Church, which is being formed in this age of grace, is so intensely interested in all of us that He not only answers what we pray for, but He answers the unexpressed desires of the heart which cannot be put into human language. This is all done according to the power of God which worketh in us.

Man cannot follow a power so great. It is beyond man's reason. Prayer is not limited to man's thought but goes out into the realms unknown in search of help and guidance. There is a mighty power at work within the heart of those who make much of their Spiritual lives. This power that is working

within is unlimited. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Ver. 21. Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations (of the age of the ages) for ever and ever. Amen.

It is that Church whose splendor has been first brought to light by a union of Jews and Gentiles into His Body in Christ. No glory can be derived for the Church except it be a glory coming immediately from Christ the Head, or immediately from His mystical Body, through His members in so far as they are in Him. The Church that communicates strength and power to another must first receive such from Christ as the Head.

"Unto the generation of the age of the ages." All ages are the various periods from the beginning of time, and have run their course, thus adding dispensation to dispensation until Christ the Head of the Church shall receive the inheritance lost through disobedience and shall become King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are living in a great age. We as the Body of Christ are separated unto the Gospel of God. God has called us, commanded us to deliver the message of the Head of the Church that the body might be made perfect and complete for the day of His coming.

QUESTIONS

At what verse does the prayer begin?

Why the expression, "For this cause," in Ver. 1 and 14?

What was Paul's attitude in prayer before the Father?

What persons comprise the membership of this family?

Why does Paul call attention to the riches of His glory?

What is the prayer of man who needs strength?

How may Christ become the guest of each individual?

Tell how a person may be made able to comprehend.

What was promised to all saints? (Ver. 18).

Tell us something of the love of Christ that we must know.

What is the climax of Paul's prayer?

What is the extent of the glory?

PART II

DOCTRINAL AS TO OUR STATE

(4:1-6:24)

IN the first three chapters of this Epistle we studied the doctrinal portion as to the Christian's standing in Christ. The Christian that understands his right position in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to have very little concern as to his walk. The Apostle emphasized our true relation to the Head and to His Body by discussing two purposes of God. The first purpose set forth in the first chapter followed by a prayer was to inform us what God did in order to have us as representatives of His Son, who is the Head of the Church and Head over all. Having obtained our relation with Him in this way, He is being seated in the Heavens, and we are known as seated with Him (Eph. 2:6). In the prayer offered we learn something of Paul's anxiety for all those who are seated together in the Heavens to be in possession of wisdom and revelation and knowledge of Him in whom we are, so that we might be true representatives of Him who is our Head.

The second purpose, the mystical Christ, the Church, Paul hinted at in Romans (16:25-27), and expounded the mystery in the third chapter of this book; a mystery known to God before the foundation of the world and never revealed until in the age of grace, to the Apostle of the Gentiles, that God through Christ is forming a Body by a New creation, from Jew and Gentile, a Church to be a habitation for Himself. Paul is anxious that those who are representing the Body might appreciate this relationship of member to member, and so after setting forth this unity of believers in the mystical Body, asks God, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, that all who are

in this Body may be able to comprehend just what God's part is in the formation of the mystical Body of Christ.

Now after knowing our position in the Head (we in Christ), and our privileges as member of His body (Christ in us), we have the practical working out of this, that our service and influence may be to the saved and lost, because of what God has done for us through Christ.

I. Their Walk Among Themselves, 4:1-16

The Apostle realizes the importance of right relationship in the Body in order that the right influence may go out from this society to the world, which ought to be won to Christ. The Early Church, from Pentecost on, was united under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and without any of the present external helps in which much confidence is placed, and it marched forward against every obstacle and was able to overcome because of this unity of purpose and leadership. This is what the Apostle Paul means to teach us is necessary if the Church is to exercise her rightful place and power in the world.

1. WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING, 4: 1-3

Ver. 1. I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.

The Apostle has just closed the former chapter with a prayer that the Church might be able to comprehend the purposes of God revealed in the age of grace. In the opening of the third chapter Paul represents himself as a prisoner for the Lord Jesus Christ, and here opens this paragraph, where he discusses the state of the Christian, with the same thought. The Apostle is willing to suffer as Christ suffered, even go to prison to show to the world what is the true enjoyment for those who are really in Christ Jesus. He is willing to be known as a prisoner of the Lord. How did he become a prisoner? It was by standing out boldly before the world and before the

Roman government for the One whom the Jewish Church, by the permission of the world, had put to death.

The Christian is to walk worthily. He is to do so because of His calling. This is the practical side of the Christian life, to show by our walk and conduct that we have received a right relationship to Jesus Christ by faith, and have the privilege of manifesting this before men. The Apostle, by going to prison, is manifesting the incarnation of Christ by his walk and conduct. It was in the Lord that he wore this heavy chain brought upon him in Christ's service and borne joyfully for Christ's sake. The tone of the Apostle's letter at this time shows that he was sensible of the increased consideration which the affliction of the last few years had given to him in the eyes of the Church.

The Apostle is speaking here about God's part in our relation to Him. The calling here is the same as presented in the first chapter (1:18). Jesus Christ, as the Head of the Church, was called before the foundation of the world and when He was called, the members who make up His Body were called; when He died, the members died; when He rose, the members of His Body rose; when He ascended, we who are in Him ascended and have our position in Him and are now seated with Him in the Heavenlies. In the Apostle's prayer he asks God that the members of His Body may know the hope of his calling. If we know the hope of His calling, we are not so much concerned about our calling as the calling of our Head by which we establish the fact of our calling.

We should expect these exhortations to unity from what we have learned in the previous chapter. Unity in the Church, brought about by constant persecution from the world and even from the professing Jewish Church, is a unity altogether different from that established at a time when persons are indifferent in their belief.

Ver. 2. With all lowliness (humility) and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

Christ Himself, who is the Head of the Church, was lowly in heart. He had descended from Divine heights and knew the immeasurable distance between God's infinite greatness and the limitations of human life. In taking the form of a servant He had also taken the spirit of a servant. He had come, not to do His own will, or to seek His own glory, but to do the will of God and to seek the glory of God. Now having taken upon Himself the form of man, He became absolutely dependent upon God, and His lowliness and humility of heart are the result of the consciousness of dependence on God, and of the vision of God's majesty.

Now how about ourselves? Our lowliness and humility are dependent upon the consciousness of sin. We are expressly commanded to forbear one another in love. There was great hate between the Jew and Gentile and now since the Body of Christ was formed by Jews and Gentiles, this exhortation was very necessary that enmity manifested by these people in their unregenerated state might not again show itself, but love, since the middle wall or partition is gone and they are made as One New Creation in Christ.

The Apostle is addressing both Jew and Gentile as members of the Body of Christ. These people had received a common blessing and each was bound to express relationship and love. The Jew must not look down upon the Gentile who had been so long an alien, and the Gentile must not retort upon the Jew, who had slain the Lord of glory. In order to prevent any controversy they must exercise humility, they must be long-suffering, patient and self-possessed under injustice. The real motive back of all this, the Apostle says, is love. Love is the sum and essence of all that promotes Christian unity.

Ver. 3. Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Spirit dwelling within the Church (2:22) creates a oneness of feeling among all true members of the Church, because He animates each, and they become one with Him.

The Church is one; that is, the members of Christ become One New Man and thus express unity.

When Paul wrote letters to the individual congregations, each separate church had authority over its own order, made its own discipline, elected its own bishops and organized its own worship. There was no federation of these individual churches under any ecclesiastical authority. That is, their unity was not constituted by an external organization, and the only unity which they possessed was the unity of the Spirit. It was by their common possession of the Spirit of God that this unity could be formed.

The middle wall that kept Jew and Gentile apart was broken down and unity existed which was formed through a new creation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The different members of the Body of Christ, dwelling in these local organizations, were forming a family for God. There was the manifestation of unity by the Holy Spirit. They were building upon the foundation of Christ and thus uniting in forming the habitation of God in the Spirit.

“In the bond of peace.” Peace is indeed itself a condition corresponding alike with unity and love in the spiritual life and for the Church. First peace with God, then peace from God, and then peace of heart which is undisturbed by assaults, temptations, and ills of the world. Hence love is the bond that cherisheth peace in the Church. In the first three verses we have presented the temple in which the unity of the Church is to be maintained. Now in the next three verses (4-6) we have the basis upon which this unity rests (2:20).

QUESTIONS

Why say “therefore” in the first verse?

Why should a prisoner entreat those not prisoners to walk worthy?

What calling is referred to in Ver. 1?

How can unity be manifested between Jewish and Gentile Christians?

2. UNITY OF THE BODY ITSELF, 4:4-6

There are seven elements of unity enumerated by the Apostle: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. They form a chain stretching from the Church on earth to the throne, and ending with one God and Father of all. They resolve themselves into three, featuring the names of the Divine Trinity: the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father. The Spirit and the Lord are each connected by two kindred elements, while the One God and Father "is over all (His sovereign power), and through all (pervasive actions), and in all (His imminent presence)."

Ver. 4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling.

There is one body—the mystical body of Christ, the Christian Church. The believers in Jesus Christ were so united in the Early Church that there was a marked difference between them and the world. That distinction became less visible in different periods of Church history. This marked difference between the Church and the world is now much less visible than in the period in which Paul lived. This is due, in a large measure, to the efforts made to unify creeds in a way not in harmony with the Scriptures. The only way by which unity, influence, and power can be obtained in the Christian Church is alone through the standardization of the Word of God. There is a religious belief transferred from one person to another than brings about this division which is not supported by the standard given to us by God in His Word. The nearer we get to the essentials of the truth and to the experiences of living Christian men, who are directed by the Word of God and guided by the Holy Spirit to obey the Word of eternal truth, the more we realize the existence of one body in the different church organizations. The Spirit of God dwells in the Church, which is the Body of Christ, through which unity

(this one great blessed hope which is expressed by all true members of the Body) is manifested (Phil. 2:5).

“In the one hope of your calling.” When they received their calling, they all alike, whatever was their nationality, were called in one and the same hope of eternal life. Let the Spirit which dwells in man depart, and the body becomes a corpse; so with the Body of Christ, and its members in particular. The question is, “Am I an integral living part of the church, quickened by that one Spirit?” The child of God seeks out his brethren, like is drawn to like, bone to bone, and sinew to sinew in the building up of the risen Body. Nothing holds people together like work and hope. The Church of Christ is a society for the abolition of sin and death, but not through education, reformation, or civilization. This must be brought about through regeneration. We look for a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, while in this one Body, this new Creation, there is this one Spirit dwelling within us. It is one Lord who reigns over us.

Ver. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

We have one hope for which to work and we have one faith by which to live. The Lord is the center of centers, the Lord in the midst of the throne, the Christ in the midst of the ages; united with Christ we are at unity with God and members of one united family. Now it is in this one Lord that we find unity. We cannot make ourselves the center, but Christ. Many men value Christ for what they can get from Him for themselves. We must yield to Him for what He is.

There is a subtle self-seeking and self-pleasing among the professing Christians to-day, and from this springs the disloyalty, the wanting of affection for the Church, the indifference among Christians, which accounts, in a large measure, for the indifference to the Word of Truth. Now Christ's leadership over us for life and death is signified by our baptism in His name. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The same rites and the same forms, admit each and all into the Church,

being the seal of the faith possessed in common by all in Him; a public demonstration that we have passed out of the old into the new. Christian baptism is no private transaction. It attests no secret passing between the soul and the Saviour, "for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

Our baptism is the sign of the common faith and hope through which we have accepted Christ's death as our death, and in our burial by baptism we bind ourselves to Him and to His Church. Christ said before He ascended, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Ver. 6. One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

The Apostle, discussing the great need of unity, here presents the different motives for it. If the simple teaching of the Scriptures is obeyed as presented here and in the sixth chapter of Romans, the members forming this Body of Christ will express this with great conviction, conscious that they are acting under the builder of the Church who is the one Lord, one God and Father of all. Belonging to this one body, being in possession of this one Spirit, and realizing this one hope, through faith in Him and under His command of death and burial, we worship together one God and Father of all, who is over all. We cannot worship one God for the Jews and another God for the Gentiles, but we can worship one God whether Jew or Gentile. God was the Father, even when we were alienated from Him; now much more when we are reconciled through the death of His Son.

Here God is a sovereign power. He is over us all. He is the supreme ruler, and He has made it possible by our

being members of this one Body to form a habitation for Himself. Think of His plan in which the Holy Spirit presents Him with life and power which precedes everything material and we know that He is omnipresent, all powerful, yet at the same time He is dwelling in all of us. We need not go far to seek Him. If we believe in Him we are ourselves His Temple.

QUESTIONS

Name the seven elements of unity enumerated by Saint Paul. What is the meaning of one body?

Show how unity may be maintained by what Paul teaches in Vers. 4-6.

3. THE DIVERSITY OF GIFTS TO THE BODY, 4:7-11

Paul has spoken about forming the united Body of Christ. The members have one and the same Body, one and the same Spirit, one and the same hope, one and the same Lord, one and the same faith, one and the same baptism, one and the same God. But the Apostle says, this is not all that is necessary. They have one and the same administration of the Spirit, a possession which differs in character from the rest. All belong to the body, all have their share of the Spirit, but all have not the function of administering the Spirit alike. This was given to individual recipients according as Christ chose to bestow.

Ver. 7. But unto each one of us was the grace (favor) given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The great gift of God in Himself is manifold in its distribution. Now each member of the Body of Christ has its own function. The grace was given that we may each do our part toward building up the Body of Christ. Our functions are measured and determined by the light and power we receive from Christ for discharging them. God dispenses His wisdom, so Christ His gifts, according to His plan (3:11). The purpose of the ages, God's great plan for mankind, determines the

measure of the gift of Christ. In order to illustrate this, the Apostle brings into evidence the words of the Psalmist (68:18).

Ver. 8. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive (led a multitude of captives) and gave gifts unto men.

It is well to understand the occasion of this old Hebrew Psalm. It celebrates Jehovah's entrance into Zion. This verse records one of the crowning events in Israel's history, the capture of Zion from the rebellious Jebusites, and the Lord descended in person to His chosen ones to take His seat upon His holy hill.

David's going up here was to the Apostle's mind a picture of the ascension of the Lord. David rose from the depth of humility to a high dominion. His exaltation brought blessings and enrichment to His people and the spoils that he had taken from the enemy went to build God's house among rebellious men. In this the Apostle discloses the deeper import in his time of the Word of the ancient Scriptures. Here Paul takes the liberty of putting his own interpretation on these words. Here we have the threefold measure of Christ: First, they are the gifts of the ascended Saviour; second, they are bestowed from the fruits of His victory; third, they are gifts to all who form the Body of Christ. He has, so He gives; as He has given, so He will give, until we are filled unto all the fullness of God.

Ver. 9. Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended (first) into the lower parts of the earth?

We have Christ exalted and seated in the Heavenlies. He has been victorious. He is about to bestow gifts unto the members who make up His Body, who represent Him here on earth.

Ver. 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the Heavens, that He might fill all things.

He is Lord of angels, but still more of men; Lord of the living and of the dead. From the depths of the grace to the

highest heavens His mastership extends. Our security is in Christ. We can estimate in a sense the gifts that are ours through Christ because we derive this from His conquests already made—Jesus leading forth the multitude of captives. By a word Jesus addressed Saul at the highest point of his enmity and changed him from a Pharisee to an Apostle of the Gentiles, and from the destroyer to the wise master builder of His Church.

Ver. 11. **And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.**

Paul begins with those occupying the most responsible position in the Church and concludes by naming persons who receive gifts, but not of the same rank. Christ is bestowing gifts upon His Church. The persons upon whom He has bestowed gifts are not all included in this verse; some martyrs, some missionaries, some church rulers, some poets, some leaders of philanthropy and helpers of the poor, all are given for the same end. The Apostle does not promise to enumerate all the graces of the ministry. The first three in order: the prophets, apostles and evangelists, have for their general mission to serve the entire Body; the last two, pastors and teachers, have charge of local and congregational affairs. Many are the marvelous gifts bestowed in the Apostolic ministry. What a gift to the Christian community was Paul himself. He was a chosen vessel unto men. Many names could be mentioned of those who labored in the Church in different periods of her history upon whom were bestowed by Christ gifts for service.

QUESTIONS

Who bestowed the grace referred to in Ver. 7?

On what condition is it held by the different members?

What was Paul's purpose in quoting from the Psalms?

Give the teaching of the Scriptures in the Psalms from which this was taken.

Who is to fill all things?

Tell the mission of each officer named here.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS BESTOWED BY CHRIST, 4: 12-16

The Apostle has enjoined upon all members of the Body of Christ to walk worthy of their calling and then emphasizes the need of unity in the Church. In order to understand more fully the need of this unity, in the former paragraph we learn that Christ Himself is the giver of gifts to individual members of the Church for a specific purpose. This specific purpose is clearly stated in the paragraph we are now studying.

Ver. 12. **For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.**

The Apostle emphasizes the fact that there is need of Christian growth. He tells us that these gifts that are bestowed upon individuals are for the perfecting of the saints. This need is keenly realized by those who know what God sets forth in His Word. There is perhaps no greater imperfection expressed in any calling as that in the professing church, and this perfection referred to by the Apostle can only be obtained through the right relationship of the officers of the Church, and a proper knowledge of God's Word. This requires the deepening of our Spiritual life through God's Word and prayer, that the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ might be edified.

The apostles were called by Christ. They had the gifts to teach and to enforce that teaching by the working of miracles. They had been with Christ. They heard him teach, and saw the manifestation of His power, knew of His death and resurrection, heard Him speak and saw Him at different times during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension.

The prophets shared with the Apostles in the revelation of the mystery of the Holy Spirit and it was their special task to expound this mystery to such as had been converted by apostolic teachings. The result was that they edified and comforted believers, and converted unbelievers to the truth of Christ and the Scripture.

The grace administered to evangelists was such that they had the power of convincing men of their sin until they cried unto Christ for deliverance. Their mission was to preach. They preached Christ crucified and took the good news from city to city. Timothy was also known to be an evangelist.

Pastors and teachers had the mission of Spiritual edification. The four-fold grace of the Holy Spirit given to men by Christ, administered by the apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, was not bestowed upon all Christians alike, but only upon those whom God willed.

The Body of Christ is now in need of faithful men who "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." If all the officers of the Church, ministers, and teachers could realize in all their service that it was for the perfecting of the Body, and that this could only come through loyalty to the Word of truth, then there would be greater sacrifice and consecration to the Master's service.

Ver. 13. Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

This unity of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the same as expressed in Ver. 5. The Church of God has something definite and positive to accomplish. The gifts enumerated in the former verse, bestowed upon members of the Body of Christ, are to bring about a coöperative efficiency and to further its general growth. The purpose of these endowments sets a limit to their use. Christ just gave Apostles, prophets, and others the positions enumerated here, till we all arrive at our perfect manhood, and reach the stature of His fulness. Such no doubt is the connection of Ver. 13, with the context just preceding. The Christian ministry makes itself superfluous when it attempts to raise men beyond its need.

Knowledge and prophesying, evangelism and teaching will one day cease. This work will be done, but not until the unity of faith and the perfecting of the saints is accomplished. The work of Christ's servants can have no grander aim, no further

goal beyond this. Here is the real mission of every one that is called by our Captain, the Head of the Church. There are many of these officials in the different churches, giving more time and means in leading the followers of the lowly Lamb of God into commercialism and industrial pursuits, instead of concentrating upon the things presented to us by the Head of the Church through the Holy Spirit in this church Book given to us for our training, "unto the unity of faith and the perfecting of the saints."

Let every student of this text-book ask himself this question, "How much of my time and means am I using to promote, increase, and unify the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I obtaining a fuller knowledge of the Son of God and using every possible means to help others obtain the same knowledge?"

This definite work of Christ given for His Church to accomplish can only be secured through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This unity can be maintained by persons who are in possession of these gifts, by the persons realizing that these gifts are from Christ, that they must be used for Christ, and for the purpose for which they were given. If this be followed, then there will be no jealousy existing between members who have not the same responsible gifts bestowed upon them. If those in possession of these gifts do their utmost in performing the things stated here, then the work of the Church will be progressing rapidly and all the lay members will begin to realize more fully the mission that each is to perform in this great work of building the Body of Christ. Now it is in vain to accomplish the thing that Christ mentions here through any other way.

Ver. 14. That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error.

A. V. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine (teaching), by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

“Tossed to and fro” just like the waves of the sea and carried about, not knowing what the end will be. This describes more closely the experiences felt in the Church, inclusive of the false teachers who appeared and will appear. They are tossed as the waves with every wind of doctrine or teaching. The wind has a great variety. Teaching is included under the figure of wind, because it is something indefinite, and because the wind in proportion to its strength and free situation of the water, stirs the ripples to foam, so the teaching sets in motion the spirit of the person which is tossed so easily to and fro; but the real child of God will hear and know the proper way to perfection.

“By the sleight of men” using every possible means to deceive and mislead. These men play with religion and with the welfare of Christian souls. This metaphor accords admirably with the restless waves and uncertain winds just preceding it.

“And cunning craftiness.” This is connected with the previous phrase and gives prominence to what the latter does not indicate—the conscious malice. It is to come upon in a sneaking manner, premeditated, pre-arranged by system; to mislead. The Apostle refers to the teachers against whom he had warned the Ephesians three years ago, the men who should arise out of themselves, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples toward them (Acts 20:30). The Apostle warns against deceivers in writing to the Colossians, the Ephesians and to his Spiritual son, Timothy. How easily some professing Christian people are led away by every ism that is introduced. They yield to the prevailing tendency of speculative thought. Think of the reckless pilots steering ignorant souls this way and that, over the wind-swept sea of religious doubt, bringing them at last to the same rocks and quick-sand.

“Whereby they lie in wait to deceive them.” These deceivers, under the leadership of Satanic influence, are often found more active in the promotion of doubt, than the professing Christians are in the promulgation of truth.

Ver. 15. **But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head, even Christ.**

This being truthful, loving, manly, steadfast in the truth, and making a bold defense of it when assailed, is opposed to the childish weakness that gives ear to every new thing and allows itself to be beguiled by unreasonable arguments and those which have false systems to define. This steadfastness and boldness of faith of the Christian, is to be joined with charity, which would not give offense by unnecessary harshness, and convinces the opposer that the motives of opposition are simply for the claims of truth and the love of souls. This means more than simply the truth of speech as it includes the deed and life. The expression here resembles that of 1 John 3:19: "We are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him." Truth and love are found in like union.

The Christian ought to cultivate and instruct himself in Divine truth to guard against counterfeits in thought and life. The Apostle was separated unto the Gospel of God. The Gospel of God is the truth, and if the minister of the Gospel speaks the truth of God, the unadulterated truth, then the child of God will grow in faith and love and be steadfast, no matter what temptations may assail.

"May grow up into Him." The mystical Body made up of the members referred to here, is to grow up to the standard of the Head, fully developed, and that is so that there may be symmetry between the two, Head and Body.

Ver. 16. **From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the (effectual) working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.**

The grace of God in the ministry of the Body is so that perfection might be reached in the Body for the Head. But it is only by being attached to the Head and dependent upon it that it can thus make increase in itself. Detached from the Head it cannot grow. Here the emphasis is put upon unity. It is the whole body "fitly joined and framed together and

compacted." This describes the Church in its present development. In such a union the Church is conceived because it is building a society, a congregation. Here we have the means and condition of its growth. It is first as One New Man, a body collected, and as members of that body, individual aspects are present. We must then unite on the oneness of faith, our knowledge of the Son of God, and we must attain, each of us, a perfect manhood, the measure of the standard of the fulness of Christ. The one faith of the Church's foundation (Ver. 5) is at the same time its end and goal. It is the living faith to all hearts in the same Christ and Gospel. When we all believe heartily in the Word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation, the goal will be in sight. All our deficiencies are at the bottom, deficiencies of faith. We fail to apprehend and appropriate the fulness of God in Christ.

Faith is the essence of the hearer's life. The Son of God is the center object of all faith and of the church life. The danger assailing the church and division threatening its unity, touches the person of Christ, and whatever touches the Head affects the health of the body and well-being of every member of it. Many are receiving the blessing of Christ, and yet the knowledge of Him as the Son of God is very imperfect. Now this ignorance expresses their faith, and they are blinded by the plausible errors in the church and are dazzled by the philosophy of empty deceit. When we have differences concerning the person of Christ, then we have differences on the fundamentals. There is a great gulf fixed between those who worship and those who do not worship the Son of God. We need a truer faith and a better knowledge of Christ in order to unite believers to one another, and at the same time to develop in each a purer character.

Jesus Christ was the perfect man. In Him we have attained our nature without the least flaw or failure, through which we are to glorify God. In Jesus Christ unity rests on its ideal standard, and we know what is the pure level of our nature.

Now we know that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

QUESTIONS

What is the contrast in the opening of Ver. 14?

Are we safe to follow those tossed to and fro?

Name some false doctrines that are being taught now.

Tell the preparation necessary to successfully meet all deceivers.

How may we grow up in Him?

Show the relation between the Head and the body.

Why illustrate Ver. 15, by referring to the physical image in Ver. 16?

II. Their Walk Among Others, 4:17-32

1. THE WALK OF THE GENTILES—THE OTHERS, 4: 17-19

Christ has called into existence and formed around Himself a new creation, a new body, One New Man, here in this world. It is known as the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Now the members of this new society must walk as representing Christ and not as members of the world. Paul does not say here "as the other Gentiles." Many are in the church, although Gentiles by birth, and now of the household of faith and the society of God, who manifest but little change of walk. The Apostle John in his Epistle, though a born Jew, yet from the standpoint of this new creation—new body—writes of the Jews as a distinct and alien people.

Ver. 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind.

The Apostle calls attention to the important lessons of Church unity and Church instruction (4:2-16); and now this unity and perfection of the saints should be so expressed in the presence of others that others might be drawn unto the Body of Christ.

Here we have special emphasis placed upon this truth, "that ye no longer walk as Gentiles." In this period of the church, there were some who bore Christ's name and made a profession to have learned of Christ, and yet walked contrary. This is what he says in another of the prison Epistles (Phil. 3:18-19), "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." We cannot but associate this warning with the apprehension expressed in Ver. 14, concerning the reckless and unscrupulous teachers, against whose evil influence the Apostle guarded the infant church of Asia Minor.

The Christians at Ephesus had been breathing from their childhood the vile atmosphere of corrupt heathenism and were still surrounded by this same kind of influence. In the community which surrounded them, the grossest vices were unrebuked by public sentiment. Now when they came into the church, they did not break at once from their old heathen habits. Some, no doubt, received the Gospel in its fulness and others only in part. Out of the old world of Gentile society have come those who are transformed into this new creation. The world in which the Christians once lived in the flesh, is dead to them. They have been partakers of the regenerated unity constituted in Christ Jesus.

The Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, hardened in their understanding. They have no clear and settled principles; no sound theory of life. Paul wrote the same thing to the people at Rome (Romans 1:21).

Ver. 18. Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening (blindness) of their heart.

They followed after the things that lead into darkness, and help to darken the understanding. Heathen men have lost the knowledge of God and, therefore, lost the steadfastness and eternal grace of righteousness. The heathen are

living in the midst of things seen and temporal, not among things unseen and eternal. They are darkened in their understanding. Darkness and death go together.

Man was so created that the root of his perfection is in God, but when the knowledge of God is lost, the life of God is lost. The heathen are living in moral darkness in which the love of God cannot be felt. They are separated and estranged, "alienated from the life of God." That is, from the life which is imparted to fallen man, which continues to animate man as long as he is in communion with God.

"Because of the hardening of their heart." That is, their increasing moral insensibility, which is the real cause of their ignorance. Man without God is in darkness. Poor creatures they are, who want to know whether life is worth living. Many have gained the world but lost the soul. We are only beginning to learn how much was meant when Jesus Christ announced himself as the light of the world—a light to shine through all the elements of human life.

Ver. 19. Who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (eagerness).

They had ceased to be sensitive to obligation of truth, of honesty, of kindness, of purity. They committed the grossest vices and were conscious of no shame. Their sin was, therefore, gross and habitual. They were not betrayed into sin against their better purposes. They sinned deliberately, and without any protest from their reason and conscience. They gave themselves up. It was an act done with set purpose and by consent of their nature.

This is a horrible picture, but Paul was describing the men among whom he had lived and among whom the Christians of Ephesus were living still. It was surprising that with such a moral environment, the Christians at Ephesus, whom a few years before had been heathen men themselves, required the ethical teaching contained in the epistle.

"Greediness." This is excessive indulgence, both of appetite

and love of money, which is nothing but an outgrowth of the spirit of heathenism or darkness, and until there is more than reformation in religion, the same spirit will manifest itself in the progressing Christian church.

QUESTIONS

Why say "therefore" in Ver. 17?

What is the source of Paul's information?

How did these Gentiles walk before regeneration?

What is the duty of the regenerate ones to the unregenerate?

How may persons become alienated from the life of God?

Give examples in this church age that fit the description of Ver. 19.

2. METHOD OF REGENERATION, 4:20-24

In these verses, the two human types are presented as the old man and the new. The one must be put off and the other must be put on.

In the preceding paragraph, the Apostle described the gross corruptness in the heathen world, and to this same corrupt society the Ephesian Christians had belonged. He could have said to them as he had said to the Christians at Corinth, that persons who are guilty of such misdemeanors cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The Gospel was preached for the purpose of giving new hope and courage, new light and strength to those who were seeking for light and not able to find it among unregenerate manhood.

Ver. 20. But ye did not so learn Christ.

He points us away from the dark description of heathenism to what a person receives by accepting Jesus Christ. When we learned about the Christ and accepted Him by faith, we could not remain in the darkness and filth of our former Gentile state. The present state of the Gentiles who are members of the Body of Christ is altogether different from that in which they lived before they had learned the Christ. When they learned Christ, they became Christ's disciples. They had

listened to Christian teachers, and to those who knew the truth; not to unprincipled teachers as expressed in Ver. 14. There are real and supposed conversions; there are false and true ways to learn of Christ. Paul presumes that his readers have duly learned the Christ. They have not only believed in Christ but have learned the Christ. They have found the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ.

Ver. 21. **If so be that ye heard him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus.**

Christ is represented here as the one who speaks to the disciples, those who hear the Master, the great Teacher, although they have never seen Him while in the flesh. The truth is in Jesus. He Himself is the truth. All of these great Church Epistles are the lessons that Christ Himself teaches and all who learn these lessons are really taught by Christ. This is what gives weight and authority to the lessons that were assigned for the Church in the age of grace. Christ is the author of this truth. He gives this truth through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit used the Apostle Paul as a channel through which He has spoken and written; so all true disciples have heard Christ, and have been taught by Christ and know the truth of Christ.

Paul was at Ephesus about eight years before, and we read from Acts (19:1-7) that he found certain disciples there who had been baptized by John's baptism, but had not received the Holy Spirit or even heard of such a thing. Apollos formerly belonged to this company and had preached and taught carefully the things about Jesus Christ, while he knew only the baptism of John. However, the ready acceptance of Paul's fuller Gospel by this little circle indicated that their knowledge of the Christ was only by definition. They had received it from Judea. They had only a partial knowledge of Jesus, and that is much the difficulty of the Church at the present day. Paul now proceeds to develop the truth which he presents to the Christians at Ephesus:

Ver. 22. That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit.

This is what regeneration means: putting off and putting on; the appropriation of the righteousness of the Christ and holiness, and reception of a new and perfect humanity which God brings us through Christ. This is a precious truth in Christ Jesus. There must be a complete moral revolution which can only be brought about through Him who offers righteousness and gives us security through justification. The man in Christ Jesus has put off the Old Man. Through faith in Christ he has put the Old Man away once for all, and now simply trusting God's own Word for it, has forever done with his former manner of life, and reckons himself, "dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). This is the only foundation on which to rear a fruitful and blessed Christian life.

Ver. 23. And that ye be renewed in the Spirit of your mind.

In the former paragraphs we have had the conduct of the Old Man described; now, in this and the next verse, we have presented to us the character of the New Man. We have put off the Old and now must put on the New. The New Man to be put on is of a new order. He is put on when the Christ way of life is accepted. When we enter personally into the new unity with Christ, we put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14) who comforts us.

Ver. 24. And put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Two distinct conceptions of the faith are passed before our minds. It consists of the one Old nature and of the quickened New nature; one to be put off and the other to be put on. It is the investure of a soul with a Divine character. We have two figures of speech in this single transaction: putting off (Ver. 22) and putting on. "If any man is in Christ there is a new creation. The old things are passed away; behold they are

become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). When man accepts Christ, then God works. A creative renewal takes place in the Spirit of our mind. That is, in the depths of our inner man which will and must penetrate through the whole life, spirit, soul and body, to result in a walk of righteousness and true holiness. "We are to make Christ's humility ours, His courage ours, and His abhorrence of sin ours. We are to make His perfect faith in the Father ours, and His perfect obedience to the Father's authority ours, His delight in doing the Father's will ours, and His zeal of the Father's glory ours."

The new creation after the image of God takes place but once. It took place on the occasion of the conversion of the Ephesians and their admission into the Church. We learn from this passage that the image of God that is received by regeneration and re-creation is righteousness and holiness.

QUESTIONS

Why say, "Ye have so learned"?

How can we hear Christ?

How can we be taught by Him?

How can we come in possession of the truth that is in others?

What is real practical about the Christian's conversation?

Why is the unregenerated conversation called the former?

What does the Christian have to put off?

What does he have to put on?

What does the person receive who puts on the new man?

3. SPECIAL TRAITS OF THE NEW WALK,

4: 25-32

From the fundamental truths of this regeneration and daily renewal (2 Cor. 4:16) in which they had been all along instructed, the author proceeds to draw practical conclusions.

Ver. 25. Wherefore, putting away falsehood (lying), speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

We are to walk no longer in any of the ways of the Gentiles, which is shown by the negative and positive side in the former

verses. If regeneration has taken place and we have put on the Christ and we have constant life by the Spirit in this new nature, then the vices that are following must belong to the fruits of the Old man, and not to the New.

“Putting away lying.” Rather, having put away lying when we were regenerated. Truth telling is an essential and fundamental quality of the follower of Christ. We are members one of another and therefore we must speak the truth to one another and to our neighbors. There cannot be unity unless it is based on truth telling. Those who have the regenerated life surely can not be guilty of lying and theft and anger and idle speech and greed.

Ver. 26. **Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down (set) upon your wrath.**

“Stand in awe and sin not” (Ps. 4:4). That there is an indignation that is righteous is the teaching of all systems of sound morality. The conditions under which this righteous anger becomes sinful, are presented in a sermon by Bishop Butler on “Resentment.” They are:

(1) When from partiality to ourselves, we imagine an injury done us when there is none, (2) When this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is, (3) When we feel resentment on account of pain or inconvenience without injury, (4) When indignation rises too high, (5) When pain or harm is inflicted to gratify that resentment, though naturally raised.

Anger in itself is not sinful, but anger must not be suffered to break out into violence. It must be kept within the control of conscience and reason. However, in the first moments of great anger there is wrath. We are excited, our blood is hot, we are exasperated, we are thus tempted, and sin.

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” The reasons as well as the acts of quarrel were to be done with by set of sun. Evening calls you to bid your brother farewell and to meet your God in solitude. We are the Body of Christ, the Holy temple, and should fortify ourselves against every approach of the spirit of wickedness.

Ver. 27. Neither give place to the devil.

Sinful anger brings even the Christian's heart into the power of Satan, from whom he was freed, destroying the fellowship with the Redeemer and His grace. Let us dismiss each day's vexations, commending as evening falls, our cares and griefs, to the divine compassion, seeking as for ourselves, so for those who have done us the wrong, forgiveness and a better mind.

Ver. 28. Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

Paul now passes from anger to theft. This may be true of the unregenerated, uncontrolled Old Man, but not of the New. Paul included laziness and idleness as the beginning of the ground to theft. The hand should now do the good that in its proper time and place must be done, then there will be something to bestow upon the needy.

The Apostle brings the loftiest motives to bear instantly upon the basest natures and is sure of a response. He makes no appeal to self-interest, he says nothing of the fear of punishment. The appeal was as wise as it was bold. You may preach culture, self-improvement, thrift, show the pleasure of an ordered home and the advantages of respectability, man will still feel that his own way of life pleases and suits him best. However, when the divine spark of love is kindled in the breast, the man will have love and pity and not self to work for, because he becomes a new creature in Christ. His indolence is conquered, his meanness changed to a sense of good, and he experiences the blessed truth spoken by the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Ver. 29. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.

We had passed from speech to temper, and now we are back to speech again. Jesus Christ laid great stress upon the exercise of the gift of speech (Matt. 15:11). By the words you speak

you shall be justified and by thy words condemned. The possession of a human tongue is a great responsibility. Infinite good or evil lies in its power. Jesus Christ said that for every idle word man must give account to God. The Apostle does not simply forbid injurious words, he puts an embargo on all that are not useful. It is not enough to say that "my chatter does nobody harm." If you cannot speak to profit, be silent till you can.

Paul does not refer here simply to personal conversation, but even the ministering of grace unto the hearers in the congregation. "Let it not proceed out of your mouth." It is in opposition to every serious listener; it is an injury to himself. Above all he says to grieve not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a messenger, bringing messages from the Lord Jesus Christ to be delivered to the congregation, and when the agent brings messages of his own and does not honor the truth of the Spirit, he is the one who grieves the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 30. **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.**

Paul told us when we were sealed (1:13), and now tells us how long we are sealed. We were sealed at the time of accepting Christ through death and burial and when we were adopted into that new Body. We have since been in intimate fellowship, and because of this there should prevail among the members, the thought of being sealed together unto the day of redemption.

The witness of the Holy Spirit is the seal of God's possession in us. This seal need never be broken and the witness withheld "until the day of redemption." Dwelling with the Church and loving us with the love of God, the Spirit of grace is hurt and grieved by foolish words coming from lips that He has sanctified. Let us grieve before the Holy Spirit that He be not grieved with us for such offences. Let us pray evermore. "Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3).

Ver. 31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice.

Here we have a comprehensive conclusion in which Ver. 31 gives the negative side and Ver. 32 the positive side. The Apostle has, in the previous part, shown to us that love is the remedy of disorder which includes falsehood, anger, theft, misuse of the tongue, all of which are against the welfare of others. It is now time to deal directly with this evil that assumes so many forms, the most various of our sins and companion to every other. These are to be put away from the member of the Body of Christ. This bitterness is internal, concealed in the heart. Wrath is internal, passionate, moving of the temper in selfishness. Anger presents itself against a particular person with the purpose of hurting him.

“Clamor.” Those mentioned before in this verse are internal and concealed in the heart, but here we have the breaking out of that which is within and becomes known to the onlooker and manifested by loud tones and by words uncontrolled by the person uttering them.

“Evil speaking.” That baser result of passion which leads men to revile and attack the reputation of those with whom they are angry.

“Be put away from.” These cannot be put away unless one is in the control of One stronger than himself.

The last of these terms is the most typical, “malice,” the badheartedness or malignity from which all evil-doing proceeds. This verse contains not only a catalogue, but a melancholy genealogy of bad passions. The sins marked here were rife in the heathen society and there were, no doubt, some among Paul’s readers who found it hard to forego their former indulgences. This was especially difficult when Christians suffered all manner of evil from their heathen neighbors and former friends. It cost a severe struggle to be silent and “keep the mouth as with a bridle” under fierce and malicious taunts.

Ver. 32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

This is the positive side. The antithesis here is strongly marked at the very start and opens the positive things for the Christians to do. There must be fellowship. This must take the place of malice with its brood of bitter passions. Injury cannot be met with reviling and insult. Those who have the new life will be found forgiving one another even as God forgave them. Here we begin to touch the spring of Christian virtue, the master motive in the Apostle's theory of life. The sacrifice on Calvary, while it was the ground of our salvation, supplies the standard and incentive of moral attainment. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Luke 6:27, 28).

Before the cross of Christ was set up, men could not know how much God loved the world and how far He was ready to go in the way of forgiveness. Christ himself says the same love is displayed in the Father's daily providence (Matt. 6:25-32). The Father's love and the Son's self-sacrifice are altogether of the same quality. It is an offering and a sacrifice. Christ's feet followed the stern and straight path of self-devotion. He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). He was born under the law (Gal. 4:4). That law of God imposed death as the penalty for sin and shaped Christ's sacrifice and made it acceptable unto God.

The persons referred to here have already been regenerated and adopted, having put off the Old Man and put on the New Man. With this new man they have the new spirit, or Christ spirit, and it ought to be easy to forgive one another, especially when they have presented to them the model as shown in the conclusion of this verse—"Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If we take God's dealings with us as a model for our dealing with our neighbors, there will be no room in the heart for the things presented in the negative side (Ver. 31).

There is and there must be a great difference between Christian culture and that of the world. The world's culture leaves the old humanity untouched and only whitewashes it. Christ's

culture ennobles a man from the foundation up, and through regeneration gives him a new nature, the Divine mind and substitutes unselfishness for selfishness.

QUESTIONS

Why, according to Ver. 25, should everyone speak the truth?
How can you be angry and not sin? If you do sin, what are you commanded to do?

How can you tell when a person gives place to the Devil?
What does Paul suggest is better than stealing?

What good advice does Paul give in Ver. 29, to those who speak in prayer-meeting and from the pulpit?

Tell how we may grieve the Holy Spirit.

Who seals the Christian?

What is the day of redemption?

What commandments are broken by those guilty of things mentioned in Ver. 31?

III. Three Points of View for the New Walk, 5:1-14

The subject pursued in these fourteen verses is to show Christ's supreme example of self-sacrifice, purity, and reproof of darkness by light.

1. LOOK ABOVE THYSELF TO FOLLOW GOD, 5:1-2

Ver. 1. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.

The argument passes unbroken from the previous words. Become then imitators of God in respect to freely giving and forgiving and loving one another. This can be done because those who are renewed are beloved children and have one common Father, who paid the ransom by giving His own Son. All human duties for those who love God are subordinated to one standard.

Ver. 2. And walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell.

We can easily walk in love if we can realize the fact that God has forgiven us. We have been told that we are to walk

in love. "Even as Christ loved you." So walk. This is the true standard of life. "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). God the Father gave (John 3:16); God the Son gave, and this high standard the Apostle sets before us. When Christ died He gave His life, not as a model for our imitation, but as a ransom for our redemption (1 John 2:2). So if we walk in love, we follow Him and count not our lives dear unto ourselves, "for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35). All the sacrificial offerings of the old dispensation pointed forward to one true sacrifice for sin and was fulfilled in Him who gave Himself up for us.

"To God for an odour of a sweet smell." This refers to the offerings made unto God as described in the book of Leviticus, which are all fulfilled in the one offering of Christ. It is that which is inhaled, an odour of a sweet smell (Cp. 2 Cor. 2:15). Here we also are a sweet savor of Christ, to the world of saints and sinners in our self-forgetting devotion and sacrificial service.

QUESTIONS

How may we become imitators of God?

Why are they called dear children?

Give meaning of "walking in love."

How much has Christ loved us?

What expressed God's satisfaction of the offering and sacrifice in Christ?

2. LOOK WITHIN THYSELF AND THINK OF PURITY, 5:3-5

Ver. 3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints.

Those who dwell in the love of God and are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, such as fornication, and uncleanness, should not even be named among them. The sweet smelling savour of the sacrifice of Calvary, so pleasing in Heaven, that sweetness of life on earth, which drives away selfishness and

passion comes only to those who are pure in heart. Lust, we are sure, cannot breathe in the sight of the cross.

“Or covetousness,” which expressed the greed in commercialism. The covetous commit idolatry with their money, and the lustful with their flesh. The covetous man imagines that because he restrains himself from many vices, he is safe. Covetousness is something more difficult to recognize, hence more perilous to the soul (Col. 3:5). Covetousness: the Greek word occurs in 4:19 and there translated in the authorized version “greediness.” The root idea is to grasp after another’s own, whatever it may be, money, property, or person.

“As becometh saints.” Saints are those who contend for the faith once delivered unto them. The saints are active representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have their standing in Christ and their walk must be in harmony with the Head. A very good scripture to study in connection with this verse is 2 Peter 3:11, “Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of person ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

Ver. 4. Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting (convenient): but rather giving of thanks.

The vices must all disappear. Impurity of action or speech, talking and jesting are to disappear as completely as covetousness and the grosser vices. These are not befitting. They do not at all harmonize with the character of saints as described in God’s Word. Foolish talking is that of a man who is insensible to the graver aspects of human life. This can only come by and through the Old Man and allowing the Devil to have the rule over one’s life. Those who live near the throne of God will not enjoy the association of those who are engaged in this kind of conversation. A person engaged in loose speech, easily becomes vulgar, and loose speech easily becomes foolish speech. Instead of being engaged in this conversation there should be a giving of thanks.

The Ephesian Christians had come out of heathenism and to them the service of false Gods was the one sin which repre-

sented the dark and evil life from which they had been delivered by the power and grace of God. Paul told them that the covetous man is an idolator. He is unredeemed from his old heathen life and has not passed in as a member of the Body of Christ.

Ver. 5. For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Here Paul adds another and stronger reason why the vices mentioned should not be even named among them. If they share the sins of these unregenerate, they will also share the doom. This you can learn by observation as well as from the Scriptures, that such as are guilty of the vices named herein are not in possession of the Blessed hope. Every fornicator, unclean or covetous man, by so doing, is known as an idolator and therefore hath no inheritance. Who is an idolator? This class is to be named in connection with each of the sins mentioned before. It is not the covetous man alone who is idolatrous, lusting after this world, and if to God covetousness is more specially idolatry, then the other sins are but more subtle forms of this. Paul told the Ephesians that they had obtained an inheritance (1:11) and received its earnest (1:14), and yet here he tells them that they have no inheritance if they are guilty of this uncleanness, showing that what they thought was regeneration was not regeneration.

“In the Kingdom of Christ and of God” means when God and Christ is ruler, and people belong to Him. Then fruits of the Spirit are manifested which are just the opposite to those described in this paragraph. Those who walk after the flesh have no place in the Church of Christ.

QUESTIONS

What are the things not to be named among saints?

What kind of conversation is condemned here?

What was to take its place?

Are these vices committed by people who know the truth?

What was the inheritance of Ver. 5?

3. LOOK TO GOD FOR DIRECTION AND BE LIGHT BEARERS, 5:6-14

Our attention is called here to the difference between the heathen and Christian way of life. This is set out by the familiar figure of light and darkness.

Ver. 6. Let no man deceive you with empty (vain) words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.

Human sin began (Gen. 3) with exactly such deceit—vain words, and they are the subtlest ingredients still, in the secret of temptation. The vain words here are the same as the words that are empty. The Apostle, in Ver. 5, has warned us that the inheritance obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can only be secured by being separated from the things that lead to darkness, and for this reason we should be able to discern the words that speak for truth and those that are but empty and deceive.

“For because of these things cometh the wrath of God.” In our study in the book of Romans (1:16-19) Paul presents the revelation of the righteousness of God for those who will walk in His light. He also presents the revelation of the wrath of God which comes upon the disobedient. There is but one way by which to escape the wrath of God and that is to accept God’s Son as our redeemer, who has by His own death, set us free from the penalty of the law. Obedience unto God brings us light and righteousness. Disobedience brings upon us the wrath of God and darkness. We are instructed in the Scripture that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The only fellowship that God does approve of is our fellowship with those who are obedient unto Him, and upon whom His wrath is not abiding.

Much has been said in these verses about false teachers; the false teachers who are going about trying to establish their own righteousness and are constantly finding fault with the Word of eternal truth. These are the persons who are deceiv-

ing us with empty words. The empty words are words void of truth, life and Spirit. They are words made up of but the shell and have not the kernel, the underlying fact, connected with them.

Ver. 7. **Be not ye therefore, partakers with them.**

Those who are disobedient and are under the wrath of God. The warning is very much needed in these days of worldliness. There is so much being offered for religion that when rightly examined is disobedience and darkness. The only way we can be sure of attaining His righteousness is to keep free from association with the sons of disobedience. The reference to punishment is the foundation of the warning against companionship with them.

Ver. 8. **For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light.**

Here the Apostle presents the reason taken from their experience of grace. This when rightly understood should keep us not only from association, but from any desire to be as we once were. The future participation depends upon present character. We are not to cast in our lot again with the unclean and covetous. We have renounced their ways and their doom. We do not want to have any further association with them. We have exchanged darkness for the light enjoyed by the saints. If we want to enjoy the inheritance that is promised us, we cannot return to our old sins. If we have light, we must walk in the light and by doing so we will reach the realm of greater light.

“But are now light in the Lord.” That is, you are not only to come into the light yourselves and to walk worthy of the light, but you are to be light unto others.

“Walk as children of light.” This is to manifest a man’s standing in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we represent ourselves unto others as enjoying the light, we must walk in that light and by walking in it we will help those who are in darkness

to see the difference between persons walking in light and those walking in darkness.

What belongs to the walk in the light? (1) Fellowship with God in Christ; (2) Laying off all ungodly doing; (3) Living according to God's good pleasure.

Ver. 9. For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

The children of the light are referred to the fruit of the light in order to incite them to a corresponding walk. This shows us what the character of the children of light must be.

"In all goodness and righteousness and truth." Fruit is in the singular and yet three kinds of fruit are mentioned (Gal. 5:22, 23). "The fruit of the Spirit" is followed by nine, in order to render prominent its unity in contrast with the "words of the flesh." Then in Phil. 4:8, "Whatsoever things are true." They are the virtues of the Christian man. You are in the light of the Lord. Now walk as children of the light. How shall we walk as children of the light? The Apostle tells us, in goodness and righteousness and truth. Let these be fruit of the light and manifest it in these three ways. And if you live this way you will find out what it is to please God. If you do this, your life will be entirely free from the works of darkness.

Ver. 10. Proving (searching out) what is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

We prove what is acceptable unto the Lord by walking as children of the light and advertising it by bearing the fruit which is named in the former verses. Wherever this fruit appears we know that this light has been, though its ways are past finding out. The test of a thing being right or wrong is its being acceptable or unacceptable to the Lord. The proof of a thing being acceptable unto the Lord would be the approval given to it by the divinely enlightened conscience of the righteous man.

"What is well-pleasing unto the Lord." The Christian is

one whose course is continually proving and testing the will of God in practice, investigating not what pleases himself, but what pleases God. Let us judge ourselves that we be not judged by the Lord. Let us not count wrong a trifle. Let us never imagine that our defect of one kind will be atoned for by excellence in another. "May your whole Spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Ver. 11. **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove (convict) them.**

In the following verses (11-13) we have a warning against fellowship with evil workers. We as Christians are light bearers and ought to influence the surrounding darkness by the light which God has given us as Christians.

"The unfruitful works of darkness." Works which contrast in character with the good and righteous and true works which are the works of light (Gal. 5:19-22).

"But rather reprove them." If we follow the instruction given by the Apostle Paul, we have to do more than not to be in fellowship, we must reprove in order to do our duty as children of the light. This will require Christian courage, but there are many who are, through association and approval, becoming partakers of the darkness instead of being positive in reproof.

Ver. 12. **For the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame (indecent) even to speak of.**

This is the general reason for reproof on the part of those whose duty it is to reprove.

"Things done in secret,"—things done by the Gentiles; the open and manifest forms of evil in which they invite their Christian neighbors to join (Ver. 11). Silent abstinence is not enough. It is a shame and a disgrace to our common nature and a grievous peril to the young and innocent, to fill the public prints with the nauseating details of crime. There is only one way by which the darkness can be manifested and that is

through the light. The daily life of Christian men among men of the world is a perpetual reproof that tells against secret sins, even when no words are spoken. Everyone who walks in Christ's steps and breathes His Spirit is carrying on against these sins a stronger warfare in silence than by spoken arguments. However, Christian reproof must not be neglected by children of the light.

Ver. 13. **But all things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light.**

"But all things" denotes what is described in Ver. 12. You who were once darkness, once wandering in pleasures and lusts of the heathen, you were without hope and without God. Now the light of the Gospel has disclosed the darkness in which you once were and then dispelled the darkness, and so you are enjoying the light, and the heathen who are in darkness will need the light that you possess so God can bring them out of darkness. The world is in the night of sin, and the world will always be in that darkness, therefore it is necessary that men and women use the light that others may see their light and through it glorify God.

"For everything that is made manifest is light." If you use your light properly, it will become punishment unto the wicked and when this takes place, that which is secret will be made manifest unto them, become pain and its scandalousness recognized. If light is manifested then men can be made to see the true nature of their sins and will forsake them.

Ver. 14. **Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.**

God is now speaking. Listen to His voice. "Awake thou that sleepest."

Paul re-utters the promise of the old covenant from the lips of the new, and from the prophetic Scriptures, the things concerning the salvation of Christ as sounded in the Apostle's ears, and conveys them to the world.

The Jewish Church is set forth as in a state of darkness and death and we have an exhortation by the prophet to walk and become light for that light is the glory of Jehovah. Now if that is true from the Old Testament, why is it not suitable for what we are discussing here concerning the Christian Church. Paul is speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit and brings about the Spiritual meaning of the passage. There are a number of Scriptures that are similar in teaching to the one just quoted (Isa. 60:1; Rom. 13:11, 12; 1 Cor. 15:34; 1 Thess. 5:6).

“Arise and call upon thy God.” This is a solemn warning to every Christian man and Christian woman making up the Body of Christ.

“Awake thou that sleepest!” Wake up, look around, see what the conditions are that are not in harmony with the Word of God. “Arise, shine, for the light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1). The people that walk in the darkness have seen a great light.

“And arise from the dead.” The sleeper is inactive and one who is dead. The promise intimates, “And Christ shall give thee light.” The figure is that of morning when day breaks and man see the sunlight. Christ Himself is the daylight and makes the day that enlightens us; the light that we have been speaking of as the power to waken the sleeping dead.

QUESTIONS

Why should people be deceived by empty words?

What class of people are under the wrath of God?

Do you realize the difference between the darkness and the light referred to in Ver. 8?

Name the three fruits of the Spirit.

How can you prove by the fruits of the Spirit what is suitable unto the Lord?

What is our duty to those who are producing unfruitful works of darkness?

What is the condition of those who are asleep, according to Ver. 14?

IV. The Spirit Filled Life, 5:15-21

The Apostle has made it clear in the foregoing paragraph that the Christian, although he was known as a Gentile, must indicate the great change that has taken place through regeneration (4:17). The Christian shows that he belongs to the company known as light-bearers. No matter how the actions of those who are known as Christians may be hidden and things done in secret, the time will come when they will be brought to light and instead of being a help, will be a positive hinderance to the individual and to the cause.

Ver. 15. Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise.

This probably refers to the thing that Paul said in Ver. 11, "Having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." We are living in a world of darkness. The great majority of the human race is classed with unregenerate. Paul realized the great danger of being led away with those who love darkness and thus becoming like the world. He instructs us not to be partakers with those who are in darkness and doing deeds while in darkness, but if we belong to the children of the light to go a step further and reprove those who walk without being guided by the light.

It is not only "walk" but "look." The Christian who looks and knows before taking the next step is the one who can be trusted and followed. The Christian must show that he is not a fool, and not unwise, but wise to observe the steps and seize every opportunity in this great period of darkness through which the church must pass. These are days so perilous that every Christian needs the very best wisdom of God and His will to save him from the fatal stumbling that is so prevalent in this age when the lamp—the Word of God—is so much neglected.

"Not as unwise, but as wise." One would think that the incentive mentioned in the Word of God for the higher attain-

ment in Spiritual life would be readily accepted and all professing Christians would act in a way that their conduct would show this change (1:18-21). The Apostle's prayer is that their understanding might be opened and that enlightenment might be granted.

Ver. 16. **Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

Buying up the opportunities. This is what those do who act not as unwise men, but as wise. They show it in their walk. There is a reason given here for this resolution not to miss an opportunity of doing God's will, because all ought to be aware of the moral corruption which surrounds them and is unfriendly to Christian righteousness. Through Christian righteousness he was to offer a continual protest on the behalf of the Divine authority which even other men had forgotten. They were to redeem the time by the use of the opportunities because "the days are evil." They were in the days of Nero, an emperor who was under the direction of Satan. There are so many who are too reckless to think and too impatient to learn. Everything in these times in which we live is sacrificed for speed. The telegraph and daily newspaper symbolize the age. The public love to catch quickly any new sensation. A premium is set upon carelessness and hurry. Earnest men who are anxious for the triumph of a good cause, push forward with unweighed denunciations that destroy Christian advocacy, and wound the cause of truth and charity. Men pushing forward without the right knowledge of God, understanding the Divine plan, must in the end receive some loss and fall under the judgment of God and His Word. It is after all, truth that lives.

The Apostle (4:21) calls our attention to the fact that he has heard and been taught by Jesus Christ—"As the truth is in Jesus." Now it depends altogether on whether we have heard Him and have been taught by Him even as the truth is in Christ. It is not as though we had heard this and that teaching about Christ, not as though we had heard this and that thing concerning Him, but as we have heard Him. That is, heard Christ

himself, for His words which He speaks to us are Spirit and Life (John 6:63). The Apostle does not say, "The truth as it is in Jesus." If the Apostle had said that, it would imply that there is some truth that is not in Him and that is not the case. Notice the words as they appear in the text: "As the truth is in Jesus." This implies that there is no truth apart from Him. Jesus declared in his farewell sermon, "I am the truth," and the words which testify of Him are truth. Here is the key for the worthy and righteous walk. The time-servers are unwise both intellectually and morally.

Saint Paul sees a special reason for heedfulness, because "the days are evil." Those who are best acquainted with the early history, realize the Church was passing through a very critical period, but from that time to the present, what period has not been critical for the church that stands true to the truth as it is in Jesus? It is the time when we must employ every means to increase our knowledge of Christ. We are living in a time when faith must be strengthened and Spiritual life must be tested by the Word of God. The Christian man must be prepared at any time for the siege. Therefore, fortifications must be strengthened and soldiers must drill each day with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that the training for Christian warfare may be thorough, that Christ our Captain can depend upon us for victory at each attack of the enemy.

It was just four years until Peter, the Apostle of Pentecost, and Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the great missionary and organizer of churches, the writer of Church Epistles, were numbered with those who died a martyr's death. Just a few years later, in the year 70, we have the capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Jewish temple and nation, so that in the year 63, when the Apostle wrote the Epistle, the sky was everywhere dark and lowering with times of coming storms. No one could tell when the siege would be on. The Bible was full of prophetic teaching concerning the times of the early Christians. The Bible is full of prophetic teachings concerning the times in which we live. However, even the professing church

is so occupied with the material and industrial, that the visions of God, and the Word of eternal truth are unheeded and the crisis may be at hand and yet unknown.

Ver. 17. Wherefore be ye not foolish (unwise), but understand what the will of the Lord is.

This teaching follows very naturally what he has said about the necessity of wisdom. These are days of unrest and we do not know the will of the Lord which is the greatest need. Paul says to Timothy, that people will be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). The intellectual is now over-emphasized, the physical is receiving the attention of the public, and the will of the Lord as revealed in the sixty-six books which contain His plan for the human race is unstudied and unheeded. People are looking around everywhere for something to satisfy this unrest. The Ephesian Christians must understand that Christ is no mere adviser, that the Christ life must be one that harmonizes with the Word of truth, not that which suits the individual himself. Christ is our Lord and it is our business to understand Him in order that we may execute His designs. Because of this, Christ's servants require a watchful eye and worthy intellect. They must not be triflers, given to sentiment. They must be men great in mind.

We have studied two great prayers given to the church in this epistle (1:17-23, 3:14-21). God has wonderfully revealed what it means for the Christian to have his standing in Christ and that the church is being built as a Body for the Lord Jesus Christ as a habitation for God.

Ver. 18. And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot (excess), but be filled with the Spirit.

In this Ephesian church were converted thieves and drunkards, and now why is it necessary to give this admonition? These are some of the unfruitful works of darkness and lead to dangerous association and fellowship. Some men take drink in excess to deaden their sensibility to trouble, to lessen the

pain, to destroy their memory or disturbing feelings, but some take the intoxicating cup to incite to action the mind. They claim things become more vivid and plain. This is the kind of drinking which brings men into violence and profligacy. Paul indicates, however, how this craving for something that is not in harmony with the walk of the Christian should be satisfied—“But be filled with the Spirit.” We must forsake all sins which render it impossible for the righteous and pure Spirit of God to grant to us fullness of His Spirit, and open the channels to the streams that flow from the Divine and eternal fountains, so they may find their way into our nature. If you do this, your vision of eternal things will have a perpetual keenness. Your joy in God will be anticipation of the blessed life beyond the grave. The source of true righteous enthusiasm is not bodily or mental excitement, but a Divine Spiritual impulse.

Ver. 19. **Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody (music) with your heart to the Lord.**

People who are filled with the Spirit of God are interested in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Their enjoyment is fellowship with those who are full of the things of God. This comes from the Spirit of God which dwells in Christ.

Their singing was not always to be worship addressed to God. They were to sing to each other as well as to Him; just as the minister is to preach to those who are before him and bring the message from God, so those who have the gift of song are to sing to the church. We are to sing about God's power in order to give new energy and courage; songs about the glory of Heaven to transfigure hope into rapture, singing and making music in our hearts to the Lord. Spiritual enthusiasm creates an inner music in the heart as well as the utterances given to God in song.

Man's body is the temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit lives in the temple. The Holy Spirit directs the person that gives him a home in the temple. Paul prays (3:19) that we may be filled unto all the fulness of God, and

then instructs us to grow to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (4:13). The Holy Spirit's fulness is manifested within the individual soul and within the church. If this be true the body possessed by the Holy Spirit, as members of the church, is truly the Body of Christ and even becomes the habitation of God (2:21, 22).

Their talk was music. They spoke to each other in songs and Spiritual psalms. Hearts filled with the Spirit, love to sing. Even those who are not able to lead in song enjoy the melody referred to by Paul. This was the custom in each church, that the Christians would take up a psalm and draw out one of the pearls and in turn would recite them at their meetings and adapt them to their measures and modes of song.

In the next two verses we have two more manifestations of the presence of God's Spirit:

Ver. 20. Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Continual thankfulness welling up from the full heart. "In everything give thanks," he wrote to the Thessalonians in his earliest letter. We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God. It is in the evil days as well as in good days. Nothing comes altogether amiss to the child of God. In the heaviest burden, the sharpest sting of injury, this is all included, in everything or all things. We may not know now, but we shall know hereafter.

"Always," the Apostle says, "for all things." Here Paul leaves no moment of room for discontent. He had learned the secret of contentment in whatever state he was. If he learned this in that early period of tremendous opposition, what is our experience as we live in the present period?

Ver. 21. Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

In the Corinthian church we find many were ready to prophesy, sing and recite, and that confusion arose in the church meetings, and some admonition was given. The Apostle

does not want such a scene to occur again. He asks for a full leadership of the Spirit, and when free utterance is given in song through the inspiration of new life, he adds this word of caution as he closes the paragraph, "Being subjected one to another in the fear of Christ." God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). "The fear of Christ." Christ is the unseen witness and present at their assemblages. The Christian ought always to remember that the church was made up of different members and these members have a relation one to another because they, as an organism, are known as the Body of Christ. Thus in mutual subjection lies their freedom and strength and peace.

QUESTIONS

What can you say about the Christian's position?

Why does Paul open this paragraph by using the word "look"?

How can the Christian "redeem the time"?

Are the days as evil now as they were when this book was written?

Can one be a Christian and not be filled with the Spirit of God?

What substitute does Paul give to take the place of fellowship of unfruitful works of darkness?

What effect has music on the Christian's life?

Name the two things that grow out of a Spirit filled life.

(1) Always giving thanks, (2) Proper conduct in one's position, or submission, or proper relationship as members of the Body of Christ.

V. Their Walk Among Themselves, 5:22-6:9

1. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, 5:22-33

In the former paragraph we discussed spiritual relations concerning the members of the Christian Church. In this we are discussing special Christian duties in domestic relations. We find that the true Christian life is not an isolated life. With such a relationship as presented in this letter there must be a very high standard manifested in domestic relations. This relationship is clearly set forth in the following paragraph.

Ver. 22. Wives be in subjection (submit yourselves) unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

In Ver. 21 we were instructed that the Christians were to be subject one to another. By its subjection, the gifts of all the members of Christ's Body are made available for the up-building of God's temple. This is to be done in the fear of God.

The author has been emphasizing the proper relationship between member and member, and because of this relationship they must walk worthy of it, not only because there is such a relationship, but that the right influence may go out from this society upon the onlooker who is not yet a member of the Body of Christ. Every member in this body is under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the different members of the body are in subjection to the head of the physical body, so the members of the Body of Christ are in subjection one to another; related one to another and all under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is illustrated by referring to the relation that exists between the husband and wife. The right relationship of man and woman will show the influence of the church exerted upon society. In the relation of man and wife, we have on the one side submission to authority, and submission and self-surrender, but the wife is to be in subjection as unto the Lord, or in other words, as is fitting unto the Lord.

The Apostle Paul tells us (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12), "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." This subordination is fundamental. Just as the Church looks up and obeys Christ, so in the ideal Christian family, each wife is so related to her husband. When the ideal cannot be obtained through the husband's defects, it is still the aim of the wife to carry it out as far as these defects admit.

The head of the woman is the man, and the head of every man is Christ. The head of Christ is God. The woman is of the man and was created because of the man. This tells us that in the Divine order of things, it is the man's part to lead and

rule, and the woman's part to be ruled, and there is no difference whatever, if the instructions of the Apostle Paul are carefully read "as unto the Lord." The Christian woman will not feel any hardship in this if the husband's standing is right in Christ. Such subordination as expressed here by the Apostle Paul does not mean inferiority, but rather the opposite. The same submission must be within the Church that is within the house. Both are the children of God by the same birth-right, both receive the same Holy Spirit according to the Scripture used by Saint Peter on the day of Pentecost. Christian courtesy treats the woman as the glory of the man.

Ver. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the Head of the Church; being himself the Saviour (preserver) of the body.

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. Christ said, "Upon this rock will I build my church." He is the builder and the Church belongs to Him, and just as the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the Head of the Church. The duties here, of the husband to the wife, are enforced by the illustration of Christ being the Head of the Church, the Body. The husband is the head of the wife (1 Cor. 11:3).

It is clear from all Scriptures which taught of the mystery, that the Church is the Body of Christ and the members of that Body are members of Christ, and He is the Saviour of the Body. The Church is His and His alone. Christ, being the Head, is the preserver (Saviour) of the Body, the Church, which would necessarily perish were it not for the life communicated to it from the Head, and so the wife, who separates herself from her husband by living in antagonism instead of submission to him, is dead while she liveth, losing the life which through him might be hers.

Ver. 24. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.

There is some difference in Christ as the head of the church and man as the head of the wife. Nevertheless the Church

is subject to Christ. It would be well for all who study this book to have clearly in mind what is meant by the Church. The Church here is a Body called out from the world, saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died with Christ, who rose with Christ, and who lives because Christ lives. This new society has a mission similar to that which was expressed by the Head while He was here on earth.

The Church is a separate institution from the world. She has but one great mission, and that is to save men, to add members to this Body. The Church now, in a large measure, is being side-tracked by worldly influence and modernism, having in view civilization and world-betterment, instead of listening to the Head and taking orders directly from Him. There is not that relationship in the so-called professing church to-day to the Head, as taught here by the Apostle Paul. If the Church is subject to Christ, she knows Christ as her Saviour and protector, and knows that under all circumstances the Body is safe when directed and protected by the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Head. What a wonderful relationship there must exist between the true Church and the Body of Christ. This is to be the relation between the wife and husband.

Ver. 25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it.

See to it that you love your wife, even as Christ also loved the Church. The husband is here placed in emphatic parallelism with Christ. The reason for this is fully set forth. There is such love expressed between Christ and the Church that He "gave Himself up for it," even unto death.

It was by the disobedience of one man that sin came into the world. It was by the obedience of one man, even unto death, that righteousness and life came, and all righteousness and life has come to take the place of sin and death. Then that relationship must not be forgotten that is expressed between the purchased Church and the person who has paid the price. Christ gave Himself for the Church, even unto death, and if

that same spirit is manifested by the husband's self-devotion even unto death, there is but continual joy in the heart of the wife who can live in companionship with that self-sacrificing husband.

The Church, knowing what it cost to save her and give her the joy that she now possesses, creates love for Christ, so woman's love for man. Man's love for woman modeled on that of Christ for the Church, leads him, if need be, to sacrifice his life for the protection of his weaker partner and to nourish and cherish her. Woman's love for man, modeled on that of the Church for Christ, shows itself in the one duty of submission—a single duty, but of manifold application.

Ver. 26. That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing (laver) of water with the word.

The Church's purification is antecedent in thought to her sanctification through the sacrifice of Christ, and it is therefore stated, "ye are washed, ye are sanctified" (1 Cor. 6:11). It is the order of doctrine which he laid down in the Epistle to the Romans, where sanctification is built on the foundation laid in justification through the blood of Christ. We have learned through Paul's instructions (Rom. 6:4) that baptism serves as a visible and formal expression of the soul's passage through the gate of forgiveness into the sanctified life. The believer, having thus passed through death, burial, and resurrection by faith into union with Christ, is here instructed as a believer, how he may obtain in every period of his Christian life a more complete sanctification. The Apostle here is not emphasizing the fact of passing out of the old into the new, but the great need of spiritual power and growth as a member in the Body of Christ.

The washing unto sanctification here propounded is not in natural earthly water, applied in sacred ceremony, but it is affected by the cleansing, purging, purifying and judging Word of God. In the Jewish church, to approach God in the sanctuary acceptably, there was need of daily washing at the laver that

stood in the court on the way from the altar to the sanctuary, and which was always full of water for this purpose. Thus the church to-day in its membership whose service knows no stated or limited period but is continuous day by day, hour by hour, without intermission needs constant and continuous cleansing and purifying by the keen and infallible Word of God. This Word of God is "living, and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). And again Christ said (John 15:3), "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." So it is impossible for a Christian to grow in grace and make progress in sanctification without repeated and constant washing with the Word. No pious exercise can take its place; as we are regenerated, so we are cleansed and sanctified. When this cleansing and sanctifying is not carried forward by the Word, much confusion and burdening of conscience is experienced by thousands of Christians. When the Word of God is not given its proper place, it leaves the soul open to all manner of unsound and visionary fanaticism even with those who are earnestly striving after holiness. This caution is needed to-day. Many devout and well meaning people are following false leaders because they know not the truth of God.

A very large holiness literature is published and eagerly read by ardent hungry souls, who if they would devote only half the time needed for reading it to acquire a thorough washing of water with the Word of God, they would soon experience a far greater and more healthful growth in true holiness. This cannot be had even by the closest study of the lives and experiences of the most holy and devout people that ever lived. There is danger on the one hand of mistaking our assent to the experience of others for our own actual progress and growth in grace, and on the other hand, of making these expe-

riences a pattern and standard of our own life and thus becoming bond-servants of men.

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

The world or anything else cannot produce this glorious church. His purpose in giving Himself for His future Church was: (1) to cleanse it, (2) to sanctify it, (3) to present it to Himself, thus a glorious and holy and spotless Church. The Church is, according to Divine intention, in this world, glorious, without spot or wrinkle; holy and without blemish. Christ died for the Church, not because its perfection made Him love it, but because He was willing to undergo any suffering to deliver it from the world. His love was so strong that He did not recoil from any shame or anguish to bring it out of sin and make it holy and spotless.

Ver. 28. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself.

The imperfection of the wife does not release the husband from the debt of love. Through the right kind of relationship is developed the strength of love which gives occasion for self-sacrifice and devotion. Here in this verse he gives another reason for this love. We have been told that husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. So ought husbands also to love their own selves (their wives) because they and their wives are "one flesh." The man is now to be head of the wife and the wife the body of the husband, as the Church in Christ is the Body. Therefore, he who loveth his own wife, loveth himself.

Ver. 29. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church.

"No man ever" is not limited. If he actually injured himself, it cannot even then be said that he hateth his own flesh, "but nourished and cherished it." This growing development is brought about through nourishment.

“Even as the Lord the Church.” Christ called Himself the Bread of Life. We know the Lord is continually directing as far as His children are obedient to Him in the Church. He does not only redeem; He nourishes and feeds.

Through the Apostle Paul, Christ, the Head of the Church, has given us seven great books to study. The Holy Spirit has brought these truths of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through Paul as His agent, these great books were written for our instruction to help us understand our relation to Christ so that our state might be equal to our standing. In this way the Church is fed, nourished and strengthened.

Ver. 30. **Because we are members of His body, (of His flesh, and of His bones).**

He nourisheth and cherisheth the Church. How could He help but do this when He is the Head of the body. When the body suffers, He suffers. When the body is not nourished, He understands all about it. The Church as a whole and as individual members, are the members of His body, “of His flesh and of His bones.”

The Apostle Paul is presenting the same line of thought as recorded in (1 Cor. 11:3-12). He would have you know “that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Man is the image of the glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man, for man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. So the same thing may be said concerning Christ and His Church. We have here a profound mystery disclosed that the Church is the Body of Christ which accounts for His love to the Church and His authority over it. We were told that He nourisheth and cherisheth the Church just because we are members of His Body.

Now this membership, in its origin, was older than creation itself. God choose His Son before the foundation of the world and the members of His Church were included in that call, and this was the mystery that was hidden in God from before the

foundation or creation of the world until finally revealed unto the Apostle Paul as described in the third chapter. We were thus created in the Son of God's love, antecedent to the time of our personal redemption when we accepted Him by faith. Such is the teaching of this Epistle as well as the companion Epistles which Paul wrote while a prisoner in Rome.

Christ died, even the death of the cross; His body was buried, and from that tomb came forth the Church, His Body. The derivation of Eve from the body of Adam, as that is termed the mystery in Genesis, is analogous with the derivation of the Bride from the Body of Christ. The origin of woman in the man which forms the basis of marriage in the Scriptures is later than the origin of the Church, the Body of Christ.

The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man Adam, and while he slept, God took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh, and forming woman brought her to the man, and the man said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24). Adam spoke and made this declaration at the time of his own wedding. Thus in some mystical and real sense, marriage is a reunion, Adam seeking his other self, the complement of his nature. He founds a new home.

The inspired Apostle, from the passage in Genesis, explains the origin of marriage and indicates that which really draws the bridegroom to the bride. However, with this declaration a deeper truth, as before stated, can be secured from "before the foundation of the world."

Ver. 31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh.

Paul quoted from Genesis (2:32), "Of his flesh and of his bone," and now proceeds to quote the next verse (Gen. 2:24) which confirms his teaching concerning the affection which ought to exist between man and wife. Since the woman was taken from the body of the man, he should naturally, from a Scriptural point of view, cling to her, she being part of him. That which is of interest to one, must also be of interest to

the other. Here we have the Scriptural grounds for the forsaking of all others and cleaving but to the one because the two, through marriage, have become one flesh.

Ver. 32. **This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.**

What does this great mystery signify? We see that it has to do with Christ and His Church. It means that the Church is the Body of Christ. That is the real meaning as expressed in the Scriptures. Mysteries in God's Word are truths which the human mind, unaided by Divine revelation, could never find out or grasp. God, however, unfolds them in His Word and reveals them to His own through the Spirit who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10).

Note carefully how this passage relates to the quotation in the former paragraph (Gen. 2:22, 23). This is the account of the origin and making, not of Adam, but of his wife, who was builded from a portion of Adam's body which was already in existence and completed. Along this line of thought does the Apostle move and here is the explanation of the great mystery. There is a close intimacy between Christ and His Church in as much as the Church is His Body. The term "bride" or "wife" of Jehovah is quite often used in Old Testament Scripture and a proper understanding of these terms will help us to ascertain the true meaning of Paul's teaching here.

In Gen. 24 we have Abraham sending his servant to get a bride for Isaac, his son and heir. He was not to seek her among the Gentiles, but "go unto my country and to my kindred" (Gen. 24:4; Cp. also Ps. 46 and many other passages in the Prophetic Psalms as well as in the Songs of Solomon). Now there must have been many Jewish believers in the churches to which Paul wrote this letter, and as he expounded this truth of the Body of Christ, taken from all nations (Israel included but without any special prerogative) the questions would arise again and again, What of the fulfilment of the many and glowing promises of Jehovah concerning His final marriage with the

virgin, the daughter of Zion? Are not the gifts and calling of God without repentance? Paul warned Gentile believers not to be wise in their own conceits because of this mystery (another mystery that blindness in part happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles); so here he speaks of the parallel mystery to-wit: that when the Body of Christ, the Church, is completed from among the nations (including Israel of course, but reckoned among the nations) then will take place the formation and preparation of the bride, the wife of the second Adam.

Thus the term "bride of Christ," in this mystery, would mark that portion of the Body which comes from Israel, and who during the formation of the Church, out of all nations in this age, has not had in the judicious providence of God any separate existence or history; but which was hidden as it were in the Body as the rib was in the first Adam's side. So she as part of Israel partakes of the same wonderful life and blessing of Christ with all the other believers, but in the final consummation she is to find a peculiar and separate presentation as a special organism. She is to be builded into a second woman for the second Adam, a truly Israelitish bride of Jehovah, a proof and evidence to the rest of the Jewish nation of the unshaken faithfulness of Jehovah to all His promises; evidence, too, that the seeming destruction of the Jewish nation as such and its almost complete scattering and mingling among the Christianized nations of the world was only apparent.

From the side of the great second Adam will be taken a body of Christ-believing Israelites, the earnest and first fruit of Israel's final national redemption and restoration to Divine favor, the guarantee and at once the agent, for the execution of all the great and precious promises of Jehovah given to the fathers. So as the body of Adam enclosed the wife, so the body of Christ (the Church from all nations) encloses to-day, all the Israelitish elements from which the bride proper, according to Scripture, is to be formed and presented to the second Adam, "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh." That will be the

signal and means of Jehovah's reopening official relations as it were, with His ancient people Israel. It does not mean any disruption of the Body to distinguish between the Body and bride. All who believe in Christ are one in Christ Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile. Adam declared that Eve was bone of his bone, and Paul declared in Ver. 31, "For this cause a man shall leave—and the two shall be one flesh," but it does mean much confusion and darkness of council to confound Body and bride, and to apply the latter term indiscriminately to the whole Body of believers from all nations.

In the summary of this entire passage we see (1) in Ver. 23 man is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Had Paul wished to teach that the church was the bride or wife of Christ this would have been his opportunity, then we should have read, "Even as Christ is the bridegroom of the church." (2) In Ver. 30, "For we are members of His body" would also read, "For we are the bride of Christ." If Paul had intended to teach in this passage that which he is commonly supposed to teach, that the Church is the bride of Christ, why did he not use the term freely and frankly? It must be that that was not his purpose. He was the bearer and revealer of a mystery, not made known in past ages to the children of men, and it was his special gospel mission to unfold this mystery, which was the Church, the Body of Christ, and we as believers, members one of another.

Ver. 33. Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband.

The Apostle closes this paragraph with this very helpful instruction for Christian parents. There is nothing to be said beyond what the Apostle has here presented. See that you all, in your individual capacity, whatever may be your relations, do that which becometh members of the Body of Christ. The husband is to love his wife even as he loves himself and the wife is to reverence her husband which is a necessary condi-

tion of the submission emphasized in the former part of this paragraph.

QUESTIONS

Explain the domestic relation as presented in Ver. 22.

In what sense is the husband the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church?

Give reason for Christ's love for the church.

In what sense does Christ Jesus nourish and cherish the Church?

To whom are all the members, including the officers of the church, subject?

Explain the mystery as presented in Genesis concerning Adam and Eve. Explain the mystery concerning Christ and the church.

Give reasons for higher relations of man and wife than father and mother.

2. CHILDREN AND PARENTS, 6: 1-4

In the preceding paragraph we considered the duty of wife to husband and members of the church to Christ; we have now to consider the duties of children to parents. The Christian family is the cradle and fortress of the Christian faith. When parents are thus united as expressed in the former paragraph, knowing their obligations to one another, the family honor is secure and a basis is had for reverence and discipline within the home, and so the Apostle turns in the opening of this sixth chapter, from the husband and wife to the children of the household.

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

The Apostle addresses these children as present in the assembly where the letter is read. Paul considered the children holy, even if but one parent belonged to the church (1 Cor. 7: 14). These children, no doubt, are of tender age and under parental care. Obedience is the law of childhood, and if the parents are in the Lord as expressed before, obedience is in a great part the child's religion and that is to be practiced "in the Lord." Jesus is the head over all things and is the authority

of life of boys and girls. He is the head over the house, and in His love He guards the little one in the chamber of the home. The wonderful love of parents to their offspring and the awful authority with which they are invested can come only from those united with God through Christ. Christian men and women who understand just what God through Christ has done for the Church, how he does nourish and cherish and keep the Church under His own supervision, can by this more fully learn their relation to one another as parents, and with such an understanding, children in such homes, under such parents, have a great heritage.

“For this is right.” It is right for children to obey their parents in the Lord. The right relation to the Church or the Head of the Church will bring right relation between parents, and right relation between parents in the Lord will bring sweet obedience from children to such parents. These children are brought into the home to take the place, in some future day, of those who gave them existence, and by the right nourishment and training will be able to establish homes of their own that will be as light-houses to the community in which they live.

Ver. 2. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise).

The Apostle reminds the children of the law and of the ten commandments taught them in their earliest childhood from the Scriptures. He calls their attention to the first commandment with promise and upon this the continuance of the church and of society depends. It is the first commandment with promise showing man's relation to man on the table of stone written there by God Himself. It is not only the first commandment, but it is a commandment with a promise. It takes the form of a promise and holds out to obedience a bright future. It is indeed a promise and upon this promise salvation itself rests both externally and internally.

Paul was not only thinking of the ten commandments as a part of the law given to the Jewish people or else he would have said then that this was the only commandment that has a

promise through obedience. He meant that of all the Jewish laws, this was the first that had a promise attached to it and this promise was to the individual and nation. It is not an assurance that every child that obeys his parents will escape sickness and poverty and be prosperous and live to a good old age. It shows that a disobedient child makes disorder in the home and disorder in the nation, and the national disorder leads to the destruction of national life. If children honor their parents they make good citizens and a prosperous nation.

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

This is really the purport of the promise referred to in the former verse. The well-being is put in the front rank; the long life is second. Even among the most degraded people it will go well with him who honors his parents through obedience and his life will be long, at least in comparison to others.

The promise made here in the Scriptures through inspiration is seldom presented to the children as a challenge for good behaviour. It must be because parents do not have the faith that they ought to have in things that the Scripture presents, and failing to transmit that faith unto the children it makes the children careless and they lack confidence in what God promises through right relationship of children to parents.

Ver. 4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord).

This instruction is made to all parents in the Lord, and if the parents are in the Lord and have the right relationship to one another and to the Church, the admonition given to fathers here would be well to heed. Parents must exercise great care not to provoke to disobedience if they expect children to be obedient. It is the hasty, rough treatment of children that destroys childish confidence and repels them to opposition instead of affection. The Apostle seems to allude to provoking

by unreasonable blame and uncertain temper in ordinary home training and discipline.

These instructions to the fathers apply to all who have charge of children; not only to fathers, but to pastors and teachers of every description whose work is among children. Many a child received his bias for life from the influence of the teacher before whom he sat in the day school or Sunday-school. The ideas which children form of Christ and His Church are gathered from what they see, in a large measure, manifested in the home.

“But bring them up in nurture.” This admonition requires serious observance on the part of the parents that their children should belong to Christ and be under Christ’s care. The nurture is to be in the chastisement and admonition of the Lord. The children are also Christ’s subjects and have to be taught obedience to His authority. The children’s redemption is by their birth into the world and if rightly instructed they will always be members of the Church. The parents have received the charge of their children from Christ and have, therefore, to nurture them in the admonition of the Lord. Let me emphasize this great need of the right admonition now so seldom witnessed in the home. The admonition the Apostle refers to is of the Lord.

The primary condition of successful Christian parents is that they should care more for the loyalty of their children to Christ than for anything else. They should really care more for this than their health, their intellectual welfare and their prosperity or social activities. Their loyalty to Christ must be cared for, not because it will keep them from vices which might degrade and ruin but for its own sake and Christ’s sake. Only when our children have found eternal righteousness and eternal life in Him, has the trust we received from Him been successfully discharged. Only then have our children discharged their supreme duty and achieved their supreme blessedness.

Parents should expect their children to be loyal to Christ.

They are born in Christ by parents who are of the Body of Christ. They are born thus, into the Divine household, and as they are born into this Divine household, there should never be a time when the relationship between them and their Lord should not be confirmed and more clearly revealed. It will be a pleasure and a joy to the children to do that which they have learned in their childhood, because the children realize that they were instructed by parents who were obedient to what God's Word teaches.

QUESTIONS

What is the duty of children toward their parents?

Why say, "In the Lord"?

What is the first commandment?

What are the two things promised to those who honor their parents?

What admonition is given to the fathers?

What is meant by bringing children up in the admonition of the Lord?

3. SERVANTS AND MASTERS, 6: 5-9

The Apostle has discussed the relation between husband and wife, showing how the wife must be in submission to the husband and the husband must do that which shows supreme love to his wife. Those parents who are in the Lord are reminded in the last paragraph, as to the training of children and the obedience of the children to the parents, and now further instruction is given to this household concerning servants and masters.

The Greeks regarded slavery as a fundamental institution indispensable to civilization. That the few might enjoy freedom and culture, the many were doomed to bondage. Two or three facts will suffice to show slavery did deprive human rights in the different periods of the human race.

In Athens it was the legal rule to admit the evidence of a slave only upon torture while that of a freeman was received upon oath. Amongst the Romans, if a master had been mur-

dered in his house, the whole of his domestic servants, amounting sometimes to hundreds, were put to death without inquiry. The slave population outnumbered the free citizens of the Greek and Roman cities by many times. They were of the same race frequently and might be even superior in education to their Master.

Now, this new religion was welcomed by the slaves of the Pagan cities. Welcome was the voice that said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). They welcomed the proclamation that made them Christ's freemen "brethren beloved," where before they had been nothing but slaves and tools to those who were over them. In the light of such teaching, slavery was doomed.

The social fabric, as it then existed, was so entirely based upon slavery, that for Christ and the Apostles to have proclaimed its abolition would have meant universal anarchy. The Apostle Paul, in writing about his converted slave Onesimus, does not say, "Release him" (1 Cor. 7:20-24). He even advises the slave, who might have had his freedom to remain where he is; to be content to be the Lord's freeman. To the Christian slave what mattered it who ruled over his perishing body; his spirit was free, death would be his discharge. No decree was issued to abolish bond service between man and man; but it was destroyed in its essence by the Spirit of Christian brotherhood.

Ver. 5. Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness (integrity) of your heart, as unto Christ.

The Apostle does not disguise the slave's subservience; nor does he speak in the language of pity or of condensation. "Let every one be subject to the higher powers for there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). This means to obey the law and pay all taxes and tolls, to respect our moral duties which must be discharged by conscience sake and not merely to avoid punishment. In the church Christ was honored as the true Lord.

Slavery is dealt with in a way by the Apostle Paul that even the slave can become a member of Christ's Body. When the Jews and Gentiles came into relationship with Christ as members of His Body they no more remain Greeks or Jews or slaves, but are one in Christ Jesus, and although the body is under submission to the master who has authority over the slave, yet that in no sense destroys the freedom that Christ gives him in the Church.

"Masters according to the flesh,"—earthly masters, whose dominion does not extend beyond the things of this world. This obedience was more clearly designated with fear and trembling. It does not refer to anger and punishment. The Apostle in referring to this class, hits upon the particular vices which characterize slavery, indolence and carelessness.

The Apostle Paul (Col. 3:24) says, "Ye are slaves to the Lord Christ." Saint Paul was accustomed to call himself a slave of Christ Jesus. We have it stated that Christ Jesus took the form of a slave (Phil. 2:7). The relation of servant and master will endure in one shape or another while the world stands, and the Apostle's injunctions bear upon servants of every order. We are all servants in some capacity, servants of the community. There must be a genuine care for our work. It is obedience that is emphasized here. The fear enjoined is not dread of human displeasure, of the master's whip or tongue, but fear of doing that which would displease the beloved One.

Ver. 6. Not in the way of eye service, as menpleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

This is the principle of the Greek and Roman slaves and it is natural from the motive under which servants act who have been brought up in the fear of man instead of the fear of God. We were told in the former verse that this should be done in singleness of heart. This shows the method or maxim of service.

The reference is not simply to compulsion or the appearance

of service as menpleasers, that is, not to please men alone. Men can only see what is before their eyes. They use their master's human weakness to their own advantage. It is the common fault and temptation of servants in all degrees to observe the master's eye, and to work busily or slackly as they are watched. Such workmen act as they do, because they look to men and not to God. Their work is without conscience and self-respect. The visible human master says, "Well done," to all pretentious doing through eye service, but there is another master looking on who says, "Ill done," who sees not as man sees, but judges the motive and intent that causes the act. We will have to remember that within the book of accounts there is a stern reckoning in store for deceitful dealers and the makers of unsound goods in whatever way it is manifested. Many overseers can be dismissed when every servant works as well behind his master's back as to his face, when every manufacturer and shopkeeper puts himself in the purchaser's place and deals as he would have others deal with him.

"But as the servants of Christ." As slaves of Christ doing the will of God; from the soul with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to man. Their work must be done from the inner principle with thought and affection and resolution spent upon it. It must be in any service, that we are conscious of the onlooker, who bought us and whom we are to please. In this verse we have a distinction made between Christians who make simply a profession but do not the will of God and those who know and do His will.

Ver. 7. **With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.**

The Christian shown in this verse is compared to the one in Ver. 6. He is doing good will and good service unto the Lord. He is subject unto the Lord, and not careless and indifferent, simply a pleaser of those who are over him in the flesh. Paul concludes the seventh verse by saying, "And not unto men." We must know that we serve the Lord and not

men. The earthly master may not give the slave his just reward, or his labor may fail to be recognized for its integrity and zeal, but Christ's servants will not miss their full reward for all work in harmony with His instruction.

Ver. 8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond (slave) or free (freeman).

No good work will be forgotten. The reward which is withheld while on earth will be conferred upon us in Heaven. The slave's reward is defined in the epistle to the Colossians as being a participation in the spiritual inheritance. In Rome the slave was regarded as a chattel incapable of inheriting or possessing.

"Whether he be bond or free." That is, whatsoever be his social condition, the future has in store for him untold blessings.

Ver. 9. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that both their Master and yours is in Heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him.

This refers back both to the will of God from the heart, to good will and to the submitting yourselves one to another" (Ver. 21). The Apostle had stooped to the slave and he was not afraid to speak directly to the master. "And forbear threatening." Their authority is only subordinate and temporary. The true master of slaves is Christ. He will leave no wrong unredressed.

"Knowing that your master and theirs is also in Heaven." This refers to the master and servant as standing in equality before Him. The master that helps the latter helps the former and will give each his due. He is in Heaven. He comes from Heaven and judges. With the Lord there is no respect of persons. All have one master in Heaven, and there is no difference in reference to any man's life whether he is rich or poor, whether he rule or serve, if he is obedient to the will of God. It ought to lift up our church society and individual life in the loyalty to God.

QUESTIONS

Give meaning of servants in Ver. 5.

What obedience is emphasized in this verse?

Why say, "In singleness of heart"?

Meaning of servants and menpleasers.

Whose master is in Heaven?

How is the will of God done from the heart?

Explain the paragraph, "There is no respect of persons with Him."

VI. The Christian Armor—Equipment for the Conflict and Victory, 6:10-20

The Christian church, founded by a crucified Christ here on earth is engaged in a great war. All Christians elected according to the foreknowledge of God are enrolled in this great army and are called to active service. The conflict is not against flesh and blood as our attention has been called to in the different Scriptures by the same author; not against visible and human foes, persecuting governments, unjust magistrates, violent mobs, but against invisible and superhuman powers animated and inspired by Satan himself, with a deep and irreconcilable hatred of God and righteousness. Now for this battle that is raging constantly in which the true followers of Christ are engaged; God alone can give us the strength and the arms which are necessary to defend ourselves, to support our comrades and destroy the enemy. Therefore the Apostle calls our attention to this great need.

1. THE FOES OF THE CHURCH, 6:10-12

Ver. 10. Finally (my brethren), be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.

Paul was living in a period in which the Church, the Body of Christ, was meeting with tremendous conflict in its onward progress. Leaders were falling by the sword, some slain by enemies which could be seen, others from powers unseen. Paul realized this fact and gives warning to all who are with him in this tremendous conflict.

Here, as the Apostle soars in meditation, he does not forget the situation of his readers. The Apostle's words (4:14) show us how well aware he was of the dangers looming before the church to which he was writing. In studying the other two prison Epistles we find this conflict is constantly present with the author, "For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" (Col. 2:1).

In writing that Epistle, the Apostle Paul was beset with Spiritual forces, mighty for evil, which had commenced their attack on the outlying posts of Ephesian provinces. He sees in the sky the cloud portending a desolate storm. The clash of hostile arms is heard approaching; and it entered into his own deepest experiences. He gives the church to understand, that as the Head of the church had to suffer to establish a church which has an aim directly opposite to the aim of the world, so the members of that society must have incarnate in themselves the spirit of suffering and be moved by the same love and sacrifice in order to offer to the world that for which the Head died.

Paul means to say that this is no time for sloth or fear, for the half-hearted or half-equipped. Every one of us has need of the best equipment of Spiritual armor to hold the ground in the conflict that is coming upon this society in every period, until the Master Himself returns.

Paul's cry is "To arms!" Preparation must be made and equipment secured before the enemy is upon us. The Christian cannot fight this battle himself. He must make the strength of another his strength. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ" (1:3). "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (2:6). This shows the Christian's exalted place in the world. He belongs to the society that was in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, an elect company made up by paying the price of the death of His own Son. Paul teaches us that this company of believers is now

dwelling in the Heavens where the Head, Christ, now is (Rom. 8:26-39), and that there is no separation from the love of Christ, the Head of His Body, the Church. Back of this company is our Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Equipped to fight under this organization, no matter what the unseen forces of evil may be, one knows before the conflict begins that one fights on the side of victory.

Ver. 11. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil (crafty ways of the enemy).

Our Lord Jesus Christ described Himself in the conflict with Satan. Christ equips the members of His Body with this whole armor to meet the counter-attacks of Satan and the power of evil. Those who study carefully the origin of evil will learn that Satan, who is heading the forces of evil, has a great host fighting with him. He also furnishes them with the equipment by which to do their work. There is a Heavenly unseen power-house of equipment. Christ's weapons are tempered in Heaven and are wielded by the sons of light (Rom. 13:12). There is also an unseen power-house of equipment for those who are interested in the world, and these weapons are wielded by the men who belong to darkness. Now these weapons of warfare on the two sides are as the two leaders who furnish them. Christ, the strong one armed, is the stronger. The weapons are faith and love against unbelief and hate. The Scripture says (1 John 4:4), "Greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world." Greater is Christ who furnishes you with this armor than he that is in the world, as represented by unbelief and hatred.

"That ye may be able to stand." There is no question but what the New Testament assumes the personality of Satan. Satan and Hell are clearly set forth in the Word of God, but this runs contrary to modern thought. This teaching concerning the evil spirits given to us in the Bible, the Word of God, is treated as an absurdity and superstition and the name of the evil one, Satan, with many people is only a careless jest. All

who are acquainted with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ have learned that Satan is no mere figure of speech, but he is a thinking and active being whose presence and influence is manifested in this evil world.

Now the Lord Jesus Himself, the Head of the Church, speaks what He knows and testifies what He Himself has seen concerning the mystery of this evil force in the world. There can be no question of the existence of a personal devil. Immediately after Christ was baptized He was taken into the wilderness and there, three times, was tested as the King of the Jews, and personally encountered Satan, and it therefore entered into His own deepest experience. In order to bring about the best that God has for His people, Christ could in no sense enter into any compromise with this evil power.

The first prophecy of the Bible is, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Jesus taught His Disciples to pray that they might be delivered from the evil one, Satan. The victims whom He healed from disease and madness were so many captives rescued from the malignant power of Satan. Now Jesus fulfilled in part the prophecy and had to meet His death. He viewed it as the supreme conflict with the usurper who claimed to be the "Prince of the world." Falsehood and hatred are his chief characteristics. Jesus called him the man-slayer, and the father of lies. Through his influence man became disobedient to God.

"Against the wiles of the devil." The devil here is the active and precise enemy. Through him sin is in the world. The armor of God and the wiles of the devil are thus opposed to each other. The contest is difficult and hence the next statement:

Ver. 12. For our wrestling (our conflict) is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities (governments), against the powers (authorities), against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Chief among the wiles of the Devil, perhaps, at this time, was the scheme of error, which is cunningly presented, and the

Apostle feared that those in the church would be endangered. Satan's empire is ruled with a settled policy and his warfare is carried on with a system of strategy which takes advantage of every opening to attack. Now such is the gigantic opponent with which Christ and the Church have been in conflict through all the ages. The Apostle even teaches that the contest is more than against flesh and blood. Underneath and beyond what is human and sinful, Satan himself is active. Flesh and blood to him is only the division of the armies seen and unseen. The contest with flesh and blood is not, however, on this account excluded.

James writes, "Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). Paul declares that the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of the unbelieving, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul has warned the Ephesians that if they yield to the excitement and violence of uncontrolled passion they will "give place to the devil" (4:26,27). He tells the Christians at Corinth to beware of men who will come to them with false teaching and claim to be Apostles of Christ, and to give urgency to his warning he adds, "Even Satan fashioneth himself as an angel of light. It is no great thing, therefore, if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14, 15).

The Apostle speaks of "your adversary the devil—whom withstand, steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:8, 9). In the short epistle written by John, he has no less than six or seven references to this dark and evil power. "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong and the word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:13, 14). "He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (1 John 3:8). "In this the children of God are

manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:10). "Cain was of the evil one and slew his brother" (1 John 3:12). "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5:19). There are other passages in this same book that the Apostle is using to show unto us that he at this time realized a personality at the head of this onward progress of evil.

Christ, although He died on the cross and ascended into Heaven, did not dislodge and dethrone a prince whose power and malignity were only the fantastic product of a gloomy imagination. It was not for Him—the judge whose lips are to pronounce the sentence which will secure eternal life and blessedness or doom and eternal death—to warn men that He will condemn them to eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels, if there is no devil to destroy and if there are no evil angels to share his destruction. The subject was one of active controversy between rival Jewish sects. In using the popular language, Christ took sides on this very question with the one sect and against the other, and that He should have supported opinions which He knew were false, is inconceivable.

'But against principalities, and against powers, and against rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.'" They are here entitled principalities and powers after the same style as the angels of God, to whose ranks, as we are compelled to believe, these apostates once belonged. The angels of Satan have become associates with him as the god of this world and swaying the dominion of darkness, he is the ruler of the world of darkness. Nero was the wicked emperor of Rome when Paul was writing this and was under the direction of Satan. Pilate also was a specimen, by no means among the worst of the men in power. Jesus regarded him with pity.

St. Paul's demonology is identical with that of Jesus'. The

two doctrines stand or fall together. The advent of Christ appears to have stirred to extraordinary activity the satanic powers. Satanic powers in an age of scepticism like our own are the wiles of the devil and work obscurely. The fight is not against flesh and blood. We need metal of another kind. The foes of our faith are untouched by carnal weapons. They come upon us without being detected by sense of seeing or hearing. They assail the will and conscience. They follow us into the regions of spiritual thought, or prayer and meditation. Hence, the weapons of our warfare, like those which the Apostle wielded (2 Cor. 10:2-5), are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty toward God.

The Apostle had personal enemies to meet. There were wild beasts with whom Saint Paul fought at Ephesus, the heathen mobs of the city, then Alexander the coppersmith, ready to do the Apostle evil, and the Jews from Asia, a party of whom all but murdered him in Jerusalem. You have read of Demetrius the silversmith who was at the head of a mob that drove him out of Ephesus because Paul damaged the trade of those who sold idols through the progress of this new religion. These were formidable foes, but simply brought terror to the flesh and body, yet back of this opposition was a mightier foe. The center of the struggle lies elsewhere. The Apostle looks beyond the ranks of his earthly foes. The church has all the time been undergoing an inner conflict with systems of error which were in the mind of the age. These forces opposed the Christian truth from without. They become far more dangerous when they find their way into the church, undermining her teaching and practice. The religious world is wondrously divided. The division comes by believing different isms, introduced by men not thoroughly grounded in the Word of Truth, not able to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints."

God has placed us in this new society, this church that Christ Himself is building. It is standardized by the Word of God. In all ages God has had a separate people. Men and

women who come into that society and are playing for an influence over the world to establish a standard more liberal than the Word of God, are giving Satan his way in the church and using his influence to modernize what is known as the truth of God. It is then that the Word becomes standardized and influenced by the leaders who are not acquainted thoroughly with the program of God.

The church is made up of members known as the Body of Christ, who dwell in Heavenly places and because of this are assailed by the powers of Hell. Christ died on the cross because His teaching was in direct opposition to a church already influenced by the teachings of the world. The Church that has Christ for its Head is in opposition to the world and is attacked by Satan, as Christ Himself was, so it is no wonder that Paul teaches that, "If so be that we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom. 8:17). The "Glorified with Him" means only those who suffer with Him and not those who are building separate bodies.

"In the heavenlies." Through Christ we have been exalted. We are in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Our Head is in Heaven. Our foes try to take Heaven from us. If we keep on dwelling in Heavenly places and our associations are right with the different members of the Body of Christ and we ever look to our Head for whom the Body is being built, no matter what the influences may be that play upon us, we shall be able to hold our place and gain our victory through Him who is known as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

QUESTIONS

Why say, "From henceforth be strong in the Lord"?

How can the Christian best meet the foes of the church?

Explain meaning of "wiles of the devil."

Is there no wrestling against flesh and blood?

What two great forces are in opposition to each other?

Who are the leaders of both forces?

What is the source of the armor used by the enemies of the church?

How do these enemies attack us, who are organized as hosts of wickedness, in Heavenly places?

2. THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, 6:13-18

The Christians are raised to Heavenly places of fellowship with Christ and invested with lofty characters as sons and children of God, and as such, they must hold their ground. They must maintain the honor of their calling and have secure their highest state, thus being able to stand fast in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Every good soldier of Christ Jesus contends for his Heavenly city and household of faith. Now the defense that the Apostle speaks about here is for an evil day that is coming. The Apostle Paul foresaw the crisis of extreme danger to which the Church of Christ, during this age of grace, would be exposed. Christ taught from the first that as He was in the world, so they would be in the world, and that there would be constant conflict and opposition by the world in holding the truth as presented by the Lord Jesus Christ. Every desperate struggle of Christ's Body must finally result in triumph.

In the second epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul presents to the church some of the forecasts of Christ's visions and judgments. It culminates in the evil day of Antichrist, which is to usher in the coming of the Lord Jesus. This consummation, as the Apostle was inclined to think, might arrive within the generation in which he lived, although he declared its times and seasons are wholly unknown. The final day of the Lord Jesus Christ is sure to come. There is a great crisis to be met by Paul and the church to whom he is writing. They were approaching the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people who had returned to Palestine.

Ver. 13. Wherefore take up the whole (complete) armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand (resist) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

This is every Christian's duty. It is an armor offered without money and without price to every soldier who enlists to

fight under the banner of the King. It is the armor that is prepared in Heaven's munition plant and has been tried out, and those who fought under the protection of this whole armor found it not burdensome to wear but that it gave security and confidence of protection and victory. No one can go into this conflict with the unseen foe, having been careless concerning any part of the armor furnished us by One who is to lead on to victory.

"That ye may be able to stand" and "that ye may be able to withstand." That is, that ye may be prepared for the approaching evil period into which we are being ushered. "Stand" is the watchword for this battle. The Apostle's order for the day, "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" and that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, the day of peril, and "having done all, to stand." That is, having accomplished all that we can accomplish and yet be able to stand. It is the victorious keeping the field in the place of contest, the opposite of yielding, of being thrown down. The Apostle here treats of doing the Divine will in order to make the way through all assaults and conflicts from the organized forces of demons, without being led astray or weakened.

The armor consists of seven pieces, offensive and defensive, if we count prayer. These make up the whole armor: (1) the girdle of truth, (2) the breastplate of righteousness, (3) the shoes of readiness to bear the message of peace, (4) the shield of faith, (5) the helmet of salvation, (6) the sword of the Word, and (7) the cry of prayer.

Ver. 14. **Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.**

Stand ready for the fight. The soldier, in girding himself for the field, fastens around his waist the military belt. To this he binds his garments that there may be none loose or trailing about him, and prepares himself for action. Everything about the warrior is tense and firm; his dress, his figure and movements speak of decision and concentrated energy. He

stands before us, an image of resolution, impressing us with the fact that his mind is made up. This is what comes to us from the person that is "girt about with truth." It is the solemn conviction of what we believe. If the Christian is girdled with truth, he will be honest and upright and will not lie or deceive. It is the truth that is in Jesus that is his girdle.

You must dwell in this truth of Jesus and make it your own. Only by faithful searching and being honest will this truth become the girdle of truth to the soldiers of the cross. This is an age when faith should be strengthened through a better knowledge of God and His Word. We need the faith of an intelligent, firm, and manly assurance, a faith that does not depend upon intellectual greatness or physical security, but lays hold of the truth of Jesus Christ. In other words, it is the Word of God that furnishes us with the girdle, or the girdle is furnished by God Himself, but it is truth of the Word from which the girdle is made. Truth appropriated is made into a girdle of strength, firmness and decision of Christian life and action. It relieves us from the entanglement and distraction which comes from uncertainty and doubt and gives us a complete command of all our vigor. It can only be said of those who do this, that they are able to stand because the truth that is in Christ Jesus has made it possible for God to furnish the girdle through which to secure them for action.

"And having on the breastplate of righteousness." This protects the vital organs of the soldier. In the picture drawn in 1 Thess. (5:8), the breastplate is made of faith and love. It is the state of one who is right with God and God's law. It is the righteousness both of standing and of character. These are never separate in the true doctrine of grace. The righteousness that is of faith, is the soul's main defense against the shafts of Satan. Does the enemy bring up against you the old sins? You meet it at once by saying, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth" (Rom. 8:33, 34)? There is wonderful protection in this breastplate of righteousness. From this breastplate the arrows of the tempter fall pointless.

“He that doeth righteousness is righteous. He that is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:7-9).

Ver. 15. And having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel (glad tidings) of peace.

The soldier thus having on the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, must as he enters this army look well to his feet. He is provided shoes of wonderful make. Now, what is the quality of the shoes most needed? The soldier must have on his feet shoes by which he may move with alertness over all sorts of ground. The Apostle's feet were shod with shoes of this kind. This is the spirit of a man who was ready to move forward against any opposition. You can hear him say that he is ready to preach the glad tidings to all who are in Rome.

“Having shod your feet,” you are thus shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Cp. Isa. 52:7; Nahum 1:15). It is the Gospel of God. It is the Gospel of conflict with the world. While it is in conflict with the world, it is the Gospel that brings peace to the soul. It gives man the right relationship to God. The fact that God is at peace with us gives us confidence. We are not merely ready; we are eager for every good work. We are like a man whose feet are well shod. They can stand firm and they can run. They are prepared to resist the shock of the enemy's assault. They strike him and pursue him when the assault is repelled. We are soldiers having our feet shod with preparation. This is the readiness of the Gospel of peace. These shoes are furnished to you by the one who sends you out on the mission of peace.

Ver. 16. Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.

That is, in addition to. It means, in all things and under all occasions, having on the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, the feet properly shod with the gospel of peace, we are now ready for the shield of faith. There are

thousands of perils against which faith, love, and power of God are our only protection. With all our civilization and education, we have perhaps never stood so much in need of faith as in this hour of gloom. The hopes that men cherish of a Golden age, concerning which they are trying to unite the forces, seem to us nothing more than the illusions of the imagination which can never satisfy the heart's unrest, because such a union is not in harmony with the teaching of God's Word. God Himself is our shield, hence it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that is our security.

The shield was made of hides and metal, curved round so as to protect the whole body. This would protect the soldier from the fiery darts of the enemy. The shield of faith protects the soldier, so that the fiery darts of the enemy fall extinguished at his feet. Such is the shield of faith by which "we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." In this hour of anguish we are like soldiers wounded by the darts. We want to be safe when that evil day comes. It must find us with strong and invincible faith in God. This will be a perfect defense apart from which we can have no secure protection. No wonder the Apostle after presenting the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and feet shod with readiness of the gospel of peace, emphasizes this shield of faith so much needed in this evil day of doubt and modernism when many lose out because they are not willing to wear the armour that Christ has furnished for protection.

Ver. 17. **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**

We are insecure until we make completely our own the great redemption that God has achieved for us in Christ. The man and woman that is secure is made so by a proper standing in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christ who bought him has given him complete salvation. He now has experienced salvation by forgiveness; by faith in the thing that God says, he stands justified before God. He testifies by actions and words, not in any uncertain way, but as a positive witness for God.

There are too many soldiers now fighting for the Lord without such a helmet. We have the hope of looking forward to a glorious return of the Lord. We are conscious of the infinite power and grace of God. These different parts of the armor are all given us for the defensive: the girdle of truth, the breastplate, the shoes, the shield, the helmet, but a soldier needs more than simply protection. An army with soldiers who are simply depending upon protection and nothing more, cannot be counted upon. We must have a weapon for conquest—"The Sword of the Spirit." We must have weapons for attacking and destroying the enemy. We belong to an army and are fighting for victory and for the complete destruction of the armies and power of the spiritual hosts of the wicked one. It is not enough that we have personal safety, but we are to fight the enemies with a Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

The world is full of doubt, the world is full of religions. These doubts and these religions that are without the Christ must not only be repelled but they must be destroyed. Of the Messiah it was said in language quoted by the Apostle against Anti-Christ (2 Thess. 2:8), "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). Similar in Hosea: "Therefore have I hewed them by His prophets, I have slain them by the words of His mouth" (Hosea 6:5). Again in Hebrews (4:12), "The word of God living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." (Also see Rev. 1:16, 2:12, 19:13-15.)

This Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—the Apostle Paul wielded with superhuman effect. He rebuked the sorcerer, he defended the Gospel against the Judaizers of Galatia and Corinth.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass away." The Son of Man put it to test in his temptation in the wilderness. Satan himself sought to resist this sword. With adulterated truths in his mouth he tempted our Lord. Jesus, who is truth, repelled Satan and drove him from the field and said, "Get thee behind me Satan."

The soldier is harnessed from head to foot. He is clothed in arms that are supernatural. We must be strong, but our strength must be of some one else and that is the Lord. With all these equipments the Apostle goes a step farther:

Ver. 18. With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

So the Apostle adds this besides. It is essential to be mentioned in connection with the offensive and defensive work of the children of God. It is not a needless repetition. God speaks to man in His Word; man talks to God in prayer. The Bible is the best book on prayer. Only those who know God and His Word can talk to Him in a way that pleases Him and to these He will be willing to make His program for humanity known.

We must know our Captain and talk to Him and He to us at every turn of this great battle in which we are on the defensive and using the offensive weapon. Christian prayer is always in the Spirit, being offered in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who is the indwelling Person in the Body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities and weaknesses and virtually intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26, 27).

“And watching thereunto with all perserverance.” Prayer is of necessity, both for our own defense and for the destruction of the Kingdom of darkness. The Christian needs to be on his guard. Perseverance here is necessary. Prayer is an education. The Master taught us how to pray. He is a good Teacher. He hears our prayers and brings them to the Father. The Holy Spirit helps us make these prayers, if we are willing to have them made in harmony with the will of God and “supplication for all the saints.”

It is in the church at large that the Apostle Paul is interested. Every Christian equipped with this armor will be in constant training in the use of the Sword of the Spirit. He talks to God in behalf of every member of the Body of Christ.

By the bonds of prayer we are knit together—a band of saints throughout the earth, unknown by face or name to our fellows, but one in love of Christ and all engaged in the same perilous and victorious conflict.

QUESTIONS

Why was it necessary to take the whole armor of God?

What is the evil day referred to in Ver. 13?

If it is so important to stand, are we making the required preparation?

Name the defensive and offensive weapons.

Explain each defensive armor.

Give the offensive weapon and its use.

How may we learn to pray as suggested here?

For whom should we pray?

3. PERSONAL APPLICATION OF PRAYER, 6:19-20 (Cp. Col. 4:2-4)

We had introduced the cry of prayer with the armor, believing that he who has this is completely armed. It was customary of the Grecian armies, before they engaged in a conflict, to offer prayers to their gods for their success and the Apostle shows that these spiritual warriors must depend upon the Captain of their salvation for help and victory. We should be ever ready for public and private communion with God in the great interest of safety and progress, both of ourselves and the church, because everything depends upon Him who is our Captain, who can alone save and can alone destroy. The Apostle exhorted the Christian to pray with all prayer. It may be performed in public, in the family, in the closet, in the heart, on the way, without a voice, and with a voice from the heart. Now all of these are necessary to a genuine Christian. He whose heart is right with God will be frequent in prayer.

The author of these church letters was especially conscious of the opposing forces that had to be met. The Apostle stood in the forefront of this great battle. He was a soldier for the cause of His Master, Christ. He was a mark for the attacks

of the enemies of the Gospel, and he prays more than any for the safety and progress of the Christian Church (Phil. 1:25). At this time he naturally says, "Watching unto prayer in all perseverance, and supplication for all the saints."

Ver. 19. **And on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery (secret) of the Gospel.**

He was in need of a strong heart in this conflict when the opposition is more than that which comes from flesh and blood, by unseen foes on each side. The most difficult to meet are those who find their way into the church and pretend to be true to the Word and yet use their influence for material gain in a large measure, and make it almost impossible for men who are true to the Word to stand against those whom Paul calls false brethren. Paul was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and made much of his Heavenly allies. This privilege was continually open to him and this great teacher of the Gentiles, with unlimited faith, and with the girdle of truth, was able to open his mouth and speak forth the words of Truth.

Would it not have been a tremendous blow upon the early Christian Churches if the enemy could have closed his mouth; in some way closed the channel through which inspiration came to him, and instead of being the great teacher of the Gentiles, which increased faith in the Truth, would have commenced to question the authority of the Word of God and occasionally presented doubt instead of truth? In any century such a man as Paul giving way would have been a sore discouragement to the friends of Christ. In this letter (3:13) Paul says, "My afflictions are your glory, my unworthy testimony of Christ in the showing forth in praise of all men and angels" (Phil. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:17). "Pray for me then that I may speak and act in this hour of trial in a manner worthy of the dispensation given me."

Now strong and confident as the Apostle was, he felt himself to be nothing without prayer. In the study of all his writings we learn that he expected the support in intercession of all

who loved him in Christ. He knew and experienced that he was helped by this means on numberless occasion and ways, and now he asks right here, "Pray for me." The specific thing that he wants them to pray for is utterance, that this gift may be given him from the Lord.

"That I may open my mouth boldly." He is asking for courage, fulness, freedom, and fit opportunity. A word thus uttered in the opening of the mouth by God, is God's Word. He therefore wished the word, not for himself and his heart, but a word in his mouth for others in the furtherance of the conflict which tends to peace.

Jesus said to His apostles, "It shall be given to you in that hour, what you shall speak when brought before the rulers and kings" (Matt. 10:18-20). The Apostle now stands before the Roman world. He has appealed to Cæsar and awaits his trial. If he has not yet appeared at the empire's tribunal, he shortly will have to do so. Christ's ambassador is about to appear in chains before the highest of human courts. It is not his own life or freedom that he is concerned about. It is not flesh and blood that he is thinking of. The ambassador has only to consider how he will represent his sovereign's interest. Christ is his Master; is his Lord, and now shall he be true, clothed with Christ's armor, when he stands before the man of the Roman court? The man wearing the girdle of truth, who is the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, cannot but be subject to His individual thought or will.

Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself." The Apostle intends to open his mouth and he knows for whom he must open it, so he must have the true word given unto him. Now, can we not pray for Christ's ambassadors and especially for men who are the mouthpieces of God, that when they open their mouths, they may only open them to present the message given by the Master Himself?

He wants boldness to make known the mystery of the Gospel. He wants freedom and confidence of speech. Paul realizes the fact that the Gospel is a mystery. The Apostle was separated

unto the Gospel of God. This Gospel of God is a revelation from God. In this Gospel is revealed the righteousness of God which is received by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This part of the Gospel, however, was not hidden from before the creation of the world. It was set forth in the Old Testament in types and figures, and revealed in the New Testament, but the mystery referred to here is a secret concerning this Gospel that was hidden from before the foundation of the world. It was hidden in God and never presented in the Scriptures for man until it was made known to the Apostle Paul.

He writes this church letter for this age of grace and now the Apostle asks the prayers of the saints, that he might have boldness not only to reveal the Gospel, but to reveal this mystery concerning the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The middle wall or partition is broken down between Jew and Gentile, and this mystery is the making out of individuals, from these separate nations, through regeneration, One New Man, a society, a Church, known as the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 20. For which I am an ambassador in (bonds) chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

An ambassador is a representative of a King. His person is in all countries held sacred. Contrary to the rites of nations, this ambassador of the King of Heaven was put in chains. He had, however, the opportunity to defend himself and to vindicate the honor of his Master.

“That therein, I may speak boldly.” That is, in matters of the Gospel mystery. “They have bound me but they cannot bind the Word of God” (2 Tim. 1:7-12). He was not ashamed of the Gospel when he came to Rome years before (Rom. 1:16), and he is not ashamed now, though he has come in chains as an evildoer.

Paul was writing to the Ephesian Christians who had strong affection for him. For three years he had lived in and about the city, and during that time ceased not to reveal the blessings of God. Such a Church would naturally be anxious to know about his health and prospect of release.

“As I ought to speak.” Much depends upon this. He must indeed testify. That is of necessity, and he can only testify in harmony with the Master under whom he serves. A minister must speak as he ought to speak because he is under the authority of the chief shepherd and cannot, if he wants to have Christ’s will done, speak in any other way than under the direction of Him who gives him his commission.

QUESTIONS

- What did Paul say about prayer in connection with the armor?
- Why did Paul say, “And on my behalf”?
- Why did not Paul ask prayer for deliverance from prison?
- Is the Gospel still a mystery?
- To whom was Paul an ambassador in bonds?

VII. The Salutation—The Conclusion, 6:21-24

The Ephesians among whom Paul spent three years in building up the church, were deeply interested in behalf of Paul’s condition at Rome as a prisoner. He has been asking in this letter for their prayers, that he might open his mouth with boldness to declare the mystery of the Gospel.

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

Here we have an important statement for the Ephesians who want information about Paul. Paul is sending this Church letter with a man who is able to convey to the church the information concerning Paul’s condition and his brethren who are with him, and of his sufferings during his imprisonment at Rome. This paragraph begins with “but” adding what follows concerning his affairs at Rome, as much as to say, “I want your prayers. Tychicus will tell you more about me than I can convey in this letter. I am sending him for this very purpose, that you may be relieved of your anxiety on my account.” Epaphras of Colossia had shown him the love in the Spirit that

was felt by him and those in the church who had never seen him in the flesh (Col. 1:8). The tender heart of the Apostle is touched by this assurance, so he sends Tychicus to visit as many of the churches of Asia as possible, bringing them news that will comfort their hearts and relieve their discouragement. He anticipates with some confidence his speedy delivery. Paul is likely soon to be free and we shall hear of him again.

“Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.” This is the way that the Apostle introduces him to the Ephesians and all the church. His first association with Saint Paul is in Acts (20:4). The Pastoral Epistles show Tychicus in the Apostle’s service in his last years (2 Tim. 4:12).

Ver. 22. Whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.

“For this very purpose,” namely, that the Ephesians might know his affairs and those of the Church at Rome. Messengers of this kind frequently passed between the churches in those ancient times.

“Comfort your hearts,” by showing them how powerfully he was upheld in his tribulation and how God turned his burdens into the furtherance of the Gospel. Now this must have given consolation not only to the people then living, but to all the followers of God.

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

All prosperity and continual union with God among yourselves. Love to God and man is the principle of all obedience and union. He breathes out this final blessing.

“And love and faith.” These people, instructed as they were in this chapter, have faith in the one whom they call their Head, and a more fervent love.

Ver. 24. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in (sincerity) uncorruptness.

Love for Christ is the common life of all true Christians. The Christians who understand God’s part in bringing about

salvation, inheritance, and glorification, have given to them a security in Christ, "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us will give us all things."

Thus understanding God's side of our great salvation, the Christian's love for Christ is such that it brings joy and security, no matter what the material and external conditions may be. Our love for Christ is immortal. Everything that God has done for us, purchasing our salvation through His redeeming love; everything is thus expressed in this one word, "Grace be with you." The gift of the Holy Spirit is the all sufficiency of grace. He is the innermost sanctuary of our religion.

"Love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." These are the last and sealing words of this letter. They stand as the crown and climax to this glorious Epistle. The Apostle has used the term in other passages as synonymous with immortality. We are raised in incorruption. This love is the life of the body of Christ. In it lies the church's immortality. The gates of death prevail not against her. No separation from Christ. Not in life or death. Neither life nor death can part the soul from Him. This is above flesh and blood. Christ now is seated in Heavenly places. He and the church which is the body are above the realm of decay, waiting in Heavenly places.

QUESTIONS

- Who is the bearer of this letter?
- What does Paul say as to his qualifications?
- What is the purpose of sending him?
- What was his mission besides the bearer of this letter?
- How many chapters does this Epistle contain?
- Give the seven subdivisions of the Epistle.
- Explain God's purpose in the first chapter.
- Explain God's purpose in the third chapter.
- What two great prayers are found in this book?
- What was Paul's purpose in each of these prayers?

How does the teaching differ in the last two chapters from the first three chapters?

Why was the armor introduced at the close of this letter?

NOTE: It is here because our blessings and standing are in the Heavens, and our conflict therefore, is in Heavenly places. If it were not for that, we would have no need of this Divine armor. We need the girdle of truth, the truth taught in Ephesians. We need the breastplate of righteousness, God's righteousness as we have learned in the Book of Romans. We need the helmet of salvation combined in these two as revealed in God's Word, which is the Spirit's Sword, Faith's shield is Christ. All is contained in Him and His grace or favor which gives us our standing in Him: "Blessed with all Spiritual blessings in Christ," and Christ is the shield which preserves all these blessings to us. Faith can quench the fiery darts of the evil one. We have learned (Rom. 6:11) "That by faith we know that we died and rose with Him." We also learned (Eph. 2:6) that we sit in Heavenly places with Him. Through these Spiritual forces in the defense of spiritual blessings we shall be able to meet the foes of the Church and be true to the Captain of our salvation who has made us worthy to wear this Divine armor.

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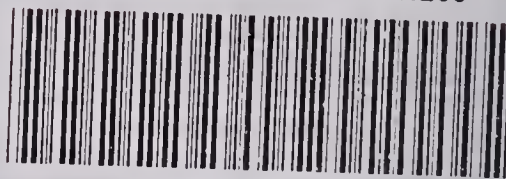
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