

EPHESIANS
The Exaltation of the Sons of God
A.S. Copley

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

THE DIVINE PURPOSE.....	CHAPTER ONE
THE DIVINE PROVISION.....	CHAPTER TWO
THE DIVINE POWER.....	CHAPTER THREE
THE DIVINE PROCEDURE.....	CHAPTER FOUR
THE DIVINE PRODUCT.....	CHAPTER FIVE
THE DIVINE PANOPLY.....	CHAPTER SIX
THE DIVINE PERFECTION.....	Romans 16:1-20

with Revelation 3:12

INTRODUCTION

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" - I Corinthians 2:9, 10. This letter to the assembly in Ephesus wonderfully couples God's eternal purpose of the past with His eternal fulfillment of that purpose in the future. The place where the divine pendulum is let swing determines its landing place on the opposite side. Hence, in chapter one, we read of "will" "predestinated," "good pleasure," "purpose," "love," and "grace" all "in Christ" before the foundation of the world. Then for the future, we read of "the fulness of times," "the ages to come," "the riches of the glory," also all "in Christ." The fact of "fulness" regarding the Church is peculiar to Ephesians - "fulness of times," "fulness of Him that filleth all in all," "filled with all the fulness of God," "a perfect (full-grown) man," and "the fulness of Christ." The phrase, "in heavenly places," occurs five times and is found in no other epistle. It expresses the glorious destiny of the Church of Christ, whose calling is a "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" - Philippians 3:14. It is most fitting, therefore, that we should call our lessons on this epistle, "The Exaltation of the Sons of God."

Paul's epistle to the Church in Rome stands related to his other epistles as a solid hub to a great wheel. All the essential features of the Gospel are concentrated in that letter. From it radiate all the burning spokes of Church teaching. The arrangement or order of his letters, as we have them in the King James Version, doubtless is correct - beginning with Romans and ending with Hebrews. Hence, Ephesians is the fourth spoke. First Corinthians sets the assembly in order. Second Corinthians sets its members in motion as a spiritual priesthood - Revelation 5:10. Galatians denounces legality and sets its victims eternally free. Ephesians sets the assembly in Heaven - her eternal Home.

In Romans, the Gospel is distinctly termed "the Gospel of God," because the triune God is its Author and Source - Romans 1:1. It is called "the Gospel of His Son," because Jesus is the chief figure therein - Romans 1:9. Twice Paul calls it "my Gospel," because it was revealed to him and he was the first and chief promulgator thereof - Romans 2:16; 16:25. In First Corinthians, it is especially termed "the Gospel" or "the Gospel of Christ" - 9:12, 18. In Second Corinthians, it is known as "the glorious Gospel of Christ" or more correctly "the Gospel of the glory of Christ," because its priestly ministry fits the assembly for her heavenly destiny - 4:4. The phrase, "the truth of the Gospel," is peculiar to Galatians because of its corrective purpose - 2:5, 14. Finally, in Ephesians 6:19, we read of it "the mystery of the Gospel."

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

Chapter One

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" - 1:1, 2. Paul alone writes this epistle, as he did also Romans and Hebrews, because to him was given "the mystery" herein unfolded. To him alone was given "the dispensation of the grace of God"; he was made the administrator or steward or housekeeper of the mystery - 3:1-4. Only Paul received the Gospel by direct revelation from God. Timothy, Titus, and all others, though called apostles, received the Gospel by the Spirit's illumination of the Word revealed to Paul. Just so, we receive it today. Religious fog is sure to follow, if men do not give Paul's writings the place that God intends. Some men are apostles or preachers or teachers by their own will, or by the organized will of others. Most of them ought to be in the counting room, or

out digging turnips. Not so with Paul. He was indeed "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." The Lord said of him to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the Children of Israel" - Acts 9:15. This divine choice of him was revealed to the church in Antioch. Jesus had spoken to him at his conversion, saying, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" - Acts 26:16-18. Also see Acts 13:2. We appreciate Paul's writings, in the measure that we understand the distinct place which God gave him and the superexcellent message revealed to him for the Church. There are not two classes of believers addressed here as the authorized text indicates. Rather, Ephesian saints are faithful saints; and this letter is especially addressed to faithful Ephesian saints. It is not a letter of correction, like those to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Colossians. John writes words of reproof to the church of Ephesus, as representing all the saints seated provisionally in the heavenlies in Christ - Revelation 2:1-7. The meaning of "Ephesus" is "full purposed," and reveals God's purposes for the Church. Ephesian saints will lay hold of these purposes as they are revealed to them. It was a fervent custom of the apostle to pronounce "grace and peace" upon those to whom he wrote. There is one exception - the epistle to the Hebrews - because to them he had to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ before he could announce His grace or God's grace in giving Him. See Hebrews 2:9. The assemblies were addressed as knowing the favor of God; and the epistles were written to set forth the all-sufficient abundance of grace, and peace through grace. Paul's Gospel was emphatically and absolutely the Gospel of grace.

PROVISIONALLY BLESSED IN CHRIST

"Blessed be the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" - 1:3. Oh, Beloved Reader, may you comprehend this verse. "In Christ" is the abundant supply of all blessings. "In heavenly places" is the sure place of all spiritual blessings. When Christ was raised from the dead, He ascended to the heavenly regions. We expect to be there with Him some day; but by faith we are already there, because provisionally God raised us up together with Christ and seated us there - 2:6. In God's reckoning, believers are already in Heaven where they shall spend eternity with Christ, because they are "in Christ." Note further, that God "HATH blessed us." This is not experience, but provision. The babe in Christ is as truly blessed as the adult, but he does not know it. Abraham gave all his great wealth to his son Isaac; but Rebekah was enriched with the same riches by accepting Isaac, though she had not seen hence had not yet enjoyed that wealth. Just so, all the Church is made rich in all spiritual blessings by simply accepting Christ as Saviour; but a small few avail themselves of their wealth. Only a few believe the verse we are considering; therefore, they have small enjoyment in Christ.

"In Christ" is the key phrase to this epistle, even as "Christ in you" may be termed the key phrase to the Colossian epistle. This phrase or its equivalent occurs a dozen times in the first chapter, and many times throughout the book. In verse one, we read of "the faithful in Christ Jesus." In verse three, we just saw that God has blessed us in Him. Briefly stated, this epistle announces our provisional wealth in Christ and indicates the various items of our wealth with the surpassing fullness of each item. All these things are "according to" the love that planned them, and the grace that provided them, and the sacrifice of Jesus that bought them for us. The first and chief spiritual blessing is "sonship" - 1:5. Then follows "an inheritance," even an eternal inheritance in Christ, because we are sons - 1:11. Our growth, progress, maturity, usefulness, place, honor, exaltation, destiny, and glory as sons of God are herein described. But, bear in mind, that "in Christ" we are already blessed with all these. But, we must see them now, in order to forever enjoy them. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" - 1:4. The word "according" (Greek "kata") occurs seven times in this chapter. It is rendered "after" in verse eleven. The verses in which it appears are prolific with truth. Our wealth of blessing is, therefore, according to the divine choice of us before the first creation. God saw the new creation in Christ, before He saw the old creation in Adam. By faith, the Son of God (Wisdom Personified) was delighting Himself with the many sons whom He should afterward bring to glory - Proverbs 8:30, 31; Hebrews 2:10. This choice does not mean that God rejected some arbitrarily, and selected others regardless of their will. He chose no one in the old creation, or first Adam; but He chose a new creation in Christ. All who will, come into that new creation line by faith in Jesus. Therefore, God blessed us in Him

according to His choice of a new creation - 1:3, 4. The transcendent measure of our wealth and the unspeakable enjoyment thereof are according to the surpassing sovereign love - "God SO loved." He chose us away back yonder, before the world had a "sick spell" through Satan's wicked intervention. Compare Genesis 1:2 with Isaiah 45:18. This shows that the world was perfect in the beginning of its creation. The word rendered "foundation," in Eph. 1:4, also means "a periodic sick spell, a fit." This is what the devil precipitated upon the world before Adam was created, wrecking it even as he afterward wrecked Adam and Eve. Did he have a suspicion that God intended to create a different creation which should occupy the place in the heavens which he occupied? God knoweth. God chose us in Christ, to "be holy and without blame before Him in love." Will He succeed? Can man be holy and blameless? The old creation cannot. But the new creation, that which is born of God, sinneth not; and it cannot sin, because it is born of God - I John 3:9. John 3:6 declares, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" - weak, sinful, sickly, doomed to die. But "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" - heavenly, incorruptible, imperishable - "born ... by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" - I Peter 1:23.

PREVIOUSLY MARKED OUT

"In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (for sonship) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" - 1:4, 5. Here God is seen as the great Architect, whose scheme and skill flow from His boundless love. The phrase "in love" properly prefaces this verse, rather than ending the preceding verse. Many people shudder at the very thought of foreordination or predestination, as if the words meant that some could not be saved if they would. Be it ever remembered, that no one desires salvation until God calls him. Adam hid himself (sinful man loves darkness), and did not seek God; but God sought him. All of Jehovah's doings are in love, primarily for His Son and then for mankind. Predestination means to mark out beforehand. However, the Lord did not mark out some arbitrarily to be lost and others to be saved. That is not the meaning. As with verse four, so here. God previously marked out, or predetermined, a new creation; but brought forth the first creation, or Adam line, as the base and figure of the new. God planned beforehand, that every one who would believe in His Son should be saved; but he who would not believe, of course, could not be saved. Therefore, we should leap for joy, to learn that thousands of years before we were born the Divine Architect selected us in His Son.

Unto what were we predestinated in particular? He marked us out for sonship - the first and basic spiritual blessing. Some teachers would rob us of the enjoyment of it, by belittling its meaning. Therefore, let us consider the original word (hiothesian), here translated "adoption of children." It is from "huiois" meaning "a son"; and from "tithemi" meaning "to place, put, set, fix, determine, plant." It signifies to place or fix as sons. The Diagiott renders it "sonship," which expresses it correctly. The phrase, "adoption of children," does not state the exact fact. By the new birth we receive "the Spirit of His (God's) Son," which certainly means far more than adoption - Gal. 4:6. Most emphatically, we are not adopted into God's family. We are born into it, by being "born of God" - I John 5:1. An adopted child is only added; and partakes in no sense of the natures of the parents. A child who is born of his parents, partakes of the natures and dispositions of the parents. Believers on Christ are made "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4), and "are made partakers of Christ" (Hebrews 3:14). Otherwise, they could not be heavenly or spiritual. They would still be like the first Adam - "natural" and "earthy" - and liable to fail and fall again. In the first Adam, we were only creatures. In the last Adam, Christ, we are sons. We were sinless in the first Adam, before he fell; but we are holy in Christ, the last Adam - "constituted holy ones" - I Corinthians 1:2 Diagiott.

In 1:11 we read that in Christ "we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (or marked out beforehand) according to the purpose" which was previously in the Divine Mind. You see, that sonship and the inheritance as sons were the two great final purposes of redemption. This is "according to the good pleasure of His will" - 1:5. "God is love." His will is good. It pleased the triune God, therefore, to make a blueprint or predetermine that by means of redemption He should bring "sons unto glory" - Hebrews 2:10. They who believe on Jesus constitute these sons. Should we not be hilarious over such glad news?

PRAISE UPON PRAISE

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" - 1:6. God's supreme boast is His grace, which is especially emphasized in this epistle. The Greek word "epainon" means "praise upon praise," for the word "ainon" alone signifies praise. The

salvation of lost mankind through the redemption of Christ brought out the divine attribute grace, which would otherwise have been hidden in God forever. Therefore, "God's grace merits praise heaped upon praise," as a certain Chinese expressed it. But it is "the glory of His grace," which is covered with heaps of praise. What is that glory? It is this: Grace has poured itself out upon the undeserving. There is nothing in man to merit God's grace; neither can he do one little thing to earn it. There was nothing in mankind, except tremendous need, that called out His grace. Jesus said to the disciples, "Freely ye have received, freely give" - Matthew 10:8. The adverb "freely" is from the Greek word "dorean," which means gratis for nothing without a cause. The sinner who believes in Christ is "justified freely (dorean) by His grace" - Romans 3:24. He does not merit justification, and cannot earn it. He merits death, which we all received in the death of Christ for us which was necessary for our salvation. For this very reason, Paul abased himself - which few ministers dare to do - and "preached ... the Gospel of God freely" - II Cor. 11:7. He preached "dorean"; that is, without charge from the people. Also, there was no cause in themselves of divine grace, except the dire need. Grace boasts, therefore, in this: It bestows its unbounded blessings upon those who are weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies - Romans 5:6, 8, 10. Therefore, through all eternity, it will be humanity's due to pile up multiplied heaps of praise to the glory of the limitless grace of God.

Then the apostle adds that in this grace, God "hath made us accepted in the Beloved" - 1:6. Another rendering reads, "With His grace, He has graced us in the Beloved." That is, divine grace gives us a place by the side of the Son of God. The Father's favor toward His Beloved Son is passed over to us, and grants us a standing on a par with Him. We stand in the same grace in which Jesus Christ stands. He deserves the Father's favor; as sons, we deserve it in Him. Note then, that the measure of the Father's love for Jesus is the measure of His favor bestowed upon us. That is what we understand by grace. Reader, do you see that?

GRACE DISPLAYED IN REDEMPTION

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" - 1:7. We have redemption in Christ. The Greek word "apolutrosin," here translated "redemption," has a double meaning - namely, "release" and "acquittal on payment of a ransom." In Christ, we have acquittal from our sins or offenses, because He paid the ransom price which divine justice demanded of us - even death. He died for us, or poured out His life, which is the meaning of "redemption through His blood." This redemption is termed "the forgiveness of sins" or "remission of sins" - Acts 10:43.

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

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

This which is only the negative side of salvation is too positive for many people, even Christian workers. Their legal reasoning minds reject it, because it puts all of the responsibility of our salvation upon God. Is it any marvel then, that they try to deny and explain away the real positive side of our salvation - namely, justification and regeneration? They cannot believe "that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness ("aphesis," remission) of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" - Acts 13:38, 39. They shudder when we exclaim, "Now are we the sons of God" (I John 3:2), and

that we are a new creature - "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" - II Cor. 5:17. But faith in these positive fundamental Bible facts gives us full victory, and puts a shout of triumph into our hearts and voices. The Cross of Christ divorced us from our sins. The resurrection of Christ has justified us before God. The Word of Christ has made us sons of God. It may be well to note, that an entirely different word is translated "redeeming" in Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5 - "redeeming the time." The original means "to attend the market place, to buy from, to buy for oneself," without any thought of release. The thought of acquittal or deliverance or forgiveness is not implied in this word "redeeming."

GRACE SUPERABOUNDING

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE" - 1:7. This is the third of the amazing accordings. The redemption which Jesus wrought and the salvation He provided are balanced by the wealth of divine grace. Paul wrote, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich" - rich in might, honor, wisdom, and glory (Hebrews 1:2, 3) - "yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" - II Cor. 8:9. Jesus "became poor," emptied Himself, took the lowly place of a dependent servant. He tasted abject poverty when He was counted sin and "numbered with the transgressors" - Isaiah 53:12. Justice turned from Him, because our sins were laid upon Him. His physical nakedness on the Cross expressed His real poverty - stripped of all strength, honor, and righteousness, and dying as a criminal. He tasted "death (forsaken of God) for every man" - Hebrews 2:9. What a great mystery! But that extreme poverty made it possible for us to possess unbounded and eternal wealth. The distance from glory which the Son had with the Father, down to the poverty He suffered on Calvary, is the measure of the wealth of divine grace that redeemed us. Can you comprehend in a little measure that distance? Do you wonder that Paul proclaimed grace? How could he, or how can we, preach anything else? Only "blind guides" can oppose the teaching of divine grace. See exactly why God saves men - 2:7. "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" - 1:8. One divine utterance follows another in rapid succession, until we are simply bewildered before the ocean of God's goodness. The Lord's great heart is not content with speaking of "the riches of His grace" and its lavish display in His death for us. No. But He says yet much more about it. He makes His grace to abound toward us. The original word means "to superabound," "to be over and above and beyond," "to be more than enough." Whatever our trial or trouble or need, God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee" - II Cor. 12:9. The supply cannot be exhausted. We can never make too large a draw on divine grace. God could say to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect," because He had said, "I Am the Almighty God" - Genesis 17:1. He was the God of inexhaustible resources, the God who was more than enough. On the other hand, Jehovah guards His grace against lasciviousness or looseness of Conduct. Some people think to take advantage of it. See Eph. 4:19 and Jude 4. They cannot really do so. Grace abounds only in "wisdom and prudence." Some times saints wonder why grace does not abound toward them. Why does God not answer their prayers? It is because they are not spiritually wise and intelligent. They are worldly-minded. They yield to worldly companions. They follow the wisdom of this world. Jesus said, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" - John 5:44. Study Paul's five serious questions in II Cor. 6:14-18. Though God is "the Lord Almighty," yet He cannot show Himself to be "a Father" unto us, unless we separate from all that is unclean. We must stand aloof from the subtle defiling religiousness of the present age, as well as from the world, if we would experience the superabundance of divine grace. We must depend upon the wisdom and intelligence of grace, as well as upon its power. Thus, we will prove God to be a Father to us in all things.

THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will" - 1:9. By this means, the Lord made His grace to superabound toward us in experience. Note that He purposed this mystery "in Himself," men and angels having nothing to do with it, because it was "according to His good pleasure." The mystery meant is described in 3:6 as threefold. We will study that verse later. The motive for revealing the mystery is - "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" - 1:10. In Colossians 1:16, we learn that the "all things" are the governments on earth and in heaven, or visible and invisible. See also Colossians 1:20, 21. "The kingdoms of this world," and the principalities in the heavens, shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" -

Rev. 11:15. The Man Christ Jesus will be the supreme Ruler of the universe for a thousand years. The complex phrase, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times," means "unto an administration of the fulness of times," which began with Paul's personal ministry of the Gospel to the Gentiles. That administration or stewardship will end by the coming in of "the fulness of the Gentiles" - Romans 11:25. During this period of about nineteen hundred years, God has been taking "a people for His Name" out of the Gentiles - Acts 15:14. God revealed the mystery of His will, because Paul's Gospel had to be dispensed throughout this age before all the dominions on earth and in the heavens could be summed up under Christ as Head over all things. Why? Because a great company of redeemed people must be joined to Christ during His Headship over all. That company is called "the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" - Ephesians 1:22, 23.

OUR DIVINE ALLOTMENT

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after (according to) the counsel of His own will" - 1:11. The fact of "sonship" (1:5) implies an inheritance. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God" - Romans 8:17. All children legally possess what the parents leave them. How much more so in this great divine family. Even as the apostle wrote before - "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" - Galatians 4:7. A new creation was "predestinated" or previously marked out for such an inheritance, in being marked out for sonship," which was emphasized before. Observe that in this verse, the fifth and sixth accordings are named - "According to the purpose of Him," and "who worketh all things after (according to) the counsel of His own will" - 1:11. The word rendered "purpose" here, and in verse nine, literally means "placing before"; hence, "a resolve, a design." How wonderful! Our sonship and inheritance in Christ are according to a previous divine design and resolve. Then, of course, He "worketh all things" (in view of bringing this purpose to pass) according to the counsel of His own sovereign will.

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

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation" - 1:13. The phrase, "ye also," refers to the Gentiles. Here we are already let into the secret, that Gentiles should share in the grace of God equally with the Jews. They "heard the word of truth," the Gospel of salvation for Gentiles, after divers Jews "were hardened and believed not"; for then Paul went outside the synagogue to preach - Acts 19:8-10.

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" - 1:13. As with the Jews, so with the Gentiles - after they believed on Jesus as their Saviour, they received the Holy Spirit. Sinners can receive the Saviour only. They cannot receive the Spirit. Only saints can receive Him. Study John 14:16, 17. It is neither logical nor Scriptural to teach that people receive the Holy Spirit, or are filled with the Spirit, when they get saved. The clause, "after that ye believed," is correct. The word translated "sealed" is interesting in its meaning. It signifies "to seal up, shut up"; generally, "to mark as with a seal, to stamp, to stamp with approval, to limit, define, determine." The seal itself, as in Revelation 7:2, was a signet ring, a stone for a ring, the impression of a signet ring, a token, a passport.

The Spirit was given to Jesus as the seat of the Father's approval - "And lo a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" - Matthew 3:17. So is He also given to us His sons. The Gift of the Spirit is also a pledge. After Naaman was healed, he desired to take from Elisha "two mules' burden of earth" as a pledge that he would never offer sacrifices to

any but the true God - II Kings 5:17. Likewise, God gives us the Holy Spirit as an earnest or pledge of the kind of resurrection body we shall have. He has "given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" - II Corinthians 1: 22.

The measure of the love, the joy, the hope, and the glory which we possess now, are only samples of the measure which we will possess in the glory land. Accordingly, some resurrected bodies will be more glorious than others. Only the Prize winners will have bodies fashioned like unto the body of the glory of Him who is all glorious. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" - Phil. 3:21. Bridal splendor must compare with Bridegroom splendor. Read I Cor. 15:40, 41. Then consider verse forty-two - "So also is the resurrection of the dead." Some saints will share equally with Jesus in His future honor and glory, as to their place and fellowship and power and glory; and their bodies will radiate with the same supernal splendor as intimated by the transfiguration of Christ - Matthew 17:2. "The day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30) is the resurrection period; and "the redemption of the purchased possession" (1:14) is the obtaining of our glorified bodies, which completes our "sonship" - Romans 8:23. The word "redemption" here is the same as in verse seven; hence, our bodies will be released from the grave, because Jesus paid the ransom price by His death. He lifted the mortgage - physical death - which sin entailed upon our bodies. He "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" - II Timothy 1:10. Truly, this will be "unto the praise of His glory"; the measure of which we somewhat grasp, as we ponder the following pages of this marvelous little book.

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

FIRST PRAYER FOR EPHESIAN SAINTS

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" - 1:15, 16.

The last nine verses of this chapter constitute the third sentence. The apostle offered two important prayers for Ephesian saints. This is the first one; the second one is recorded in chapter three. Consider exactly for whom he prayed: for the holy ones seated in the heavenlies, for the faithful in Christ Jesus (1:1), for those who are sealed with the Spirit (1:13), and for those whose faith Godward and love manward are praiseworthy (1:15). I do not mean to say that Paul prayed for four classes of people here, but for one class; all of whom possessed those four marks of sainthood. "Passing strange," you say. "Why did he not cry to God for blinded sinners? Why did he not intercede for enslaved Galatians? Why not for fleshly Corinthians?" Ah! He did pray earnestly for all those; but he could not offer this petition for them. Multitudes are storming the courts of Heaven in behalf of sinners. Very few there are who "travail ... until Christ be formed" in those who are under law - Galatians 4:19. Who but Paul, dear Brother Paul, ever besought God after the fashion of this petition?

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

"May give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" - 1:17. Now this is not another baptism, nor a fresh anointing with the Holy Spirit. It is not a baptism of fire. It is not more of the Spirit. It means that our own spirit is made wise by the Holy Spirit, through knowing Jesus Himself by the Word. What is written in this wonderful Bible is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse eighteen explains it - "The eyes of your understanding (heart) being enlightened; that ye may know ..." It is written, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" - Romans 10:10. The Christian life is a heart life. "Through faith," the faith of the heart, "we understand" the things of God - Hebrews 11:3. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" - I Cor. 2:14. He gives a heart knowledge of His will to those who believe His Word without reasoning about it. Let me emphasize it, that the revelation of the Spirit can come to us only through an exact knowledge of Him - Christ. That exact knowledge is found in Paul's writings.

THREE THINGS TO KNOW

The knowledge of three very important facts results from having a spirit of wisdom and revelation. First: "The hope of His calling" - 1:18. God has called us to "sonship" 1:5 and Gal. 4:5-7. In this epistle, we learn what sons may hope for - what wealth of glory, what place of honor, what crown of destiny. All believers are God's children; but all believers do not become full grown children or sons, and never know who they really are. Is that not deplorable? Reader, may it not be so with you.

Second: We may know "what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" - 1:18. Jehovah is not poor. He needs nothing. All the wealth of the universe is His. Nevertheless, He shall be enriched by redemption. He shall have an "inheritance in the saints." It is usually supposed that only we obtain an inheritance. It could not dawn upon us that God gets anything out of our salvation; but this is just what the enlightened eyes of the heart behold. The measure of Christ in us is the measure of God's inheritance in us. As much as we are partakers of Christ now, so much will we possess forever. Accordingly, so much will God possess. "Christ in you" is "the hope of glory" for you - Col. 1:27. Christ fully formed in us, full grown, fully matured, so that we are "all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13), "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"; but holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27) - this will be the "riches of the glory of His (the Father's) inheritance in the saints" - 1:18. Oh! How wonderful! Look for the further amplification of this truth in this book.

Third: We may know "what is the exceeding (surpassing) greatness of His power (dynamite) to us-ward (in behalf of us) who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (the full might of His strength)" - 1:19. This power in our behalf has no reference to our salvation. It rather means that the very divine energy, that raised Jesus from the dead and took Him up to the highest Heavens (1:20, 21), is at our disposal; this is actually to give us a seat in the Heavens, where we are now seated in God's provision. We "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12), as we count ourselves there; for we thus "lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18) and on this surpassing resurrection and ascension power. We believe according to the working of the strength of His might.

God put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet, and gave Him the headship over all things for the Church - 1:22. The "all things" mean dominions and all authorities, whether good or bad, in the heavens and on the earth. Observe that the Church is the Body of Christ (1:23); hence, Christ and His Church constitute "a perfect man" (the full grown man of 4:13), which is the "mystery of Christ" (3:4). This Christ in mystery (I Cor. 1:13 and 12:12), this full grown man, is "the fulness of Him (God) that filleth all in all" - 1:23. This is the sovereign plan and purpose of the wisdom of Jehovah. Through redemption, God fills all and in all, by means of Christ and His Church. This fulness is God's inheritance in the holy ones, as before stated in 1:18. This fulness includes our possessions in the heavens with Christ. We may actually come into all our possessions. We may know the unlimited power of Almighty God, who stooped to break the bars of the grave and carry Jesus up past all the power of "the prince of the air" - the devil. This is continually within our reach for our faith to appropriate. We may indeed secure the heavenlies for our eternal abode and dominion. The racer in Philippians, beholds Christ as the PRIZE of the upward calling, and runs with joyful patience that he "may obtain" - I Corinthians 9:24.

THE SEVEN ACCORDINGS

A brief retrospect of this first chapter may whet our interest for what follows. Let us look especially at the "accordings," viewing them together. Observe first, that we were blest in Christ according as God chose us in Christ before Adam was created - 1:4. Then, we were marked out beforehand, to be sons of God "according to the good pleasure of His will" - 1:5. Therefore, God chose us as sons, that "the glory of His grace" should be praised forever - 1:6. That required redemption. When Jehovah began to perform "the good pleasure of His will," He found a ruined and sinful race - a lost race - to deal with. Hence redemption, even divorcement of our sins, was granted in an amazing measure - according to the incomparable wealth of His grace. But, it was all a secret, which God could no longer conceal. Therefore, He made known the mystery of His will which He purposed in Himself according to as good pleasure - 1:9. The divine purpose was back of all. Hence, He also marked us out beforehand for an inheritance, which Satan tries to hinder. But, he cannot, because the inheritance is "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after (according to) the counsel of His own will" - 1:11. Finally, the counsel of the will of the triune God is to marshal "the exceeding greatness of His power" in our behalf - 1:19. To what

extent? How much is Almighty Jehovah FOR His people? "The superabounding greatness of His inherent power to us who are believing ones as measured by the operative energy of the manifested strength of His might, which might was operative in the Christ when He raised Him from among the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, over and above every government and authority and power and lordship and every name that is constantly being named, not only in this age, but also in the one about to come" - 1:19-21 Wuest. That divine resurrection power is pledged to be employed by Jehovah Himself, that all His saints may experience all the marvelous provisions of redemption here and now and for all eternity. This epistle lays open to our view these boundless provisions.

NOW and THEN

NOW as through a glass, but darkly,
Future hopes by faith we trace;
THEN in realms of radiant glory
We shall see our Savior's face.
NOW by faith we see Him only,
Our reflections may be dim;
THEN when He appears to call us,
We shall really be like Him.
NOW, by scientific findings,
Men attempt to conquer space;
THEN, our mighty Lord will take us
Where He has prepared our place.
NOW, by His command, we spread
His great Gospel Truth abroad;
THEN, we'll see in His blest presence
Those we lead to Christ our Lord.
- Mabel E. Palmer

THE DIVINE PROVISION

Chapter Two

"And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" - 2:1-3

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

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

Who is "the prince of the power of the air"? Who is "the prince of this world"? - John 14:30. Of course, it is the devil or "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Note that "the course of this world" is according to the will of Satan, and not according to God. Note also, that all sinners live under Satan's power; that all "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" are according to the wicked one, for sinners are counted dead in trespasses and sins. A sinner can do absolutely nothing to please God, but acknowledge that he is a sinner by accepting Christ as his Saviour. All believers were "children of wrath" before they believed in Jesus; but sinners who reject the light and never believe on Him become children of the devil - John 8:44. Remember, that so-called noble thoughts and desires of the natural man are no less obnoxious to a holy God than ignoble thoughts. Compare Genesis 6:5 with Romans 3:9, 10, 23.

GREAT DIVINE LOVE

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" - 2:4, 5. This sounds like John 3:16. Love is back of grace. "God is love." Before God could actually quicken a soul who was dead in sins, He must quicken him provisionally beforehand with Christ. God saw a full and complete victory over death and the devil, before He justified one sinner. He made us alive together with Christ in Joseph's tomb, and raised us with Him from that tomb, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenlies far above that tomb, and altogether in Christ. All this was before we were born. What was the divine motive of such provision? It was that He might display His grace. People do not like to hear about grace; nevertheless, God did the above "in order that He might exhibit for His own glory in the ages that will pile themselves one upon another in continuous succession, the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus" - 2:7 Wuest. My Friend, think of that. Infinite Love purposes to put on exhibition God's grace, matchless and boundless. It is your privilege and mine to enjoy that exhibition forever. How foolish then to reject His grace.

Therefore, we have the following words - "By grace are ye saved through faith" - 2:8. God's grace and your faith are the means of your salvation. Yet, the faith is "not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." This faith comes by hearing the Word of God - Romans 10:17. We cannot even credit ourselves with believing. All is of grace - "Not of works, lest any man should boast" - 2:9. Compare I Corinthians 1:31 and Galatians 6:14.

Ephesians 2:10 is valuable for those who are ambitious to work for God. He, beforehand, prepared "good works" for us to walk in. We need not prepare them, we need not hunt them. They are called labors of love - I Thess. 1:3. God has created us in the Anointed Jesus for these "good works," in which "we are laborers together with God" - I Cor. 3:9. How very important then for us to learn from God what these good works are; for not all religious effort is of God, and not all good works are for every individual. For example, do not imagine that you must preach because I do, or that you must edit a paper because I do. "Whatsoever HE saith unto you do it" - John 2:5. If saints do not camp around Ephesians 2:10, their works are sure to build for a bonfire - I Cor. 3:15. Observe in Eph. 2:2, that the word "children" is really "sons." Compare also 5:6. As we learn in Ephesians of grown-up saints - "a perfect man," the fully developed mystical Christ - so Satan also will have full-grown children. Here, they are called "children (sons) of disobedience"; that is, they are fully developed in their disobedience to God and in their obedience to the devil. The distance between these two classes widens every day.

JEWS AND GENTILES MADE ONE

God chose Abraham out of idolatry (Joshua 24:2), and his descendants have been known as the chosen line. All other people were regarded as heathen. Because the Lord gave Abraham a covenant, the sign of which was circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14), his followers are known as "the circumcision"; hence, they call all other people "the uncircumcision." Though there were hints of God's ultimate purpose concerning the Gentiles, as seen in the salvation of Rahab and the choice of Ruth, yet until Calvary they were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" - 2:12. Therefore, the apostle declares: "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye (Gentiles) who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" - 2:13. To Israel, because of their distance from God in fellowship, James exclaims, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" - James 4:8. But Paul announces to Gentiles that they are nigh, even as also Jews, because of Jesus' death for all men. The Cross of Christ bridged the chasm between God and man. The law given to Moses became "the middle wall of partition" between the Hebrews and Gentiles, because it was given to the former and not to the latter. That God should

show favor to the Hebrews, of course, aroused the envy of other nations. Now this cause of envy has been removed by Jesus dying in behalf of all men, and thus offering salvation to all men by faith in Himself. Jesus' death was the fulfillment of "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (2:15), which were simply shadows of coming things (Col. 2:17). By His death He put an eternal end to all observances of law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" - Romans 10:4.

"So making peace." We never need to exhort men to make their peace with God; it was made once, by the death of Christ who died in our stead. Let us announce this blessed fact, and exhort or entreat men to receive peace from God and be filled "with all joy and peace in believing" - Romans 15:13. Jesus is "our peace," says Paul; that is, He is Israel's peace. Micah 5:5. He "made both (Hebrews and Gentiles) one." He created "in Himself" of the two, "one new man." The Church of Christ is here called "one new man," constituted of Jews and Gentiles. See Eph. 4:13. Remember that we are here studying God's gracious provision. Jesus Christ identified Himself with the old creation, which included Jews and Gentiles. He assumed the headship of the first Adam, and took all men as one bad body into death with Him. He thus made it possible to bring up from death in Himself a new creation as "one new man," Himself being the rightful Head thereof. The oneness here wrought provisionally was actually wrought fifty days later, when "in one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) were we all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" - I Cor. 12:13 R.V. That was at Pentecost. Now all who believe on Jesus Christ step into this one Body, the Church, the Body of Christ - Eph. 1:23. All believers who drink, that is who receive the Spirit even as did the one hundred and twenty, are sealed and made to understand and enjoy this glorious oneness with Christ. Jews and Gentiles alike share equally the benefits of redemption by faith in the world's Redeemer. Accordingly, the last four verses of this chapter speak of all believers by three figures - a city or commonwealth ("fellow citizens"), a household or family ("the household of God"), and a building or house ("the building"). "The household of God" here is the same as "the household of faith" in Galatians 6:10, and includes all believers in every age. The fact of citizenship carries the same thought. Hence, the apostle says that believing Gentiles are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens" of all the great commonwealth of God - here termed "the household of God." Our commonwealth, our particular citizenship as members of Christ's Body, "is in Heaven" - Phil. 3:20. Evidently, the Spirit indicates two buildings "fitly framed together": one includes "the churches of Judea which were in Christ" (Gal. 1:22) which are called "a spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5), and the other is Gentile churches as expressed by Eph. 2:22 - "in whom ye also are builded together." All believers during this Church Age are called "all the building" - 2:21. The foundation of each building, whether Jew or Gentile, is "the apostles and prophets" - 2:20. Jesus Christ is "the Chief Corner Stone." He is termed the "Foundation," in I Corinthians 3:11. Who fitly frames the buildings? The great original Architect. We may carry materials, we may feed hod carriers, we may assist in whatever way He may indicate; but God alone can do the framing. It is then sure to grow into "an holy temple" or sanctuary, "in the Lord." In 4:11, 12 we learn our part in the erection of this wonderful spiritual building. Jesus said, "Upon this Rock (meaning Himself) I will build MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" - Matthew 16:18. The final results of redemption will be certain, wonderful, and eternal.

There is a family on earth
Whose Father fills a Throne,
And though a seed of heavenly birth.
To men they're little known.
Whene'er they meet the public eye
They feel the public scorn,
For men their fairest claims deny
And count them basely born.
But when their Lord Himself was here,
His claims were set at naught;
Would they another lot prefer?
Rejected be the thought."

THE DIVINE POWER

Chapter Three

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" - 3:1. The phrase, "for this cause," refers to all that has been said in the two preceding chapters. The word "cause" is "charin" in Greek, which means "grace." The same expression occurs in 3:14. Therefore, the apostle means to say, "for this grace." Because of God's favor to men through Christ, Paul wrote to that Gentile assembly. Indeed, he was the prisoner of Christ because of God's grace. You will find in all his writings, that he puts all the responsibility of all his career upon the wondrous grace of God. He refused to acknowledge himself a prisoner of Rome, though he wrote from there. He would not give Satan credit for his bondage. In 4:1 Revised Version, he speaks of himself as "the prisoner in the Lord."

The grammatical construction of these first verses is peculiar. The first seven verses are a compound clause without any predicate, as if the writer began to say something which he never quite finished. Paul never could tell all that he saw. See II Cor. 12:4. But the Spirit enabled him to write all that we need for our highest good and for God's greatest glory. Hallelujah!

The words, "for (in behalf of) you Gentiles," show that this letter was written to Gentile believers in particular. However, the first twelve verses of chapter one are concerning Jewish believers; for the divine order is always "to the Jew first" - Romans 2:9, 10. Then he spoke of both Jews and Gentiles, stating the relation of each to the other and of their mutual share of Christ's death on the Cross. After the end of the second chapter, there is no more direct reference to Jewish believers. Hence, the language of the first verse of this chapter - unto and "in behalf of you Gentiles" - 3:1 R.V.

The stewardship of the grace of God toward Gentile saints was committed to the Apostle Paul. The mystery hidden in God (3:9) was not revealed to "the sons of men" (3:5), the Children of Israel. It was sovereignly revealed to Paul, for him to announce and explain to others. He was made the housekeeper or steward or administrator of the mystery of God. Verse two implies that they may not have known this fact. He had written afore in brief (2:11-22) that, by reading which, they might perceive his understanding in the mystery. We can never understand except we read. No man can learn the mystery of God except through Paul's writings. This is why there is so much unpardonable ignorance concerning the Church. Men fail to read the Gospel as made known to this man, God's "vessel of election" (Acts 9:15 R.V.), His chosen steward of the Church. It will pay the reader to study Romans 2:16; 16:25; I Corinthians 9:17; Colossians 1:25, 26; I Timothy 1:11. What great encouragement is here for us. We may understand the apostle's knowledge of the mystery of Christ. How? By reading what he has written - 3:4. The Bible is an enigma to those only who do not care to know it. The mystery of Christ is fully unfolded in Paul's epistles in particular.

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY?

"The mystery of Christ," mentioned in 3:4, is expressed in 3:6 - "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." The word "fellow" shows that God bestowed His grace upon the Gentiles as well as upon Israel. Jesus tasted death for every man - Hebrews 2:9. Hence, "fellow- heirs" means that the sons of God (Gal. 4:6, 7; Hebrews 2:10) are composed of Jews and Gentiles. The phrase, "and of the same body," means that the Body of Christ - the Church - is constituted of Jews and Gentiles. Likewise the phrase, "and partakers of His promise," means that all who believe on Jesus whether Jews or Gentiles are participants of the promise made to Abraham - "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" - Genesis 12:3. The Greek preposition "sun," meaning "joint" (fellow), is a prefix to each of these words. Hence, in the Revised Version, the verse reads thus - "That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the Promise." Jews and Gentiles share equally in Christ, in three definite respects.

There is no Scripture for the phrase, "Gentile bride." There will be saved Jews in the Bride of Christ as well as Gentiles. Neither will the Bride of Christ be altogether of Israel, as some have taught. Abraham sent Eliezer to get a wife for Isaac from his own "kindred" in the flesh; but that does not teach that God means to get a Wife for His Son from Abraham's "kindred" after the flesh. Abraham was not a Jew. He was a Hebrew, or pilgrim, through this world. It teaches that the Bride of Christ will be taken from Abraham's spiritual kinsfolk, which includes all nations. The first company seen inside the open door in Heaven, the only ones "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne," are redeemed "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

nation" - Revelation 4:6; 5:9. Who are they, if not the Bride of the Lamb?

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power" - 3:7. Saul of Tarsus was sovereignly chosen of God to preach this hidden Gospel. See Acts 9:15. He fought conviction, and kicked hard against the pricks of truth; but the Lord prevailed. The working of His power was effectual. God's mighty grace conquered him, and afterward made him a faithful minister of the very grace that saved him; and his followers are preaching the same Gospel.

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given" - 3:8. The apostle took the place of abject and absolute dependence upon his precious Lord, even as the Lord depended upon His Father. Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" - John 5:19, 30. Paul learned that Christ held that attitude of dependence. Therefore, he wrote saying, " Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you" - II Cor. 13:4. Jesus condescended from the highest place, as the Son of God, and came down the farthest. He took the lowest place possible, even that of a servant.

"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" - Matthew 20:27, 28. Thus, He assumed the least place, ready to perform the most menial tasks. He became the bondsman (Greek, *doulos*) of His Father in behalf of undeserving mankind, and laid down His life voluntarily to redeem them. Jesus, the holy Son of Man, touched the utmost depths of condescension. His disembodied Spirit went down into hades, while His spotless temple lay in the grave. He was so absolutely helpless and dependent upon the Father, that He would have remained there, had not God raised Him up from the dead - Acts 2:32; 3:15, 26. Therefore, many times we read that God raised Him up. Oh! Let us consider it, my Friend. For three weary days and nights, God's holy One was with "the spirits in prison," down "in the heart of the earth" - I Peter 3:19 with Matthew 12:40. Those seventy-two hours seemed like an age to Him. His cry was heard by the Father - Jonah 2:2, 6; Hebrews 5:7.

PAUL IMITATED CHRIST

Likewise, the Apostle Paul chose the same place of servitude or of absolute dependence upon the Lord. The phrase, "weak in Him," expresses his attitude and experience. It is the key to an understanding of the words, "less than the least of all saints." He saw that the only way to "be strong in the Lord" was by being weak first in the Lord. Christ chose the attitude of weakness; and Paul took Christ to be his weakness, so that he could take Him also to be his strength. If Christ is weak and therefore dependent upon the Father and if Christ is my life, then, I too am weak in Him and dependent upon the Father. That was his logic. But that place of abject weakness and childlike dependence upon God is the very root of the mightiest power - "for when I am weak, then am I strong" - II Cor. 12:10. Other saints also learned that secret of power. But Paul had gone on so long, and that truth of dependence upon God had been so deeply wrought in him by years of strenuous necessity and grave responsibility, that he could well regard himself as being "less than the least of all saints." That is, there were none so entirely and unchangeably dependent upon the Lord as he. Furthermore, the menial service he rendered, doing the little undesirable things from which others shrank, and suffering the taunts of Satan and the mockings of men and the rejections of should-be friends which others could not have borne - all required that deep secret reliance upon Jehovah.

People speak and write eloquently of "the great Apostle Paul"; but not one in a thousand understands wherein his greatness lay. They slip over his testimony of personal sufferings and privations. People are ashamed of him and of his Gospel. They cannot understand him when saying, "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" - I Cor. 4:10-13. These were his credentials. God's matchless grace was thus displayed. Its sufficiency was proven. God's power was perfected in Paul's weakness. Therefore, he gloried in his

infirmities or weaknesses (not sicknesses, but limitations), that the dynamite of God like a tent might cover Him and thus the divine power be exploited by means of human limitations. Therefore, Paul boasted in what others despise. He said, "Therefore, most gladly will I the rather boast in my weaknesses in order that the power of the Christ (like the Shekinah Glory in the Holy of Holies of the Tent of Meeting) may take up its residence in me (working within me and giving me help). Wherefore I am well content in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, and in circumstances under which I am subject to extreme pressure on behalf of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am filled with ability and power" - II Corinthians 12:9, 10 Wuest.

In this citation, the apostle explains what he means by being weak in Christ. His limitations are Christ's limitations. If he is insulted, it is against Christ. If he is in a strait, Christ is in that strait, because he is in Christ and Christ is in him and he lives for Christ. He knows nothing apart from his dear Lord, and desires nothing and attempts nothing independently of Him. But, oh! This is, after all, the only boundless life and sphere. The perfect will of the unlimited God is his only boundary. Is it any wonder then, that he shouted, "When I am weak, then am I strong"? His limitations and his necessities called for divine intervention; and thereby God was glorified.

LET US IMITATE PAUL

Oh, beloved Reader, may we understand this. If we desire to experience anything of Paul's great power, we must follow in his steps. We, too, must despise what others eulogize. Let us no longer bewail our inabilities and apologize for our infirmities. Our lack of prestige, learning, wealth, tact, eloquence, organization, gifts, renown, or anything and all things, which the flesh dotes on - our lack, I say - is Jehovah's opportunity to arise and display Himself and His wisdom and might. God can use the above named items, and does often use them, if we have them without knowing it or without thinking about them or depending upon them. As sure as we depend upon anything except the Lord Himself, we actually hinder His operations. This is why people with natural gifts and qualifications are usually stiff, intellectual, and formal. Their music is not musical nor melodious. Their writings are not inspiring. Their addresses are not living and anointed. Their lives are not fragrant with the love and meekness and unselfishness of Christ. "According to your faith," is the rule; not according to your ability. "If thou canst believe"; not if you are eloquent or have some natural gift.

UNTRACEABLE WEALTH

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" - 3:8. No small task was imposed upon Paul.

Therefore, he required the mightiest strength of Jehovah which could be granted only to him who was the chief in weakness in Christ. His huge task was to preach or announce the glad tidings of the wealth of Christ, which was beyond tracing out.

How few people know anything about that wealth. Oh! How very few seem to care to know. When men are saved, they think that they have all that is to be had. Well, they have all in Christ; but, they do not grasp the dimensions of that ALL, unless they read or are taught Paul's Gospel in its fullness. Salvation from sin and sinning is wonderful. Justification before God and being born of the Spirit are blessed. But, these experiences are only the beginnings, which should be consummated with an enjoyment of the unbounded and untraceable wealth in Christ. Oh! Pity the ministers and people who paddle around in the shore waters of initial salvation, and never launch out into the broad deep ocean of the fullness of God.

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

Still others accept the doctrine of Jesus' coming. They look for Him, at least theoretically, They have some conviction of the nearness of His advent. They know that the signs of His coming are imminent. But they have very little understanding of the nature of His coming for the Church, and of the Scriptural preparation needed for that event. The whole affair is a sort of vague, dreamy, far-off event that does not grip the heart. Christ's coming is not a personal experience with such.

It is rather some distant event for all the saints. They do not say with the poet, "Oh! He's coming after me"; or with John, "Come, Lord Jesus." Such saints have never discovered the vast golden plains which the advent of Jesus will unfold. These are some of the unsearchable riches set before us in Paul's unique epistles. Let us, therefore, pursue our study of this epistle that we may learn some of them - all of which are for us to enjoy.

Observe, that the riches of Christ are "unsearchable" or untraceable. Man cannot understand the Lord by human wisdom nor by his mental searchings. Divine Truth comes to men by a divine revelation. Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But Jesus replied, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven" - Matthew 16:16, 17. Paul wisely exclaimed, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" - Romans 11:33. They are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; that is, to those who acknowledge their inability to understand, and depend upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Word. We can know the riches of Christ only by reading and pondering the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" - I Corinthians 2:10.

SCOPE OF THE MYSTERY

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery" - 3:9. It was the divine intent that Paul's Gospel be proclaimed world-wide, and it has been so done - Col. 1:6. God chose and anointed other men to assist the apostle in publishing his glad tidings in the beginning, and some are publishing them today. A heart knowledge of this Gospel creates an unspeakable fellow feeling among saints and an indescribable inward warmth, which are sure to flow out in glowing streams to others. We saw in Eph. 2:14, 15 "the middle wall of partition," which was the enmity caused by the law of commandments in ordinances between Jews and Gentiles. We saw also that wall broken down by the death of Christ. Hence, the apostle would have all men to behold and marvel at the fellowship between Jews and Gentiles, which his Gospel has produced and established.

"The mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" - 3:9. We saw, by verse five, that the mystery of Christ was not made known to "the sons of men" in the generations before Christ. But this verse shows that this Gospel of unsearchable wealth was in the mind and purpose of God from the ages past. All things were created through Christ, in view of making known this secret. The first Adam line (the old creation) would never have been brought on the scene, if God had not planned to bring forth another and far superior line through His Son the last Adam. Likewise, there would never have been a "house of Israel," if God had not beforehand purposed to have also of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" - II Corinthians 5:1.

REASON FOR THE PROCLAMATION

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God" - 3:10. The Greek word rendered "manifold" is from "polus" meaning "much, vast, deep," and from "poiuous" which means "many colored, variegated, elaborate, intricate, cunning." "In Christ" are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" - Col. 2:3. This divine wisdom is vast and deep and great. It is intricate, variegated, and elaborate. It is greatly diversified, multifarious, manifold; that is, fold upon fold. Paul's Gospel had to be proclaimed, that the governments and authorities on high might learn of this multifarious wisdom. It is now during all this evil age, and through the Church, that the mystery should be published; that holy angels might stand aghast and marvel, and unholy angels might stagger and reel, at the untraceable wealth of divine grace. Therefore, how highly we should prize the teaching of divine grace and the mystery of Christ. How thoroughly we should be imbued with it. How unfalteringly and vehemently we should declare it. If you and I do not accept and put forth this message, others will. Do you believe it? For it is "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" - 3:11. When Jehovah framed the ages by the Word of God, He had all these things in mind. They were all included in His vast secret purpose, of which we read in 1:9, 11. Compare Hebrews 1:2; 11:3 Revised Version.

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him" - 3:12. "In whom," that is, "in Christ," is a frequent phrase in this epistle. All that Ephesian saints are and do is in Christ. Hence, the apostle declares here, that in Him we have freedom of speech to proclaim the mystery. If we do not have it in Him, we will not have it at all; for Satan fights this doctrine fiercely. Note Paul's request for prayer in his own behalf - Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3. In Him, we also have

"access" or an introduction, "with confidence." The door that He opens for us, where we may announce the glad tidings, no man can shut. Thank God, if we are in Christ, we never need to break down doors nor force an opening for our message. We need not seek some one else's job. But how do we have this boldness of utterance and confident introduction? It is "by the faith of Him." Here is a lesson that few learn. If God orders our steps, we will have the faith of God. If He does not order them, we cannot have His faith. The faith of Christ is never defeated. Myriads of projects fail, because they are not born of God. The only faith the projectors have is in their own ingenuity, tact, wisdom, and strength. They mistake their own desires and plans for the will of God. Of course, they cannot have the faith of Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" - Galatians 2:20.

SECOND PRAYER FOR EPHESIAN SAINTS

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

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" - 3:14. The petition of chapter one was that we might have "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" in an exact knowledge of Christ. The answer to that prayer is preparatory to this one. The latter is doubtless the most important petition that Paul ever offered. If not so, why does he say, "I bow my knees"? This is the only time that he speaks thus. His supplication is bold and fervent. Overwhelmed with the supernal glory which awaits full overcomers, and knowing the subtle schemes and untiring efforts of Satan to hinder them, he waxes warm in his unselfish cry. The devil would make the saints faint, when running for the Prize, over the very tribulations which were sure to befall him as he persisted in the teaching and toil necessary to help them to obtain the highest glory. That is what he means by saying that his tribulations are their glory. Therefore, he poured out his heart to God in this petition, that we might be so equipped as never to faint on the racecourse.

Observe first, that he addressed "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He prayed for his own brethren in Christ, for God was their Father also. "The whole family in Heaven and earth," is another way of expressing "the household of God" - 3:15; 2:19. All believers in all ages constitute that "family" or "household." Paul himself is one of that part of the great family which is now in Heaven (Phil. 1:22-24; II Cor. 5:6-8), even as he was a part of the family when he was on earth. If the undesirable, unthinkable, unbelievable heresy of "soul sleeping" were true, no part of God's family could now be in Heaven except the three prophets and those resurrected when Christ was raised - Matthew 27:52, 53. Those who fell asleep in Christ would still be in their graves. Would that be good news? Not for me. Paul would not have called that being "with Christ; which is far better." Would that be "absent from the body"? If soul sleeping were true, how could Jesus say, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"? - Matthew 22:32. Is that the best that the new creation could hope for, during the absence of our Lord throughout this present age? Nay! Thank God! Part of the family is already in Heaven.

The apostle's petition was not of ordinary dimensions. It was "according to the riches of His glory," of which he had obtained an inexpressible vision - 3:16. What unworthy prayers most saints are wont to offer. What a beggarly conception most people have of the Father's wealth of glory in His Son. How little men see, and how much less they dare to lay hold of by faith. But, oh! What a limitless answer we may expect to a prayer so bold as Paul's. "Brother Paul, what right have you to ask Holy Justice to dispense so lavishly upon sinful depraved humanity?" Methinks he answers, saying, "I am coming to the throne of grace whereon my own Father sits inviting me.

I am coming in behalf of those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, even God's own 'dear children'. I want them actually to experience all that they have fallen heir to in His beloved Son." Paul never insulted the goodness and power of God by any puny unscriptural prayers. When I was beginning to trust God for the healing of my body, a bishop (?) thought to give me some fatherly advice. He said, "Brother Copley, you believe too much." How offensive to God is such counsel to a young minister. He wanted me to believe according to man's carnal conception of God's grace. Poor fellow. He did not realize that his words pleased the devil. Oh! I am a thousand times glad, that the Spirit did not let me be influenced by him. What eternal loss I would have experienced, and others also. Paul, a true, faithful, Scriptural bishop or overseer, prayed according to God's wealth of glory which culminates His marvelous grace. He was unlike that ecclesiastical bishop.

Consider the glory of the "eternal power and Godhead" of Jehovah. Think of "the glory of the uncorruptible God" - Romans 1:20, 23. Meditate upon, "the glory of His majesty" (Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21), and that He is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders" (Exodus 15:11). What did He do when Moses cried, saying, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory"? He passed by him and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" - Exodus 33:18; 34:6, 7. What vast wealth of glory was there displayed before Moses! In chapter one of Ephesians, we saw how the apostle prayed for us to know what are "the riches of the glory of His (God's) inheritance in the saints." Our redemption is "according to the riches of His grace," and our sonship is "to the praise of the glory of His grace." Finally, our inheritance including a glorified body is "unto the praise of His glory." All this expresses the unlimited riches of divine glory, according to which we may expect "the Father of glory" to answer Paul's prayer in our behalf. Thus, we shall "be filled with all the fulness of God" - 3:19.

THE PETITION SUMMARIZED

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

"Filled unto all the fulness of God" (3:19 R.V.) is the amazing climax of Christian experience. The last step to this fulness is "to know the love of Christ," God's Anointed One. That love surpasses the utmost possibility of being known, except by those who are saved. There is boundless breadth, and measureless length, and unfathomable depth, and an insurmountable height, to the love of Christ. Yet, Paul dares to pray that we may be enabled to seize hold upon and know that knowledge-surpassing love. To "be filled unto all the fulness of God" is to dwell in all His love and have all that love dwell in us. John wrote saying, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" - I John 4:16. Evidently, Paul reached this climactic experience. Such language as the following indicates that he did: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" - Phil. 4:11. He did not murmur nor chafe. Dear Reader, holy is it with you? He said also, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" - Romans 8:28. His faith in God, concerning His providences, was perfect and calm. He knew that "there shall no evil happen to the just" - Proverbs 12:21. Brother, is this your experience? He shouted, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" - Phil. 4:13. He was never daunted, for he was never out of God's will. The following words are exceedingly full of meaning - "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" - II Cor. 6:10. He was never discouraged. He grieved and groaned because of the lethargy of some saints and the unbelief and impudence of others; but he rejoiced evermore in God's goodness and grace. He records no regrets. He had nothing to take back or make right. How different with most Christian workers today. Is there not a cause? I fear they do not maintain a single eye to God's glory, and do not press on into all His fullness. No man could justly find any fault with Paul's teaching or conduct. Even Peter, the chief of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, gives him the highest compliment by placing his writings on a par with the rest of the Word of God. He wrote to his own people the Jews - I Peter 1:1. In his second epistle he says, "Our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you (the

Epistle to the Hebrews); as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" - II Peter 3:15, 16. Compare also I Corinthians 4:9-14 and II Corinthians 4:7-12.

THE PETITION IN DETAIL

First, the apostle prays for us "to be strengthened with might by His (God's) Spirit in the inner man" - 3:16. This cry is threefold - "strengthened with might (dynamite)"; strengthened "by His Spirit" - that is, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and strengthened "in the inner man." There is no liberty here for the flesh. Only "the new man," "the inner man," can know God's dynamite. He may know it and never have a want. The Spirit deals only with the new creation; for God dealt with the old creation once through the death of Christ on Calvary. "Our old man was crucified with Him" - Romans 6:6 R.V. This explains why so many saints never grow and never learn the Lord. They hold that they are in the place of the first Adam, by being cleansed from sin and the carnal mind. They claim that the old man is taken out root and branch. Of course, that supposedly sanctified old creation can never be filled with God. Only one class of believers ever learn Christ and His fullness: They who know by experience the two natures in believers; and count the one dead and the other only, "the inner man," alive.

What Paul is here praying for is far more than the anointing with the Spirit. This petition can be in behalf of those only, who have already received the Spirit after the fashion of the early Church. The prayer of Paul for the Colossians is thus answered in our lives - "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness" - Col. 1:10, 11. The Christ life grows stronger and stronger. Finally, the self-life, by being reckoned dead, is brought under full subjection to the inner man who is controlled entirely by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Hallelujah! How, then, can there be a want? The second strain of the petition is, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" - 3:17. Some may ask, "Does not Christ dwell in every believer?" Yes, as to fact, He does but most believers do not know it by experience. If they did, they could not talk of being saved today and lost tomorrow. Christ does not dwell in all His people in the sense here meant. He should dwell in us not only as a Visitor or Guest, but as Possessor and Director of the house. A babe lives in a house, but it has no power or authority there. It is kept by the house, just as most people think they keep salvation. Christ keeps us. We all have a babe's experience of salvation at first; but our Savior is not a baby. When we learn Him fully, He assumes full control of our affections and desires, our sorrows and joys. Our whole heart is gladly yielded to Him and filled with His love. Thus, we learn also, that neither is our salvation a baby which needs to be kept by our own puny power; for Christ is our Salvation and lives in us. He is our life. It is no longer I that live, "but Christ liveth in me" - Galatians 2:20.

"Being rooted and grounded in love" is the third strain of the prayer - 3:17. It is like a deep bass tone, which sustains the other parts of a song, giving it firmness and steadiness. Roots and foundations are usually invisible. Likewise, this is a deeply hidden and unappreciated experience in the Lord. It is not at all showy. Only the resultant supergrowth and superstructure are seen. Roots do not plunge into the deep earth in one night. They go down by growing, which is slow, silent, and imperceptible. Finally, they grapple with and hold fast to the firm objects below. It takes time to lay a good firm foundation. Exploration and excavation, which must precede it, also require time and toil. Roots begin above and grow downward. Foundations begin deep and are built upward. The former suppose life, in which are hidden the elements of development. The latter, being inanimate, are absolutely helpless and motionless in themselves.

Likewise, our rooting and grounding in divine love require time, toil, and patience. They are tedious and tiresome to the flesh. This goes on as we ponder God's Word with sincere purpose of heart, seeking to know and to do His will. We learn the nature and process of spiritual rooting. We find that the providences of God are His ordained instruments of our rooting. We are moistened and strengthened by the Spirit, and fed and nourished by the Word. Faith grapples around the rocky portions of Truth and holds to them firmly. Observe that these two figures are coupled together. In the spiritual, it seems that the rooting comes first. Hence, it is named first. The roots, deeply grown and holding strongly beneath, become the deeply laid foundation. Therefore, when we are rooted in the love of Christ, we are fixed and firm like a great temple - "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" - I Cor. 15:58. It seems that

Christ dwelling in the heart by faith is explained by being rooted and grounded in His love. The one implies the other. Christ cannot dwell in us without us being rooted and grounded in love; and we cannot become rooted and grounded in divine love except by Christ dwelling in us by faith. Wonderful!

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" - 3:18. This is the fourth strain of this wonderful prayer song. It seems to be the four parts in mighty unison. The rooting and grounding, which we have just considered, declare the "depth" and imply the "height." But, there can be no real going down and building up, without also a corresponding "breadth" and "length." The apostle here pictures the love of Christ as an immense cube, and prays that we may be fully able to comprehend it. He would have us to seize hold upon that great love, stretch our arms of faith around it, and understand it by deep experience. This is not a theoretical or historical knowledge, concerning which men might say nice things. It is actually understanding the love of Christ in inexpressible fellowship. It is a sweet sense of His love toward us, and a fervent response of our love for Him. It means much more than knowing Christ as the Savior. Indeed, many people have very little love for Jesus when they first get saved. They learn to love Him, as they learn the cost of their salvation. The comprehension of Christ's love means much more than knowing Him as the Healer, or as the Anointer with the Spirit, or as the One who answers prayer. The first part of verse nineteen connects closely with this verse and completes it.

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" - 3:19. The Greek word rendered "and" here is "te," which is not a conjunction but an expletive. That is, it emphasizes and intensifies the foregoing statement, or explains it. The word means "even" rather than "and." For a parallel, the first "and" in I Cor. 1:30 really means "even" (te). Here Paul prays that we may know even the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. The Greek adjective "hyperballousan," here translated "passeth," is exceedingly unique. It seems that our language fails to express the unlimited sweep of its meaning. The verb, from which it is derived, means "to throw, or hurl over or beyond a mark; to excel all bounds; to reach the zenith; to be over and above and beyond the highest point." Our English word "hyperbole," meaning "exaggeration," comes from it. But the apostle's meaning in this place certainly cannot be easily exaggerated. The love of Christ, which he prays that we may know, excels all limits. It sweeps above and beyond the furthest conception of even the redeemed mind. It scales the zenith of the utmost desires and longings of believers. By divine grace, that love springs up in a human heart, reaches forth and soars away to meet God, and sweeps far beyond the heights of knowledge. My spirit seems to see something here that is too unspeakably great and glorious for words.

Paul sought to prepare the Corinthian saints for this prayer, by writing I Corinthians thirteen. Note especially verse two - "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Many Christian workers possess the above four items in some degree, but they come sadly short of the "more excellent way." This way of divine love far excels all the gifts, and is greater than a knowledge of Bible history and doctrine and outstrips mountain-moving faith. This love of Christ, of hyperbole dimensions, smiles at gifts and achievements and knowledge and miracle-working faith - all good and proper in their places - and rises to meet and respond to the great heart of Jehovah in whose love it is lost. It becomes intoxicated with His personal attention and tender care. "His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely. I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me" - Song of Solomon 5:16; 7:10. Oh! What wealth of privilege is ours! What distance of sweep away from things of time and sense - even from religious activities - away off into God Himself to enjoy Him with holy and infinite delight.

What is the last strain of this unique petition? What is the ultimate and culminating purpose of its answer? "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" - 3:19. How full is "all the fulness of God"? What does it mean to "be filled unto all the fulness of God"? - 3:19 R.V. The answer has already been anticipated or intimated. Perhaps it is like other spiritual blessings. It must be experienced to be actually understood. No one can understand the new birth until he is born again. The difference between the light and life of salvation and the darkness and death of sin and condemnation cannot be grasped by a sinner. No one knows how good it feels to be healed by the Lord, until he lets the Lord heal him. Can saints be filled with divine fullness, if they do not accept divine healing? Certainly not. Can saints who refuse the Pentecostal fullness, or anointing with the Spirit, ever be filled with God's fullness? Certainly not. For the Holy Spirit is the Chief

Agent in making us full. He must come into our bodies, His temples, and abide. We see that first of all we must "be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man," as a necessary preparation for all that follows - 3:16 R.V. We must be initially filled, or anointed with the Spirit, in order to "be filled with all the fulness of God." It requires only an act of simple faith to be filled with the Spirit, for He is the Father's Gift to believers. But to be filled with all God's fullness requires many continuous acts of faith; for it is a growth, usually of long continuance.

Then are not all they, who believe in healing and in Pentecost and in Jesus' coming, filled with all the fullness of God? By no means. Indeed some of them seem to be filled with foolishness, and others with confusion, and still others with conceit. Why, if they have received the Spirit? Because they have not read and studied Paul's prayers for the saints. Jesus Christ spoke a wonderful word to the devil which, He meant for us, of course. He quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" - Matthew 4:4. Men know that a full all-round diet is necessary to develop us physically and give us full strength in the natural. But not one saint in five hundred applies that sensible rule in the spiritual. It requires God's entire bill of Bible fare, to answer the apostle's powerful prayer. If we eat all the Truth; if we believe all the Word of the Lord; if we yield to all its instructions, prohibitions, and admonitions; then we will grow into "all the fulness of God." We will learn how to walk and work, how to talk and teach, when and what to say. This Bible route seems narrow and slow. It entails suffering, because it is hard on the flesh and is bitterly opposed by Satan. But, the Word which we eat, "effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13); and affords strength to endure hardness and courage to stand. It begets faith, even the faith of God, to go on; to go through every trial, and go over the top of every difficulty. As we eat and believe, we are being "filled unto all the fulness of God." In the Pentecostal anointing, our bodies were filled with the Spirit; but here our lives are actually filled up with "the God of all grace" - 1 Peter 5:10. We become like Jesus, as a Man, who was thus filled with God. We learn to believe and act like He did. We learn to yield to the Voice and power of the Spirit as Jesus did. We come to have fellowship with the Father even as Jesus did, "because as He is, so are we in this world" - 1 John 4:17. We grow up into Christ. Christ grows up in us. We increase "with the increase of God" - Col. 2:19. Jesus Christ fills our vision. The Word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom. The peace of God rules in the heart - Col. 3:15, 16. What is the utmost limit of such fullness? Only Christ Himself - "Because in Him there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in bodily fashion. And you are in Him, having been completely filled full, with the present result that you are in a state of fullness in Him" - Colossians 2:9, 10 Wuest.

AN IMPETUS TO BELIEVE IT

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" - 3:20. Amazement staggers, reels, and sits down in a holy hush, overwhelmed with the apostle's added words. We supposed that his vision of our privileges climaxed with the prayer; but nay. His anthem of praise to God is like a tremendous chorus of "AMEN AND AMEN" to the prayer. He glorifies Jehovah for being fully able, yea, powerful to answer his cry - even all that we ask or think. That is wonderful, and stimulates our faith. Is that all? Nay! Nay! There is much more. God is powerful to do "ABOVE ALL that we ask or think." Yes, and "ABUNDANTLY above all." Ah! Yes, "EXCEEDING abundantly above all." Oh, yes, in very deed, the God to whom Paul prayed is powerful enough to do superabundantly more than we ask or think. But our beloved apostle does not stop there in his high praises. He reverts back to the dynamite of verse sixteen, and shouts, "According to the power that worketh in us" - 3:20. Jehovah is able to do it all. Surely that dynamite operates in us rapidly and effectively, deeply and wonderfully, widely and gloriously, as we yield to the blessed Holy Spirit, who carefully and wisely manipulates the dynamite. Glory! Glory! Hallelujah forever!

Most every one misquotes this verse. Usually people say, "All that we CAN ask or think." Well, God is able to do that much too; though it reads, "All that we ask or think." The implication is that most people ask far below their privileges. Many ask far less than they think, because they have not learned God's grace. Hence, they do not know the great and full provision which has been made for us. The little that people see of divine goodness is too great to suppose that there could be any greater than what they have beheld. But the provision is complete and immense.

Therefore, let the dynamite work. Let the Holy Spirit have His way fully. Put full confidence in the dynamite. Let us learn the vast sweep of divine power in a human life. What could anyone desire rather than to "be filled with all the fulness of God"? If it is blessed and profitable to have any

measure of His fullness, why not be supremely blessed and superlatively profited and useful to God by being filled unto all His fullness? Furthermore, this immeasurable unspeakable fullness will, no doubt, climax in the preparation of the Bride for the Lamb. Now, hearken to the fullest and sweetest doxology of all the epistles. "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" - 3:21. The Millennial period will be by far the greatest of all the ages of time. During that period, Jesus and His Bride will be exalted to highest honor. They will reign in Heaven, where the satanic dominions now have sway. From thence, Jesus will govern the earth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," His Bride being associated with Him. During our lifetime, we are given grace and wisdom to put down all rule and all authority and power in ourselves. We learn to yield to Him who is able to subdue all things in us, and all things around us, in our behalf. But we will be rewarded then for that yieldedness, by assisting our Lord our Bridegroom, as He puts down all rule and all authority and all power in the world. We will enjoy a thousand years remuneration, for enduring a thousand temptations while here on earth. The morning of our eternal day of inexpressible felicity with Jesus will last a thousand years. Thus ends the divine side of Ephesian doctrine, set forth in three thrilling chapters. This is its necessary background. Have you noticed one exhortation in these chapters? Not one. God first shows us the true standard - its liberty, its wealth, and its splendor - before He gives any invitation or entreaty. In these preceding portions, we have seen three huge Ps in the Divine Pod - The Divine Purpose, The Divine Plan, and The Divine Power. We see that God has already raised us up to the standard, provisionally. We see that none of these wonderful things are attainable by our own efforts, but all are absolutely of grace. Finally, He caused Paul to pray fervently for us, that we might not be hindered from enjoying the wealth and glory which Christ's death purchased for us as herein outlined. To the incorruptible, invisible, triune God be unending praise!

THE DIVINE PROCEDURE

Chapter Four

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" - 4:1. The three preceding chapters of this letter present God's purpose, plan, and provision for a ruined race. An understanding of them is absolutely necessary to a clear understanding of what follows. There is nothing haphazard, nor unnecessary, in the Bible. These following three chapters set forth our appropriation of the divine provision and the results thereof. Therefore, we find no exhortation in the first three chapters; but the remaining ones abound in entreaties and instructions.

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

Five qualities enter especially into that worthy walk. Four of these are named in the next verse - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." The fifth is in verse three - "Endeavoring (or giving diligence) to keep the unity (oneness) of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The first two agree with Matthew 11:29 - "I am meek and lowly in heart." Lowliness means humility. The same Greek word is translated "lowliness of mind" in Phil. 2:3, and "humility" in Col. 2:18, 23, and "humbleness of mind" in Col. 3:12. "Meekness" means "mildness, softness, gentleness." Humility is the outward expression of the lowliness of mind which is the inward attitude or state. Longsuffering and forbearance flow from them. The Greek word for "endeavoring," literally means, "to make speed, or haste." To simply endeavor to keep the oneness is not sufficient. We should really do it, and be diligent about it. How remarkable that these five conditions and acts meet us at the threshold of becoming real Ephesian saints.

Therefore, it behooves us to ponder them all. There are seven "walks" named in this epistle. This is the third. It contrasts directly with the first, which was radically unworthy - 2:2. The second is the place in which the third begins and continues through life - 2:10.

"The unity," or oneness, "of the Spirit" is viewed in the seven basic ones of verses four to six. The phrase, "there is," is in italics; which means that it is not given in the original. A dash should follow

the word "peace," the last word of verse three. The Holy Spirit cannot operate fully in the Church to the highest glory of the Father and the Son, except these seven facts are maintained and sustained. At the very outset, we are admonished to be diligent to observe them. Doing so is the primary preventative of all church difficulties, and the guarantee of healthy growth and usefulness.

THE SEVEN ONES

"One Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" - 4:4-6. The "one Body" is the Church, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles. This is the second item of "the mystery," mentioned in 3:6. All who believe on Jesus unto salvation throughout this age constitute that Body or Church. "And the Lord daily added those being saved to the congregation" - Acts 2:47 Diaglott. This agrees with Jesus' words, "one flock" - John 10:16 Diaglott. The provision for this oneness was made on Calvary - Eph. 2:14, 15

The "one Spirit" is, of course, the Holy Spirit. He has been operating in accordance with the divine provision, during these nineteen hundred years, gathering out a people for the Name of the Lord - Acts 15:14. The first two items of the oneness, the "one Body" and "one Spirit," are closely connected by the conjunction "and." Why? Because the Body of Christ, the Church, is the only dwelling place for the Holy Spirit on earth today. The Church is here called a Body, because it is likened to a human frame having many members and yet being only one body or frame - I Cor. 12:12, 13. The schismatic conduct of men has made the Church to be as many bodies or sects, which is deplorable indeed.

"Even as (according as) also ye were called in one hope of your calling" - 4:4 R.V. This hope is the third of the seven "ones." Israel "had before hoped in Christ," because to them the promise was given - 1:12 R.V. But the Gentiles had no hope, because they had no promise. However, in the divine plan, the Gentiles also were called; though the call was not made known till after the death and resurrection of Christ. Jews and Gentiles were called, jointly to enjoy the full measure of the blessings promised to Abraham. They together have "one hope"; that is, they share equally in the results of redemption. The "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) refers to the second advent of Christ, which will be the culmination of the "one hope" here named.

"One Lord." This is the fourth "one." This is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church, His Body. As there is only "one Body," so also there is only one "Head." For one body to have more than one head is a monstrosity, ridiculous, and destructive. Has not Christendom proven it to be so? Has she not made herself the object of ridicule, and brought upon herself demoralization? The "one Lord" is the central figure in this wonderful sevenfold New Testament archway. All who are really saved acknowledge Him to be the Savior from sin; but the majority of believers give Him no further place on the program than that. They think to be their own keepers and guides, or they must keep and guide one another. But Jesus has not redeemed men to live for themselves and by their own strength. He has paid the ransom and released them for Himself. Jesus does not save men from the angry floods of sin, to let them run loose and wander about in a sinful world with the possibility of falling back into the ocean again. He saves men to take care of them. He saves men to be with Him and enjoy Him. He saves men that He may have fellowship with them, and show His unbounded love to them. He saves men that they may love one another and have mutual fellowship together, with Himself as the one Object of their devotion. They are to meet only in His Name, and no other. "For where two or three are gathered together in MY NAME, there AM I in the midst of them" - Matthew 18:20. All the divisions and griefs of Christendom are traceable to NOT following this simple plan. "Not holding the Head," not giving Christ His ordained place as Head of the Church His Body, is the chief crime of his followers. In assemblies where Jesus is actually recognized and treated as the Head of the whole Church, there is fellowship sweet, liberty unbounded, growth perpetual, depth and breadth of Scriptural knowledge, and power and glory real but not fanatical. It has to be experienced, to know the difference between such meetings and those who do not hold Christ as Head.

"One faith" is the fifth item under consideration. This is the faith of God. It is "the faith of the Son of God" - Gal. 2:20. Eph. 2:8 declares that the faith which saves a sinner is "the gift of God," because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" - Romans 10:17. "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18), the news of which begat faith in their hearts. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" - Hebrews 11:1. By the faith of God, believers recognize only one Body or refuse to divide the Body of

Christ. It rejects sectarianism. This faith rests upon the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit alone. It will not "receive another spirit," nor "another gospel," nor "another Jesus" - II Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6, 7. Paul calls it "the faith," saying, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" - II Cor. 13:5. This "one faith" accepts Paul's Gospel with all the heart, and becomes familiar with the whole of his Gospel by a thorough knowledge of his epistles.

"One baptism." This cannot be baptism in water; for that is only a memorial, a symbolic baptism. Water baptism answers to circumcision under the Old Covenant, which was a "sign," "a seal" - Romans 4:11. If baptism in water were the "one baptism," then the baptism in the Spirit would be no baptism or it would have a secondary place only which is impossible. How unworthy of the dear Holy Spirit, to presume to assign to a symbol what belongs to one of the three Persons of the Godhead. The "one baptism" is unmistakably the baptism in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist and Jesus both spoke of this baptism - Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5. This baptism occurred on the day of Pentecost. Study the following verse: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" - I Cor. 12:13. In this citation, we read plainly of the first, of the second, and of the sixth "ones" - the "one Body," the "one Spirit," and the "one baptism."

The mystical Body of Christ, called the Church, was sovereignly constituted on the day of Pentecost. It was formed of both Jews and Gentiles, termed "the mystery" in 3:4, 6. Those who had before believed, and on that day were filled with the Spirit, became the nucleus of the Church of Christ. Hence, all who believe on Jesus throughout this Church period were that day counted as baptized into the "one Body." Therefore, there is absolutely only "one Body," and there was only "one baptism." There cannot be more than one Body; hence, there cannot be another baptism in the Spirit. Most people fail to see that the baptism in the Spirit was a divine sovereign act. I believe that some see it, but refuse to accept it as the truth. God gathered the one hundred and twenty disciples. He set the time for them to be baptized. They could not have been filled with the Spirit thirty minutes sooner than they were, no matter what they might have done or how earnestly they might have prayed. That hour of that day was the set time of the Holy Spirit's advent from Heaven. It was in perfect accord with Leviticus 23:16. That was the fulfillment of the promised outpouring of the Spirit. John and Jesus announced it as the baptism in the Spirit, because it should constitute a new company of believers which Jesus termed "My Church" - Matthew 16:18.

There was one death of the old creation by the sovereign death of one Man - Jesus - in their behalf. Study the "ones" in Romans five. Christ died for both Jews and Gentiles "once." Thus, He broke down the enmity between them, and made way for a new creation to be formed out of both. As we saw before (2:4-6), Jesus brought up from death with Him a new creation. He "raised us up with Him" - 2:6 R.V. According to God's sovereign counting, the whole old creation died and its penalty was paid in the death of Christ. On the other hand, all who believe on Jesus, and only those, were raised from the dead with Him. In like manner, after God's sovereign reckoning, by the "one baptism" He constituted all believers of this age "one Body" which He denominates the "Assembly" or "Church." The Holy Spirit was the "one Spirit," as the only necessary Agent of that of one baptism." Of course, Jesus Christ is the "one Lord" or "Head" of that "one Body." Therefore, thirsty believers do not receive the baptism of or in the Spirit, nor a fresh baptism. That is not Scriptural language. Thirsty saints "drink" of the fullness of the Spirit, which was fully poured out for us. All who drink become filled with "rivers of living water" - John 7:38. The experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is never once called the "baptism of the Spirit" in the epistles, except in I Cor. 12:13 which refers only to the day of Pentecost. To "drink" only refers to our experience.

"One God and Father of all" - 4:6. This is the last of the seven wonderful "ones." Thus, the three Personalities of the Godhead stand forth prominently in this sevenfold framework of the Church. We saw in chapter one, that God was the Author and Designer of redemption and its results. All that we are studying about is according to a previous purpose and plan. Of course, God must be a vital figure in it all. He is the Father of all that believe. Oh, how comforting, to know that we have a real Father who loves us and cares for us in harmony with the unlimited provision which He made for our edification and happiness. Many saints do not know by experience the Fatherhood of God, because they are not separated unto Him. Read and ponder II Cor. 6:14-18. To Ephesian saints, God as Father is "above all, and through all" in our behalf making all things work together for our good. He is "in you all." How beautifully this agrees with John's words - "He that dwelleth

in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" - I John 4:16. He dwells in each individual by the Spirit, and makes also the entire Church His habitation.

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

BASIS FOR VARIOUS GIFTS

"But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the Gift of Christ" - 4:7 Revised Version. The grace, or favor, mentioned here is provisional. It "was ... given. The measure of this favor is "the Gift of Christ," or God's Anointed One. The Greek word for "gift" is "dorea," which literally means "a free gift, an undeserved gift." It refers directly to Jesus here. He is the "unspeakable Gift" of II Cor. 9:15, and "the heavenly Gift" of Hebrews 6:4. God gave His Son freely. There was no merit in man that demanded such a Gift. There was no cause in him, except his unspeakable need, which called down this unspeakable Gift. Now in Christ - God's great Gift - each of us has been granted great grace, in measure comparing with the greatness of Christ. This is the apostle's meaning in I Cor. 1:4, 5 R.V. He thanks God "for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in Him." Here, in Eph. 4:7, is indicated the measure of that enrichment. There is no lack, therefore, to those who trust in Jesus and make runs on the bank of Heaven. The next verse is based upon the fact expressed in verse seven.

"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" - 4:8. In this verse, reference is had to Judges 5:12. The Lord aroused Barak to deliver Israel from captivity to the Canaanites. Psalm 68:18 is especially referred to, which will have its fullest fulfillment when Jesus will reveal Himself to Israel. But Paul gives it another application also. Who does he see in captivity? The phrase, "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9), intimates that it is some company below. "Abraham's bosom," where the spirit of poor Lazarus was kept, was in the same place. Jesus called it "paradise" (Luke 23:43), whence He took the thief who believed on Him. Doubtless many, who did not accept Noah's message in time to enter the ark, afterward believed it as the rain was falling. To them Jesus went in His own Spirit, while His body was in the grave, and announced the victory which He had just accomplished on the Cross for them and for all who believe. Of course, all the other believing spirits in "the lower parts of the earth" heard His glad message. Did He not then loosen those prisoners by making them His captives, so that He could take them up to Heaven with Him? That is exactly what He did. "He led captivity captive." This is rendered variously, and every rendering is interesting. The margin says, "He led a multitude of captives," which was emphatically true; for the spirits of the saved were there from Adam to Christ. Another version says, "He captivated a captivity." Now, contrast Luke's location of paradise (Luke 23:43) with that of Paul - II Cor. 12:2, 4. He declares that paradise is now in "the third Heaven," and that he "knew a man in Christ ... caught up" there. Furthermore, in II Cor. 5:8, he shows that those who are "absent from the body" now are "present with the Lord." For that reason, he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" than to continue on earth, tempted and tried, beaten and bruised. See Philippians 1:23. What became of those saints, whose bodies arose from the grave and went into Jerusalem on the day of Christ's resurrection? - Matthew 27:52, 53. They are, no doubt, "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23); for Jesus' resurrection was His perfection. Compare Luke 13:32 with Philippians 3:12. Now, if Paul does not mean by Ephesians 4:8 that Jesus emptied the prison house of the believing dead and took their spirits to Heaven, why does he set Christ's ascension over against His descent "into the lower parts of the earth"? Why does he put the significant question of verse nine? Certainly His body went not only into the grave, but

His spirit went into the lower parts of the earth. Jesus' own words confirm this. He said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" - Matthew 12:40. "The heart of the earth" and "the lower parts of the earth" are the same identical locality. I Peter 3:18-20 confirms this thought - Christ was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

CHURCH OFFICERS BESTOWED

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" - 4:11. In verse eight, we read that God "gave gifts unto men." In verse eleven, we have those gifts named. The Greek word here translated "gift" is "domata" - a gift, a present. The sacrifices were these kinds of gifts. In verse seven, another word (dorea) is used and refers to Christ. It is also used with reference to the Spirit; for example, Acts 2:38 - "the Gift of the Holy Ghost." Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God's chief Gifts (Doreai) to men. Still another word (charisma) is used in speaking of the gifts of the Spirit - I Cor. 12:4. It means especially a grace, a favor, a kindness, for the sake of another. It is termed a "spiritual gift," in Romans 1:11. Those nine gifts are so called, because they are the gifts of the Spirit or the gifts which He brought with Him and gave to the Church for the sake of Christ. Jesus, our Lord and Head, is glorified by the proper use of the gifts (the charismata) of the Holy Spirit.

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

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

"PROPHETS." A prophet is one who speaks "to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" - I Cor. 14:3. That is a fine definition. The original literally means, "to speak for another." It is from "pro" meaning "for," and from "phemi" "to speak." A prophet is one who interprets the Scriptures. The Old Testament prophets, as well as those in Paul's day, spoke for the Lord. Hence, they recited history and biography, as well as foretold future events. Some people vainly imagine that a prophet is simply one who tells something not recorded in the Bible, and something always future. Oh, no. Not that. Study the above definition and see. A Scriptural prophet expounds the Word of God, declaring what He bids him to say. Only such a one can edify, exhort, and comfort the people. Usually, so-called modern prophets only deceive and mislead their followers, because they do not speak according to the written Word of God.

"EVANGELISTS." An evangelist is a messenger of the great Gospel of grace. It is from the Greek word "euaggelion," which is translated "Gospel" or "Glad Tidings," in the New Testament. The word "evangelize" is sometimes translated "preach," as in Acts 5:42 and Rev. 14:6. An apostle was more than a prophet or an evangelist. He had authority over the others. He set things in order - I Cor. 11:34. Or, he instructed others to do it and how to do it, as did Paul to Timothy and Titus. All the apostles were prophets and had evangelistic abilities. But not all prophets and evangelists were apostles. Philip was an evangelist, but not an apostle - Acts 21:8. Neither were

Niger and Manaen apostles, and yet they were prophets and teachers - Acts 13:1.

"PASTORS AND TEACHERS." These two offices are coupled together, because every pastor should be a teacher; but every teacher is not necessarily a pastor. The Greek word rendered "pastors" is "poimenas." It means "a herdsman, a shepherd." It is derived from the verb "poimaino," which signifies "to feed, to tend, to keep flocks, to cherish." Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My lambs ... Feed My sheep." At first, only teachers seemed to be sufficient; and most men like to pose as teachers. It was found later, that shepherds were more needful than teachers; hence, shepherds are named first. Very few ministers today have enough love for the saints to stay with them and feed them. It is far easier on the flesh to have a few of "candlestick" or "sugarstick" sermons - just enough for a ten days' campaign. One with a good memory and strong in himself can deliver those, entice a good collection out of the poor sheep, and go on to the next place. He is shamefully destitute of the two most vital qualifications of a pastor. He is ignorant of the Scriptures, and he has no shepherd love for the people; though he may speak with the tongues of men and even of angels, and have miracle working faith - I Corinthians 13:1-3.

Our hearts bleed at the deplorable conditions in Christendom today. The cry of the flock of Christ is pitiful. "Oh, send us a pastor! Oh, that we had some one to teach us the Truth! All we hear is law! Where can we find some one to shepherd us?" Such are the lamentations that reach us. Then some fellows, who claim to be pastors, do not have a shepherd heart. They flog the sheep, rather than feed them. They demand food for their own lazy bodies, though they give no spiritual food to their people. One of the saddest facts today, among the Pentecostal people, is that many self-appointed or sect-appointed pastors are demanding a stipulated salary for their "glad service" as they term it. But, the Lord be praised, there are some real shepherds who seek to feed the sheep and build them up in the faith of the Gospel. Here is a precious truth. Jesus Christ possessed the afore-mentioned five offices. "Consider the Apostle ... of our profession," wrote Paul in Hebrews 3:1. Peter announced Jesus to the Jews, as the "Prophet" that Moses foretold should come - Acts 3:22. He is called an "Angel" in Revelation several times; for example, in 8:3 and 10:1. The only difference, between the word "angel" and "evangelist," is this: that "eu" which means "good" is prefixed to the word "angel." Certainly, Jesus Christ proved Himself to be the Chief Messenger of the good tidings of grace. Then He termed Himself "the Good Shepherd" - John 10:11. Paul called Him the "Great Shepherd" (Hebrews 13:20), and Peter proclaimed Him "the Chief Shepherd" - I Peter 5:4. Finally, the official title by which He was so well known among His people was "Master" or "Teacher." This is wonderful. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit calls and prepares men for these various official functions, He is in a manner showing Jesus Christ off therein. Jesus is again executing the same official authority and power through His yielded servants. Oh, how sacred is the place of God's ministers. How meek and lowly in heart they should be. How they should seek to adorn their office, and please and glorify their Lord. Usually, if they are really called of God, they will do so.

OBJECT OF THE OFFICERS

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ" - 4:12. There is an ultimate purpose of the five ministries indicated in verse eleven. That purpose is expressed in verse fifteen - that we "may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." There are ten necessary steps to reach that goal. These are given from verses twelve to fifteen. The first three occur in verse twelve. Each step prepares for the next one. Three of these steps are negative (verse 14); the others are positive. Have you the patience to stop and consider them one by one? -If so, you may reach the goal in your experience.

1. "For the perfecting of the saints" - with a view to perfecting the holy ones. The Holy Spirit has placed permanently in the Assembly the aforenamed five officers. The Greek word "katartizo" means "to fit thoroughly, adjust, or furnish completely." It is variously used. It supposes perfect worship in Matthew 21:16; perfect fellowship in I Cor. 1:10; perfect faith in I Thess. 3:10; and perfect work in Hebrews 13:21. Such all-around perfection is brought about in the saints by means of "the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" - I Thess. 2:13. Thus, we become thoroughly fitted and furnished for the second step.

2. "For the work of the ministry" - unto a work of serving as a deacon. The authorized version sounds like it means the ministry rendered by the preachers. No. The service of the preacher was considered before. This is entirely a ministry rendered by the people who have no official place. A Scriptural assembly is by no means a one-man assembly. All the members may be ministers, or

deacons (Greek "diaconoi"). They need no license, nor ordination papers. Of course, they do not want any carnal handle to their names, as Reverend or D.D. They do desire to be useful, however; and the apostles, prophets, and other officers are required to feed them so that they may become useful. Thus, the saints themselves effect the next feature. Is this not interesting. I am sure you are not impatient yet.

3. "For the edifying of the Body of Christ." "To edify" means "to build up." By the Scriptural ministry of all the members of an assembly, that assembly edifies or builds up itself in love - 4:16. Such a goal is to be coveted indeed. But, oh! How few people and how few ministers understand what is meant by edifying the Church. In the majority of cases, all they expect or even desire is to get sinners saved and possibly filled with the Spirit and healed in body. If they do not have such results, they either become discouraged and quit the ministry, or go wild with fanaticism and bring discredit upon the cause of Christ. Reader, are you a pastor? Do you know that the Lord, the Good Shepherd, expects you to feed your flock by teaching them the whole Word of God, so that they will "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"? Are you showing them the way of victory over sin? Do you teach them the necessity of judging the flesh in themselves, and show them how to do it? Are you judging your own flesh, as an example for them? Sometimes, the preacher's flesh needs the severest judgment, by himself. As the shepherd, so are the sheep. How is it with you who are in the pew? Are you taking in the whole Truth, so as to be useful in edifying the entire Body?

4. How long shall these three steps of progress continue? "Till we all come in the unity of the faith" - 4:13. It is the same Greek word "enoteta" for "unity," as in verse three. It also means "oneness." We saw that the "unity" or "oneness" of the Spirit was a divine arrangement, which we are admonished to keep ("therein" Greek) or give heed to. But this oneness is an experience that we come down to, or at which we arrive, in the valley of humiliation and suffering long with one another. See verse two. Oh! What precious pearls of truth are found in the valley where Shimei casts stones at us. Often it is dreary and lonely in the valley. Often we have to suffer long and be kind to those who will not judge themselves. Nevertheless, this is the only but sure route to experimental oneness.

5. "And of the knowledge of the Son of God" - 4:13. Observe that the unity is found in two pockets - "faith" and "knowledge." These are very closely related. Note, too, that it is not the knowledge of science nor inventions nor grammar. It is a knowledge of God's Son. Now faith in the Word which we read or hear affords us that needed knowledge. And, as we learn Christ, our faith becomes perfected. Thus, we all travel on together, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:5); and we finally reach this two-armed goal of perfected faith and exact understanding. We "see eye to eye." There is no discord between us. We know Christ and believe Him alike. Such is a real Ephesian assembly. Then, what do we behold? Or, perhaps, we could better ask, "What will the Lord behold there?"

6. "Unto a perfect man." The original reads, "Unto a man full grown."

We are not to look at full-grown individuals, but at the assembly as full grown. Note the exact wording: "Till we all come" - not till each of us comes. For some in the assembly may not yet be full grown. The faith and victory of the assembly as a whole may guard the weaker ones and carry them along as children.

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

8. "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" - 4:14 Revised Version. We are all infants in grace, when first saved; but it is not our Father's will that we always wear baby clothes and be imprisoned in a religious stroller or high chair. He has made ample provision for us to grow out of this stage. That was the purpose of the five God-given ministries of verse

eleven and the succeeding steps of verses twelve and thirteen. The Word of God is the food, "the sincere (pure) milk of the Word," for babes in Christ. The God-ordained ministers and older members of the Church constitute the nursing mothers. Satan takes advantage of the infantile state of most believers, and bewilders them by false teachings. There is a bad family of four terms here, closely related, by which the apostle expresses the terrible tossings of babes in Christ. These four are:

(1) "Kubeia," which means "dice-playing, sleight of hand, trickery, gambling."

2) "Panourgia," meaning "villainy, knavery, ready to do any evil, doing a holy deed in an unholy way." It is rendered "craftiness" in our text.

(3) "Methodeia," which means literally "a following after, moving by method"; hence, "artifice, cunning." It is here translated "lie in wait," or "wiles" as in 6:11 where it is called "the wiles of the devil." Paul uses the word in these two places only. He never employed the word in a good sense. Hence, I have cut the word "method" out of my vocabulary entirely, unless I wish to express cunning or craft. It never was used in a good sense by the Greeks. Why, then, should we?

(4) "Planes," which signifies "leading astray, leading by wandering about, leading into error, wandering in mind." It is rendered "deceive" or "to error," in the text. Jude thirteen terms methodical teachers "wandering stars" (Greek, "planetai asteres").

Now couple with these, two other striking words in our text. The Greek word "kludonizomenoi" means "tossed by a surging wave." The word "peripheromenoi" means "carried around in a circle, holding out." Satan makes some brainy men and women religious. They play dice or gamble with the Word of God. They are "walking in craftiness ... handling the Word of God deceitfully" - II Cor. 4:2. They are unscrupulous in their religious knavery or craft. They make merchandise of sacred things, and thus enrich themselves in fame and money. Their teaching is rank error, leading astray from the simple truth of Christ; yet so religious, and in such a roundabout manner, that their plot is not seen. What is still worse, all their teaching and maneuverings are attractively methodical, politely systematic, and charmingly arranged or programmed. Method, system, tact, skill, adroitness, cunning - all this appeals to the natural man. Babes in Christ are often caught up by religious winds or whirlwinds and tossed and whirled around hither and thither, up and down, never knowing where they are. Like babies in the natural they are always restless and dissatisfied, whining and fussing with other babies, jealous and peevish, and never "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord," but increase in error. They end in dead formalism, or rank fanaticism, if they do not lose their minds altogether. The simple truth as it is in Jesus is the only remedy against such a terrible state.

IMITATORS OF EVIL MEN

Here we must note another sad fact. Some saved people, ministers and Bible teachers, are caught in this devilish snare. They denounce much of the Truth of God. Preachers of religions of works, or legality, are terribly guilty in this respect. Paul says to the Galatians, "there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ." He pronounces a curse upon such teachers - Gal. 1:7-9. They are deceitful workers. They are actually crafty and underhanded in their ministries. They twist the Scriptures to prove their pointless points. They are unscrupulous in their smart methodical craftiness. It is no wonder that their poor unfed hearers feel that they must be carried along on their religious waves or "hold out faithful" in order to be saved. Yes. Method, tact, or pious trickery, appeal to the carnal mind. Some Christian workers seem to be carried away with it innocently, not knowing that Satan is the author of it all. Perhaps some might think to hide behind II Cor. 12:16 where Paul says, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." If the apostle means that he caught the Corinthians by cunning deceit, then he contradicts all his other utterances on this subject. Furthermore, he would contradict all the other six citations where this word "guile" (Greek, "dolos") occurs - John 1:47; I Thess. 2:3; I Peter 2:1, 22; 3:10; Rev. 14:5. In all those it means "deceit, cunning, craft." Certainly the number seven could not be broken by our beloved brother Paul's exception. Well, what did Paul mean? You will observe that he spoke in irony several times in this twelfth chapter and in the preceding one. Read II Cor. 12:11-13; also II Cor. 11:16, 21, 23. Then, continuing his irony, he says, "Nevertheless, (you say that) being crafty, I caught you by means of a tricky bait" - II Cor. 12:16 Wuest. That is, he preached the Gospel without a salary. There is no Scriptural ground, therefore, for resorting to chicanery in the service of God. The apostle says, "We ... have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the Truth,

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" - II. Cor. 4:2. Unselfishness was Paul's craft. Now, having taken the three important negative steps, we are ready for the last one, which is indeed comprehensive and precious.

THE GLORIOUS GOAL

9. "But speaking the Truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things" - 4:15. True ministers speak only the Truth; and true followers accept only the Truth. The Word of God is so vast, the Word of grace so full and sufficient, that no Gospel messenger need add any of his own cogitations to try to help the people. If we are honest before the Lord and faithful to the people, we will keep within the Bible and take heed to good and sound doctrine and have nothing to do with "doctrines of devils" - I Timothy 4:1. Thus, the Lord will give us flocks that will "endure sound doctrine" - II Tim. 4:3. "In love!" - Eph. 4:15. What a beautiful phrase. It occurs three times in this fourth chapter. Compare verses two, fifteen, and sixteen. It is not enough to know the Truth and fight for it; for Truth is not some cold rigid code of laws or hidebinding rules. Truth is warm, because it is life itself Jesus said, "I am ... the Truth." Some fellows teach grace with a great hammer. They talk about love in a spirit of vengeance. They would force the Word upon and into their hearers as by a pile driver. It seems that some ministers, even of grace, have not sat down very long in Paul's love chapter - I Corinthians thirteen. If preachers are heady and stem in their ministrations, they need not be surprised if their people are like them. "Love begets love" is an old adage which is still true. However fervent and unfaltering we may be in declaring God's Word, it must be with the fervor and firmness of unselfish love, which is longsuffering and forbearing, pitiful and patient. A real mother feeds her children without forcing them to eat. She comes to them with an inviting platter, laden with enticing victuals, and not with a rawhide. Jesus said, "Feed My sheep." They are His sheep; and yet, He gives some of us the high privilege of shepherding them. What a marvelous grace! How then dare anyone flog or flay Christ's sheep?

10. "Grow up into Him in all things" - 4:15. There are four degrees in this brief statement: First: Fed saints "grow." As Peter exhorted, they grow in grace and divine knowledge. Some saints never grow. Usually it is because they do not have nourishing food. People cannot increase spiritually without spiritual provender, any more than they can grow naturally without food. What a reckoning awaits most ministers because of their laziness and neglect. What will they answer when He shall ask them, "Did you feed My lambs and sheep? Why did you not feed My flock?" No excuse will be accepted. Their religious playhouse ministries will receive no reward, but rebuke and shame.

Second: Well-fed saints "grow up." In 3:17 we saw them growing downward, or "rooted and grounded in love." Here, in 4:15, we behold them becoming taller in grace and in the things of God. In experience, they approach nearer to the throne of grace. They possess a keener sense of the divine Presence.

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

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

If something is said about giving, they cough. Their penurious old man begins to squirm. If healing is mentioned, they ask, "What are the doctors for? They have to live." If they are asked to help others, or give them a seat in the auto, they say, "No one helped me. Oh, I have a new car." The Word read or expounded shows people what to do, or what not to do; but, because they do not yield to that corrective or directive truth, they fail to grow in all things. They never become

evenly balanced in their Christian lives; hence, their happiness is imperfect. They wonder why they are not blessed and contented as some others. It is because they chafe under, or run from, the very providences which make for those things. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" - Matthew 4:4. Only those, who eat all of the Word of God, grow in all things. Admitting and admiring the Truth is not enough. We must assimilate it and live by its power.

SOURCE OF UNITY AND GROWTH

"Which is the Head, even Christ" - 4:15. This final clause is not incidental but vital. The Headship of Christ over the Church is as exceedingly important as it is shamefully slighted and ignored by His people. There is no growth apart from its observance. Note that the goal is, "Grow up into HIM." How can we grow into Him, if we do not hold Him as our individual Head and as Head of the whole Church which is His Body and as "Head over all to (in behalf of, by) the Church"? - 1:22. It is impossible. It is a lamentable fact that people, who do not with the heart maintain this attitude to Jesus Christ, simply hang on - go on apparently and keep a form. They lose the power, fail in faith, fall from grace. Their love cools off and joy leaks out. Some lament their sad condition, but cannot locate the disease nor the cause of it. Therefore, the apostle ably and beautifully amplifies this growth in Christ the Head, in the next comprehensive verse. "From whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love" - 4:16. The followers of Jesus as a company are pictured in different ways. Sometimes they are likened to the human body; other times to a house, or to a family in a house. All three of these likenesses are couched in this verse. The two chief classes of employees on the scene are carpenters and teachers. We saw the carpenters at work in 2:21 - "In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." The Greek word, of "sunarmologoumenon," occurs in these two places only. It literally means, "having been accurately framed together." The next word, "sumbibazomenon," means "having been brought together." The same word is translated "knit together," in Col. 2:2, 19. It is rendered "proving" (bringing together evidence) in Acts 9:22, and "instruct" in I Cor. 2:16. Two important acts by the carpenters are expressed by these two long words. The material is first fitly framed. That is, the saints are so wrought upon and inwrought by the Word and Spirit of God that they become adjusted and adapted and spiritually fitted for certain places in "the temple of God," called also "the Body of Christ." Then, secondly, that prepared and fitly framed material is placed together, or joined piece to piece. That is, the saints who yield to the divine process of spiritual framing, are gathered together by the Spirit and "set ... in the Body, as it hath pleased Him" - member joined to member, saint united to saint, one associated with another in warm fellowship and mutual respect. All are deeply devoted to God and tenaciously depending upon Christ as their Head.

The clause, "by that which every joint supplieth," changes the figure from carpentry to anatomy. The uniting or knitting together of the members of the spiritual Body of Christ is accomplished "through (by means of) every joint of the supply" - 4:16 R.V. Col. 2:19 says, "By joints and bands having nourishment ministered." The Greek word "epichoregia" means an additional abundant supply. But I am amazed to discover that "choregeo," the base of this word, means "to lead a chorus, or pay for a chorus, pay the piper." How wonderful then, that Paul should use it in this connection. The "nourishment ministered" or "the supply" by every joint and band, evidently includes - "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Eph. 5:19, 20. The "Joints and bands" refer to such saints as afford spiritual nourishment, a prominent feature of which is a spirit of melody. All this speaks of perfect harmony in the assembly. What is more soothing and comforting than sweet Scriptural words sung to a melodious tune, harmonious and tender? What an uplift to the saints as a whole, when they sing in the Spirit in other tongues! This is the will of God for all believers.

The Spirit does not stop here with His minute description as to what enters into the growth of the assembly. But He says that all this process is "according to the working in due measure of each several part" - 4:16 R.V. Is that not significant? Each member of the Church is to learn his particular place - whether a joint, or band, or whatever part of the Body - and keep yielding to the Holy Spirit and walking in the Truth in his place. Whatever our place, we should operate with divine energy, which the Lord is always ready to supply. We should operate "in due measure,"

and not fall short nor go beyond. Some folks pray and testify too often and too long. They have a conceited notion of their gifts. Others do not pray nor speak at all. They underestimate their gifts. They let the sly fox of timidity seal their mouths. They are personally robbed of blessing, and so is the whole meeting. But what is the climactic result of the due working of every member of the Body in harmony with the written Word? The last clause of this verse answers -

"Maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love" - 4:16. The divine appointment of the five gifts (domata, Greek) of verse eleven is to this worthy end. The ten steps of verses twelve to fifteen are to this glorious end. The several items of verse sixteen are an explanatory review of the preceding ten steps. Now we understand why most assemblies do not grow. They do not receive proper Scriptural teaching and training; hence, there cannot be among them the ordained articulations of their members. There is no Scriptural growth in numbers, because there is no power to bring forth. There is no growth in grace and knowledge, because "the Word of His grace" is either rejected or neglected. The assembly, "the Body," cannot build up its own self in any sense.

"In love" - 4:16. Let us pause here. The love here mentioned is not sentiment. It is not carnal pity, a glossing over other's faults. It is not that sickly something that exclaims, "Well, we must be charitable; there is good in all people." It is "the love of God ... shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" - Romans 5:5. This love puts Christ first; and seeks His honor, and gives Him His place first of all as Head of the Body. This love reveres and believes the Word and practices it. Therefore, we read in Eph. 4:2 - "Forbearing one another in love." That does not condone sin, nor give license to the old self-life; but it supports the weak, and suffers long with those who learn slowly and are hindered and handicapped by Satan. It speaks "the Truth in love," which cuts down the flesh and builds up the new man. This love judges the flesh in each individual life, primarily in himself first of all. "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote (or, splinter) that is in thy brother's eye" - Luke 6:42. Self-judgment is the most powerful proof of "love one to another" - John 13:35. It prays more, talks less, criticizes never, washes feet, lifts burdens, runs errands, sings songs, binds up bruises, takes insults, revenges no one. A meeting of such members builds up itself in love. In Col. 2:19, the apostle goes a little further saying, "Increaseth with the increase of God." This is wonderful, and as vital and real as it is wonderful. In a typical assembly, God is seen to grow. There is no real growth in a meeting except God grows therein. Only by the increase of God can we "be filled unto all the fulness of God" - Ephesians 3:19 R.V.

In the light of such delicate and intricate dealings of divine love, we marvel that any Spirit-filled person should introduce any kind of man-made cement to hold saints together. We marvel that men claim to find a recipe

for such glue in the Bible. The above language speaks of the unbreakable union, solidity and growth, and vigorous health of the Church, which we should covet for God's glory. If we believe these words, we never will contrive some human framework and expect the blessed Holy Spirit to fit redeemed souls into it. We will not break the tender heart of our adorable Head, by substituting ourselves or others as heads of Christ's Body. Beloved, let us stand aloof from present conditions, which do not give Him His ordained place. Rather wound your friends than the Beloved. Rather court His favor and approval than any other. By God's enabling, we can maintain this most loyal attitude to Christ and the Truth, "speaking the Truth in love" - 4:15. Thus, we will indeed be building up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20), and be "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" - I Corinthians 15:58.

SUITABLE SUNDRY EXHORTATIONS

Ephesians 4:17-32 comprises more than a dozen instructions as to our daily conduct or walk, in view of what is contained in the sixteen preceding verses. The first of these instructions is the fourth of the seven "walks" of this epistle - "Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" - 4:17. That is, do not "walk as men" - I Cor. 3:3. Before we were saved, we walked thus; even "according to the course (age) of this world" - Eph. 2:2. But, now that we are a new creation in Christ, we are to walk as Christ walked. When we were sinners among sinners, we may not have realized the actual condition of sinners; but, now that we are saved, we may know what we were before we enjoyed God's salvation. Therefore, as a background for his entreaty, the apostle briefly outlines the sinner's state. With eight dashes of his word-brush, he makes a dark and dismal picture of fallen man.

"Gentiles walk, in the vanity (emptiness) of their mind, having the understanding darkened" - 4:17, 18. They think themselves to be full and bright. They boast in their intelligence and wisdom, or supposed light. They are "alienated from the life of God." They go away from Him deliberately, as indicated by Romans 1:21-25. How terrible to be "dead in trespasses and sins," and continue thus, when the glorious real life of God is offered to men through His Son. How have they become alienated? "Through the ignorance that is in them." And the more ignorant they are, the more they profess "themselves to be wise" - Romans 1:22. How have men become ignorant? Through "the blindness (hardness) of their heart." Rejection of light increases blindness. Rejection of conviction induces hardness of heart. They are "past feeling." Literally, they have cast off all feeling toward God and divine things. If that were true in Paul's day, it is more true in our day. They "have given themselves over unto lasciviousness" or licentiousness which is another rendering. They go to the utmost extreme of wickedness and lewdness, and "work all uncleanness with greediness" - craving or eagerness. Such a picture should produce an eternal recoil to believers.

The foreground of Paul's exhortation is expressed in 4:1 R.V. - "Walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called." The inward attitude of the saints toward God and toward one another is the chief concern of the first sixteen verses of the chapter. Hence, the entreaty - "keep the unity of the Spirit" (4:3), and the goal - "the unity of the faith" - (4:13). That is a walk before the Lord, the faithful steppings of the heart and will. It is a walk together with one another - forbearing in love, speaking in love, building up in love. The power of the Word and the Spirit effectually operate in the new man, the inner man, causing him to grow up into Christ in all things. But the outward conduct is the concern of the latter half of this chapter. How to walk before men calls for these cautions.

A CHANGE OF CLOTHING

"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by (in) Him, as the truth is in Jesus" - 4:20, 21. The fundamental truth as to experience, which Paul always emphasized, was that we put off the old man when we believe on Jesus and put on the new man. He declares this positively in Col. 3:9, 10 - "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man." The old man "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," or the desires of deceit, in which the nations still revel. Therefore, we are admonished not to walk as they walk. We are no longer to walk like the fellow we abandoned, but like the new man which we have taken on. As believers, we are a new creation, we are in a new realm; we have a new Head, even the last Adam. We are a spiritual people. Now, 4:22-24 seems to teach us to put off the old man again and put on the new man again. But that is not the meaning. Paul does not mean to say that we may be saved today and lost tomorrow, and have to be saved over again. He means that we are to put off the conduct of the old man. The former course, or manner of life, must be abandoned - "walk not as other Gentiles (nations) walk." Note exactly the wording of 4:22 - the truth, set forth in Jesus' teaching and in His conduct, is this - "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man"; or that ye put away, according to the former manner of life, the old man. When you were saved, you put off the old Adam head; therefore, now put away his old habits which are waxed corrupt. The exhortations of 4:25-31 name some of those habits. Heeding those exhortations is putting off the old man, as to his former conduct. The other side of truth, as it is in Jesus, is "that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" - 4:23, 24 RV. Here the conduct of the new man is meant, as the following verses also show. The phrase, "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2), is a comment on these verses. Neither one refers to salvation, but to being "renewed in knowledge" (Col. 3:10), "renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16). Having taken the last Adam as our Lord and Head, we are to wear His robe of righteousness. Our daily life should agree with our Sunday profession. In the following platform of eight planks, there are eight "nots" or negatives, and five "lets." Some of these planks are as couplets, a positive set over against a negative. These couplets declare unquestionably the fact of the two natures in believers. They prove that the old man is not taken out root and branch, as the second-work theory claims. There is no kind of sanctification this side of death or translation that puts a believer, as to his body, into the state of sinlessness and purity which Adam enjoyed before he sinned. Old sinful deeds are possible after we are saved, because of "sin in the flesh" - Romans 7:17, 18, 20, 23; 8:3. But we should not let sin reign in our mortal body - "for sin shall not have dominion over you" - Romans 6:12, 14. By observing the

following entreaties, we put off the old manner of life and put on the new manner of life. We heed Ephesians 4:22-24.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" - 4:25. This verse is a significant triplet. The devil is a liar from the beginning. Though he has inoculated us with a lying nature, we are to yield our members to God and tell the truth. Lying to my neighbor, is lying to myself, because he is a member of me. A white lie is just as black as a black lie. Truth makes men free (John 8:32); therefore, we should speak the truth always.

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" - 4:26. Here is another triplet; but some of these triplets have couplets as opposites. Psalm 4:4 is a parallel citation - "Stand in awe (be ye angry), and sin not" (R.V.). It means well-grounded hatred of evil or wrongdoing. Mark 3:5 is a sidelight - Jesus "looked round about on them with anger (orge, Greek), being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." But, however just our holy indignation may be, we must not let it burn on into bitterness. We must not "chew the rag," after we have had our say. We must not boast of how we rebuked the foe. If our anger does not subside, it will turn to wrath and become sinful; then darkness will steal over our spirit - the sun will go down upon our wrath. Thus, we will be giving the devil a chance to do mischief.

"Let him that stole steal no more" - 4:28. It is wise to make restitution, if possible; but restitution is not even intimated here. How then can anyone teach the necessity of restitution in order to be saved? Salvation is by faith in Him who paid all our debt, and not by restoring what we might have stolen. We are not exhorted to repair the past conduct of the old man, but we are taught not to continue in that conduct. "Rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good," instead of stealing with his hands; for stealing is evil. This verse is another significant triplet. Observe that the toil is not to enrich the former thief, nor the present toiler, but to relieve the sufferer. The Gospel of Christ and of Paul never gives any place for selfishness.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" - 4:29. Someone said, "If you think something, you might as well speak it out." That is a poor excuse for not being willing to put his hand on his mouth, as Proverbs 30:32 advises. Oh, how much harm is done, how much sadness is wrought among saints, by not heeding this injunction. We may not be responsible for evil thoughts; but we certainly are responsible for saying everything which comes into the mind. Do you turn on the faucet and let out all the water, just because the water is there? Do you open the windows and let all the dust and smoke blow in, simply because they are crying for entrance? Some people are so given to gab in the natural that it seems they never get control of their talkative old man, though they have received the Holy Spirit. Instead of being ashamed of their useless palaver, which is invariably baneful, they enjoy hearing themselves talk.

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

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" - 4:30. This verse has no reference to praying and testifying in meeting. It refers to our daily life among the saints. Neglect of the preceding and succeeding admonitions grieves the Spirit. Walking after the flesh, doing the things we did when unsaved, living and talking like the world, misusing our tongues, misappropriating our earnings - all such things grieve the Holy Spirit. The next verse is a sample - "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." It is a summing up of what went before.

Is it possible that saved people need these exhortations? Yes, and these were written to Pentecostal people. They had been sealed with the Spirit, that is, anointed with the Spirit; or as folks today say, but unscripturally, "baptized with the Spirit." Note also Ephesians 1:13.

Apparently there is more strife among the Spirit-filled saints than among others. There are several reasons for this. First: They are the most out-and-out-for-God folks on earth. Of course, the devil seeks to make trouble among them more than among others; for he knows that "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" - Mark 3:25. Second: When the Holy

Spirit comes into a life, He begins to show up the character of the old man; and domestic war arises between the old and the new lives, or the two natures. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit (the renewed spirit), and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" - Gal. 5:17. The individual, and usually the whole assembly, is dwelling in the seventh chapter of Romans - sin is reigning in the flesh. Third: They have not learned the way of victory over sin - the road out of Romans seven - by means of reckoning, as taught in Romans six. Therefore, they know nothing experimentally about the glorious victorious reigning life in the Spirit, as taught in Romans eight. Some may have a philosophical self-control in certain respects, but not through the mastery of the Holy Spirit over them. Fourth: Some saints know the theory of victory over sin, according to Romans six; but they do not practice the theory. They fail to reckon. They do not judge their own cantankerous flesh. They sit in judgment over their fellows, and justify themselves; or, they do not judge their nice sweet flesh - their natural self-control. The flesh in one believer snorts against the flesh in another believer; or the flesh in one arises against the Holy Spirit in another. Sometimes error in doctrine causes strife. All these things grieve the Holy Spirit; and that grief is keenly felt by those who are filled practically with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. Some may say, "What is meant by 'the day of redemption'?" This is not an unfair question. It deserves an answer. Romans 8:23 gives us light - we "which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (sonship), to wit, the redemption of our body." The full fruitage of the Spirit will include the resurrection and translation of the body; for Christ died to save the entire man - spirit, soul, and body. The Greek word "apolutrosis," rendered "redemption," literally means "a loosing away, a release on payment of a ransom." An immortal body will be the final result for us of Christ's redemption. We will be actually loosed away from all sin, and from the possibility of committing sin. We will be loosed away from death and disease, to be forever with the Redeemer Himself. Therefore, "the day of redemption" is when the Lord shall raise the dead bodies of saints and change the living, and catch us up to be with Him in the glory. When we received the Holy Spirit, we were sealed unto that glorious time, and none can break the seal.

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" - 4:32. Doing this pleases the Holy Spirit; for this is what He will enable us to do, if we keep yielding to Him. What a beautiful finale to the chapter! It is akin to the beginning of the chapter. If we consider the motive of God's forgiveness, even "for Christ's sake," we will become kind and tender toward our brethren. Then there will be also reality and depth to our forgiveness. When the Lord pardons us, He does not afterward publish what wicked wretches we were. If we really pardon an offense of a brother, we will not broadcast the crime he had committed against us. The forgiveness for Jesus' sake forgets as well as forgives, even as Jehovah casts our sins into the sea of forgetfulness for ever.

AN EXPLANATORY WORD

Our use of the word "officer" in reference to the five divine "gifts" in 4:11, may seem to some that we endorse organization. No, we simply endorse divine order or arrangement. God forbid that we should leave an unwise impression on anyone's mind. Let me explain the meaning by several citations. Paul said, "I magnify mine office" (literally, "deaconship" or "ministry") - Romans 11:13. He said, "All members have not the same office" (Greek, "praxis," meaning "work, action, use") - Romans 12:4. Also, "If a man desire the office of a bishop (Greek, "episkope," "oversight, bishopric"), he desireth a good work" - I Timothy 3:1. Note that this office is called a "work." See also Acts 1:20, where the four-word phrase is translated "bishopric." The priests were not in an organization, and were not chosen by the people. They were divinely appointed.

Who is an officer? An officer is one who fills an office, or acts in an official capacity, or performs a certain service. Hence, a deacon, a bishop, a minister, and an apostle may be called an officer, as by divine appointment. Such an appointment, or such an officer, need have no reference to an organization at all. The Greek word "huperetes," translated "officer" in the Gospels, means "an assistant, an attendant." John Mark was such an officer with Barnabas and Saul, but was called "their minister" - Acts 13:5. Of course, if we call those five classes of ministries in 4:11 "gifts" ("domata," Greek) as in 4:8, we shall not be misleading; neither will we give Satan an advantage to introduce something unscriptural.

My Bible, 'tis a Book divine,
 Where heavenly truth and mercy shine;
 And wisdom speaks in every line -
 It speaks to thee and speaks to me.
 My Bible, here with joy I trace
 The records of redeeming grace;
 Glad tidings for a sinful race -
 Good news for thee, good news for me.
 My Bible, in this Book alone,
 I find God's holy will made known;
 And here His love to man is shown -
 His love for thee, His love for me.
 My Bible, source of comfort pure
 To those who trials here endure;
 The hope of Heaven it renders sure -
 Best hope for thee, best hope for me.
 I love my Bible. May I ne'er
 Consult it but with faith and prayer,
 That I may find my Savior there -
 Who died for thee, who died for me.

THE DIVINE PRODUCT - THE BRIDE

Chapter Five

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor" - 5:1, 2. These verses properly conclude the preceding chapter. The expletive, "therefore," connects them with it. For us to do as admonished in the foregoing couplets and triplets is being "followers" or "imitators" of God. Thus we are "beloved children" of God, as our Father, who loves His dear children even as He loves His Son. We also are His very own, having been begotten of Him. We were entreated "to walk worthily of the calling" and it no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk" - 4:1, 17 Revised Version. Three things were to be done "in love." Now all those "walks" and "works" are summed up in one comprehensive request - "and walk in love" - which is the fifth of the seven "walks" of this letter. To walk in love is to do God's perfect will. The leverage for such a perfect walk is profound and powerful. It is twofold.

"As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us" - 5:2. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem it. The Son so loved the world, that He left the glory to come to earth to die for mankind. The Holy Spirit so loved the world, that He came to empower the Son to die thus. Hence, the Son has given Himself, "an offering and a sacrifice." During the time of the shadows, the people brought offerings of money or wood to the Lord. Those were thank offerings. Then they brought also animals and birds for sacrifices, which were called burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings. They all foreshadowed Jesus Christ and His death on Calvary. As "an offering and a sacrifice," Christ gave "Himself for us." God accepts us in Christ, who is our Offering, because of our acceptance of Him. In Christ, we are a thank offering to God. He accepts the sacrifice of Christ as the burnt offering for us. In offering Himself as a Sacrifice for us, He was "a sweetsmelling savor" to the Father; and we who believe on Jesus are a sweet savor also in Him. Genesis 8:20, 21 is a bright sidelight at this point. "Noah ... offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor." The margin says that He smelled "a savor of rest." God is absolutely satisfied with the offering and sacrifice of His Son in our behalf; therefore, He has entered into an eternal rest. He wants no other offering, no other sacrifice. He smelled that savor of rest for you and me. By accepting Jesus we, too, satisfy God. Oh, this is too deep and wonderful for words. He is resting in regard to us, in the perfection of His Son; and He rests in us as His sons, because of Christ. (Paul does not speak here of Christ as the sin and trespass offerings. We have those in Ephesians two). Do you marvel then that Paul said, "And walk in love"? How can we walk otherwise, seeing that we are so highly favored? With such a view of divine grace, we need not wonder that "Enoch

walked with God." It makes me want to walk with Him. Yea, it makes me let God walk IN me. If a Scriptural vision of the boundless grace of God and of the self-sacrificing grace of His Son does not move us to chastity, unselfishness, and holy living, what will? But that is not all. We are to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." We are to walk as He walked, love as He loved, give ourselves up to the Father as He gave Himself. Moses and Paul are examples of the possible depth of such devotedness to God. Moses was willing to have his name blotted out of God's book, if thereby Israel might be forgiven - Exodus 32:32. Paul was willing to be accursed or separated from Christ, for the salvation of Israel - Romans 9:3. The high purpose of this deep love and devotion is set before us, in Ephesians 5:22-33.

WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH

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

People put unwarranted distinctions between lusts of the flesh. They raise a "hue and cry" about fornication; but pass lightly over covetousness, and even rejoice over a jest. Bear in mind, that Holy Writ always sees them in the same pen as abominable in His sight. If there is any difference, covetousness is the worst; for it is termed "idolatry" - 5:5; Colossians 3:5. It substitutes for God what it lusts after. Ephesians 5:5 is unmistakably plain - "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God." Of course not. The old creation can have no part or lot in God's Kingdom, because it is flesh; and "all flesh is grass" (Isaiah 40:6), which shall be burned with divine wrath. Rev. 22:11 gives the final verdict of the old creation - "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." Galatians 5:21 declares that "they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." (Notice that we are talking about inheritance here, and not salvation. editors note).

CHRIST'S HEADSHIP ADORNED

There is deeper meaning than the natural to these verses. God's chief concern for His people has always been their spiritual condition and their relation to Himself. Most saints are unduly taken up with the natural works or lusts of the flesh, and miss the enjoyment of the place and fellowship which is ours in Christ. Therefore, let us consider the spiritual application of these motions of the flesh. Religious "fornication, and all uncleanness" certainly figure prominently in Christendom. Fornication heads the class in the religious realm, as well as in the natural. It seems to be the father of all the others. God's way is that His Son should be the Head of His people which, for this age, are termed the Church or Body of Christ. See Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:15; Col. 2:19. Paul said, "I have espoused you to one Husband" - Christ - II Cor. 11:2. As our Head, He desires to be our Wisdom, Life, Strength, and Guide. He would be to His own all that a husband should be to his wife, and more. But men have assumed His place of Headship over the Church. Thus they have made themselves, or others have made them, religious fornicators; and they cause the Church to commit adultery. Human wisdom is substituted for Christ. Intellectual feasts and musical performances take the place of Christ as the life and Strength of His people. Presbyteries, conferences, and official boards assume to guide, by human legislation and legerdemain, whom only the infinite Spirit of Jehovah can direct.

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

"Covetousness" is the next child born to fornication. Perhaps it did not occur to you that some people are religiously covetous. It stalks with long legs, high air, and brazen face on every hand today. It is a most common thing for saints to yield to this shameful lust. Men have no scruples

about stealing other people's places. Preachers covet the pulpits of their brethren, and get them by craft. They covet well-fed sheep, and connive to win them. Covetousness is so wily and oily, so polite and fawning, that its real character is not readily discerned. It talks smoothly and smiles complacently. It flatters and fools folks. Apparently, it wants nothing; but actually it craves everything. Apparently it is contented and satisfied; but all the while pulling wires and shoving dice to win a spiritual game. Dear Paul cried, "Let it not be once named among you." It is unbecoming for saints to want what does not belong to them. It is a burning shame the way some ministers maltreat their brethren. If God calls you, He will find you a job. You need not steal one. The "foolish talking" or "jesting" (5:4) means much more than innocent pleasantries or mirthful puns. It means professional storytelling, creating laughter by ludicrous remarks and actions. "A jester was one retained by persons of high rank to make sport for them and their friends. He wore a motley or parti-colored dress, with a cap or headdress furnished with bells and asses' ears." This refers especially, no doubt, to making a mock of the Truth and of divine things. After giving those unanswerable proofs of the resurrection, Paul adds, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" - I Cor. 15:33. He had no reference to ordinary conversation. Devilish doctrine was the evil communication. By good manners, he meant good behavior in God's sight. Wrong teaching will produce bad conduct. The meaning here is similar. Smart remarks, and witty tricky flings at Christ and His doctrine, are not befitting to believers. Instead of enjoying them, much less engaging in them, we should rebuke them as coming from vile mouths. The Greek word "aischrotes," here translated "filthiness," means also "ugliness, baseness, infamy." The word "morologia," rendered "foolish talking," is from "moros" meaning "dull, heavy, stupid, silly, foolish, tasteless" and from "lego" to speak. It is amazing to what depths of ugliness and abuse men can stoop, when they assume authority that God has not given to them. With heated invectives, they warn people against those who proclaim the whole counsel of God and are innocent of ministerial filthiness. Their teaching, if it may be called such, becomes dull and insipid; their preaching, empty and tasteless. Finally, they crown their harangues with ludicrous jests about the Truth. Here is a sample of such pious (?) filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting: One fellow wrote, "Eternal security makes God unholy, unjust, a respecter of persons, and both a liar and a fool. It makes the whole Bible a pack of lies and a bunch of nonsense. It forces you to believe in infant damnation, or universalism. It teaches in effect that men can be cleansed from sin after death, and has purgatory beat forty ways. It is hellish and blasphemous, and a lie of the devil from start to finish." Reader, is that not terrible for a Gospel minister? But that is a specimen of what flows from religious fornication. Hence, how wisely Paul wrote - "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" - II Corinthians 7:1.

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

Perhaps you think it is too much to say that there are religious whoremongers and unclean and covetous fellows in the pulpits; but that is what the Bible teaches. What else is the fitting title for the man that deliberately takes the official place that belongs to Christ, since Christ is the Head of the Church? Is he not unclean, by making himself the husband of Christ's very own? Does he not defile the Body and Bride of the Son of God? What kind of covetousness could be more criminal? This spirit of unclean dominion and covetousness flows through entire organized systems. They demand stipulated and systematic support from their flocks. Imagine a man marrying a woman ostensibly because he loves her, and then demanding of her fifty dollars per week for his headship. No doubt, a divorce suit would soon follow.

Now, if these things are so, how can such ministries obtain a heavenly inheritance? How can "the God of all grace" reward the works of flesh with spiritual remunerations?

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" - Gal. 6:7, 8. All the reward and inheritance that many Christian workers will receive is in this life. They themselves will be saved as by fire, if they are born again; but, their carnal works will ascend in smoke, a stench in the nostrils of the holy Jehovah.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" - 5:6. The projectors of the six evil acts named in the three preceding verses are termed "sons (Greek "huios") of disobedience" - 5:6 R.V. They have grown up and become efficient in their wicked works and religious buffoonery. Though their language is catchy and entertaining, they are really "vain" or "empty." Fleshly hearers may be attracted thereby; but the spiritual are disgusted with them. They are useless, defiling, and destructive. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" - II Cor. 11:13. Hence, our apostle warns us not to be deceived by them.

"Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" - 5:7, 8. Some saints are deceived by the cunning flattery of the aforementioned religious evils, and become partakers therewith. They have not learned that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," and has ministers "transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" - II Cor. 11:14, 15. His light is darkness. His righteousness is a false righteousness. It is a make-believe, a put-on, an imitation, a whitewash. It is commonly called self-righteousness. Many believers are snared by it. Christian workers are victims to this trap of the devil, and defile their followers thereby. Hence, Paul warns us not to be deceived thereby, and not to partake thereof.

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

THREE WORTHY WALKS

"Walk as children of light" - 5:8. The chapter began by saying, "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" - 5:1 R.V. That exhortation requires a threefold walk. The first and basic one is "walk in love," which we have considered already - 5:2. "Walk as children of light" is the sixth "walk" in the book of Ephesians, and demands our attention here. It is the direct opposite of the walk of the religious make-believers of verses three to five. We are admonished to move in harmony with our new sphere and our new nature. We are in the light. We are in the Lord. We are light. We are children of light, being born of God who is light. Hence, we should walk accordingly. Note that the Greek for "children" here is "tekna"; and not "huios," "sons," as in verse six. We are reminded that God is our Progenitor. We are His offspring. Hence, we are to walk in dependence upon Him, and not independent as do the self-righteous who depend upon their own strength and wisdom. Though we grow up into actual sonship in Christ, and are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14), yet we are always absolutely dependent upon the Lord every step of our Christian journey. Therefore, John called his flock "little children" in his last entreaty - I John 5:21. Ever "looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) and "holding fast the faithful Word" (Titus 1:9) are our only safety.

"For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" - 5:9 R.V. This verse is parenthetical; for the last clause of verse eight connects directly with verse ten. By walking as children of light, we prove what is acceptable unto the Lord. We prove verse nine. The word "Spirit" in this verse should be "light"; for the apostle is writing about the fruit of the light, and not concerning the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He is contrasting light with darkness, and the respective fruit of each. Of course, this is not contrary to the Spirit nor independent of Him. Where "the fruit of the light" is seen, which is "in all goodness and righteousness and truth," there the fruit of the Spirit - "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" - is also manifested.

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

those evil workers and works were only in the natural, certainly so much attention would not be given to them. It is the religious deeds against which we are warned. They are works of darkness, though they pretend to produce light. They are unfruitful of goodness and righteousness and truth, which only are acceptable to the Lord. They are so cunning and seemingly pious, they appeal so pleasingly to the carnal mind, they employ so much of certain Scriptures, that ignorant souls are often snared thereby. Unity, Spiritism, Christian Science, Adventism, Theosophy, Modernism, and such belong with the unfruitful works of darkness. They are the subtle brood of legality, which is flooding the world and has honeycombed Christendom. Cain is the father of them all. The Cain religion of works, which rejects the sin offering lying at the door (Genesis 4:7), was the foundation of all the abominable unfruitful works of religious darkness. Oh, how many honest hearts have been trapped therein.

"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" - 5:12. The shameful secret things are not all done in the "redlight" district. They are not confined to the natural flesh. The most shameful and abominable secret works are religious. The public does not recognize them, but Jehovah does. The religious performance may not be hidden behind a screen; but the devilish secret is disguised by pious words and religious garbs. The "meal," the Word of God, has been adroitly leavened with doctrines of demons and people do not detect it. How pertinent, therefore, is the next verse.

"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" - 5:13. Lift a board in a dark damp place, and let in the sunlight; and, behold, the worms and bugs. The light makes them manifest and, they scurry off, hunting a hiding place. All that is needed often is simply the quoting of one Scripture verse. The leaven is exposed. The worms of error begin to wiggle; the bugs of darkness flee in every direction. The owners of those dark broods either blush and cower, apologize and explain, or rave, snort, and dash with rage. "Be sure your sin will find you out," saith the Lord - Numbers 32:23. Saints expose error and cleanse away leaven by their happy testimonies, for they are light in the Lord.

"Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" - 5:14 R.V. This quotation is not verbatim from any Old Testament citation. Jonah 1:6 comes the nearest - "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God." It may seem strange that such an exhortation should occur here. However, if we study Acts 20:29, 30 and Rev. 2:1-7, we discover why it was given. Religious evils were lurking about the Ephesian assembly. It was threatened from every side. "Grievous wolves" were already prowling around on the outside. They claimed to be apostles, but Ephesus found them to be liars. She hated their Nicolaitan works - their woolpicking ministry, or preaching for hire. Paul saw by the Spirit that from within the assembly self-seekers would "arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." John wrote to Ephesus, saying, "Thou hast left thy first love." She had fallen into drowsiness, which is next door to death. Can it be that the slumbering state was stealing over them already when Paul wrote? Surely there was great reason for his fervent repeated and detailed admonitions and warnings. Let us profit by them. Let us ever "walk in love," "walk as children of light," keep aloof from dead religious bodies (Lev. 21:1, 11); then Christ will always shine upon us, and our way will be clear and clean.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" - 5:15, 16. This is the last of the seven significant "walks" of Ephesians. It is of a culminating character, in view of our gathering together unto Christ in the glory. The word translated "circumspectly" means also "understandingly"; hence, "accurately." Luke "had perfect (or, accurate) understanding of all things" pertaining to Christ's birth and biography; hence, he wrote of Him - Luke 1:3. The preceding steps brought us up to this, the final one. They were preparatory to it. No one can leap from the lowest step to the seventh of any material stairway. Neither can anyone span the spiritual stairway by one bound. We ought to be able, by this time, to walk accurately. The Spirit has given us wisdom. Light has been streaming in upon our spirits. Dangers have been pointed out. Adequate instruction has been bestowed. What lack we? Nothing. Let us "walk ... as wise." How can we thus walk?

"Redeeming the time," or buying up the opportunity. The Greek here for "redeem" is "eksagorazo." It literally means, "to haunt the marketplace, do business there, buy for oneself." The thrifty business man watches for bargains. He is not particular as to what he buys, if only he can make it count dollars in his purse. He deals in pencils and shoestrings, if he thinks them to be the most prolific of gain. Just so with the saint who walks spiritually wise. He makes every

providence count eternal revenue into his heavenly bank. He resents error and resists evil, not by argument, but by the Word of God. Thus, he converts every obnoxious moment into blessing to another and into gain for himself. The opportunity which another fails to see or puts from him, the wise saint grabs quickly. It may seem unworthy of notice, like Samson's jawbone of an ass; or, too stupendous to undertake, like Goliath against David. But the wise man passes over nothing flippantly, and shrinks from no proffered task. He is grateful for the smallest blessings and runs after the largest ones.

God shows men their privileges of blessing and usefulness continually. Then He furnishes them sufficient capital of wisdom and faith to buy up the opportunity. Most people, however, want their own way. They have some schemes of their own. They refuse to invest with Jesus as led by the Spirit. His opportunities and investments seem too small, too narrow, too humiliating, too self-sacrificing for them. Hence, God's market for them closes and they go out of business altogether or they dwindle into a little racket store on an alley. They keep up a religious racket anyway. Compare the word "redeeming" in 5:16 with the same English word "redemption" in 1:7. That speaks of Christ paying a ransom for us and buying us out of sin's marketplace. But this verse speaks of us entering into the marketplace and seizing goods which He has already bought, and delivering them to Him. What an honored place we have.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" - 5:17. The spiritual marketeer observes one governing principle - what is God's will? With him, it is not a question of brains or experience or equipment or means. But what does the Lord want? It is most unwise to determine what to do, or not to do, by our own wisdom. But is it possible to know God's will? It certainly is possible, else He would not tell us to find it out. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" - Amos 3:7. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to "guide into all truth" - John 16:13. Shame on the people who cry, saying, "The Bible is a riddle, a sealed book. How can we know God's will?" The next verse shuts the critic's mouth, and shows us by what means we may learn the will of the Lord. Indeed, it declares what is the first and important item of the divine will.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" - 5:18. This verse does not refer to our anointing with the Holy Spirit, or the baptism with the Spirit as some call it. Paul did not write this letter to newborn ones, who had not yet been filled with the Spirit or received their Pentecost. Nay, they had been filled or sealed with the Spirit, before he went to Rome. Compare 1:13 and 4:30 with Acts 19:6. The Greek word for "filled" in Acts 2:4 is different from the one used here, which is also used in 1:23 and 3:19 and 4:10. It carries the meaning of continuance and permanency. The apostle is saying here - "Be filled continually with the Spirit, by whom you were once sealed unto the day of redemption." Through feeding on the written Word and by frequent times of worship, we keep filled with the Spirit. Thus, also, the Spirit keeps us informed as to the Father's will in doctrine and practice. We behold opportunities to learn and to serve, and are enabled to make purchases that will bring eternal gain to Christ and to ourselves. Everything, every step of progress, every item of our usefulness, depends upon our being filled perpetually with the Spirit. The Greek phrase, "pleroun naun," means "to man a ship"; hence, the word for "filled," means "to pilot, or control, or guide." Therefore, to be filled practically with the Spirit, as here indicated, means to be piloted or governed in daily life by the continued fullness of the Holy Spirit.

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

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" - 5:19. Worship is emphasized as the first act on life's drama. Spiritual

worship of the living and true God prepares for efficient service among men. There is no display of musical talent or of other gifts in this program. Though we address others in psalm and song, yet the melody is in the heart and it is unto the Lord. A heart occupied with Jesus as Lord disallows any religious pageantry. Such true worship obtains a present and an eternal reward from Him who is worshiped. Singing to be heard receives as a reward the applause of men or self-congratulation only.

The literal meaning of these different kinds of music is interesting and instructive. The Greek word "psalmois" means "strains, or bursts of music, or songs sung to stringed instruments." Therefore, musical instruments are not only permissible but profitable, when yielded to the Holy Spirit. "Hymnois" means "songs of worship or adoration of Deity." "Oda's" means songs in general - odes or strains of music - whether worldly or religious. Hence, the adjective "spiritual" precedes the word "songs" here. Only spiritual hymns and songs are acceptable to the Lord of glory. "Psallontes," rendered "making melody" in our version, literally signifies playing on an instrument with the fingers or singing with a harp. There is a mysterious and quieting charm in music. It seems to clarify the atmosphere, break Satan's power, and bring an audience into God's Presence. An impressive instance is found in II Kings 3:15. Elisha obtained the will of God "when the minstrel played"; for then "the hand of the Lord came upon him." This is beautiful. Our own little hearts, when fully tuned to the will of God, are each of them stringed instruments on which the Lord plays with His fingers and makes melody to Himself. Then how wonderfully all are mutually blest, when the whole meeting yields to the musical operations of the Holy Spirit, and the Triune God is glorified. Therefore, He thrills the saints "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" - I Peter 1:8.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - 5:20. Not only in meeting, should we give thanks, but at all times. God is not only present with His people when in worship, but He is always with us. He is not only with the assembly as a whole, but also with each individual. The God whom we worship is our Father. We are to be thankful not only for some things, but for all things - even the undesirable things; for our Father allows nothing to come our way that He cannot turn into good for us. "There shall no evil happen to the just" - Prov. 12:21. "My times are in Thy hand" - Psalm 31:15. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" - Romans 8:28. Our thanksgiving should be "in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then it will be as though He were giving thanks to the Father for the "all things." Thus, the Father and the Son will bring blessing to us and glory to themselves from every providence.

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" - 5:21. This is an essential feature of walking accurately. It is a powerful proof of being filled practically with the Spirit who works this mutual submission in us as we yield to Him. This mutual submission is not confined to the hour of worship in the sanctuary; but it is to be observed always, even as well as giving thanks. Some saints are nice and agreeable in meeting and on Sunday; but, elsewhere and on other days, they are distant and selfish. They want their own way, whether it is feasible or not. Now, is it not interesting, that the exhortation to submission should come in at this point? For the apostle is leading us up to the Bridehood of Christ. No wonder then, that our submission is to be "in the fear of God." He sits by to see if we really obey. For He is building a woman for "THE MAN," His well-beloved Son - Genesis 2:22 R.V. To me it is amazing, that our "walk in love," our "walk as children of light," and our "walk circumspectly," should climax with submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God.

THE ASSEMBLY GLORIOUS BRIDAL SUBJECTION

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" - 5:22. The last twelve verses of this chapter bring us to the climax of "the mystery of Christ," because they portray in figure the union of Christ and His Bride. Concerning that union, 5:32 R.V. says, "This mystery is great." They were not written simply to teach married people how to live so as to have happy and beautiful homes. Rather, the attitudes expressed here are freighted with truth concerning Christ and His people. Here we team the deepest and sweetest and most intimate relationships between Christ and His Bride. Viewing them otherwise, we will derive only the most common benefit from this section.

The wife is a picture of the Bride of Christ; hence, her subjection to her husband is "as unto the Lord." Of course, it is implied here that the husband is a saved man who likewise is a picture of

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

" For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the Body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" - 5:23, 24. Every Scriptural husband is a picture of Jesus Christ as Head and Husband of His people. His headship over the wife is shown by his hair being shorn. This truth is amplified in I Corinthians eleven. The husband is the image and glory of God; hence, he prays and prophesies with an uncovered head which symbolizes Christ's authority as Head over His Body the Church. The wife is the glory of her husband, and acknowledges her subjection to him by her long hair. Likewise, the submission of the Church to Christ is symbolized by the women praying and prophesying with their heads covered. They wear a veil or bonnet or hat - whatever is the customary covering for the head. Therefore, in this verse, the reason of the wife's submission to her husband is given. When saints see with the heart their relation to Christ, they gladly hold these attitudes toward one another and symbolize them as Paul teaches. Yes, Christ is the Savior of the Body the Church; for it is His own Body. Long before it was formed, He called it "My Church" - Matthew 16:18. He said also, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." No, for He is its Savior. He saved each member from sin. Now, He saves each member from sickness and error, as we trust Him. The responsibility of a husband to look after his wife and provide every need and comfort for her is here implied.

BRIDEGROOM LOVE

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" - 5:25. The love here enjoined is not simply a common ordinary marital affection. It is not superficial and selfish. Nay, it is "even as Christ also loved." How much did He love the assembly? So much, that He gave Himself up for it. Typical husbands give themselves to seeking the greatest good and fullest comfort for their wives. They relieve their burdens and heap blessings upon them, not for any selfish purpose but for very love. This they do for Jesus' sake, to show forth His unbounded love for His people. Such bridal devotion does not admit of yielding to passion to satisfy carnal lust at the expense of his companion. The apostle says, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God" - I Thess. 4:4, 5. It does not allow flippant remarks, that sometimes pass between husband and wife, stinging the one and then the other. Just as well might we make smart remarks to our blessed Lord and grieve His tender heart. Does He ever joke with His loved one? I marvel at the fleshly flings that fly from Spirit-anointed people whom God has ordained to adorn the Gospel of grace by their fervent love one to another. Sister, remember that your husband is the image and glory of God. Brother, bear in mind that your wife is your glory, for Jesus' sake. Do we actually believe that what Paul has written is God's Word? Then husband and wife will so love each other that the Presence of Christ will be manifest without any effort on their part. They will be "not without law to God," the warm spontaneous rule of perfect love. For what purpose did Jesus give Himself up for the Church? "That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word" - 5:26 R.V. This giving up of "Himself for us" was before stated in 5:2. Jesus' prayer (John 17:19) explains Paul's words here - "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth." Those Ephesian saints were already "cleansed" in the laver of the Word. They were born again or "saved ... by the washing (laver) of regeneration" - Titus 3:5. But they should be wholly separated from every defiling thing which might mar their fellowship with Christ, or dim their vision of their relation to Him, or hinder their spiritual growth. To this end, Jesus prayed for the disciples - John 17. To this end, He gave Himself up for the Church, Paul declares. He set Himself apart and offered Himself

up as a whole burnt offering to God in our behalf. He was a sweet smelling savor for us. That is, we are accepted of the Father in Christ, as sanctified. We smell sweet to the Father in His Son. Let us see ourselves in Christ and accepted in Him. Let us see Christ in us, walking in us, as our very life. Let us count ourselves complete in Him. Then the Spirit will actually work in us God's perfect will, and separate us from everything as Jesus was separated. We will know no man, no object, no interest, after the flesh. We will possess and enjoy a complete inward separation unto Jesus Christ alone. Then the outward sanctification will result there from unconsciously. Sanctification is not obtained by voluntarily laying all on the altar, as some teach. Sanctification is not a sudden cloudburst of dynamic power blowing the old man into atoms, or destroying him root and branch. They, who teach thus, do not know the meaning and process of sanctification. It is not a cleansing from the least and last remains of sin and the carnal mind, as my early teachers taught. It is entire separation unto Christ, as said before. Sanctification is practical and progressive. It begins with the new birth and continues throughout life. This separation is particularly in view of our being members of the Bride of Christ, who shall be as thoroughly sanctified from all things carnal and as devoted to God as was Christ Himself. If indeed we take Him to be our sanctification, such it will be. Beloved, have you not read - "Who (Jesus) of God is made unto us ... sanctification"? - I Cor. 1:30. Why then not take Him as such, and be Scripturally sanctified?

PURPOSE OF SANCTIFICATION

"That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" - 5:27. The original is very emphatic and unique - "That He might present it beside Himself the Assembly glorious." The whole Church was espoused to Christ (II Cor. 11:2); but, only a small portion of it accept that engagement, because the separation for the Bridehood is too clean-cut. Hence, only a select company will have that intimate place by His side. Jude saw a wonderful place for the saints; but it seems that he did not see what Paul saw here. Jude says that God "is able ... to present you faultless before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy" - Jude 24. But the Bride company will have a more glorious place than that. As "the woman (wife, Greek) is the glory of the man" (I Cor. 11:7), so the Bride saints will be the glory of Christ. Jude's company will appear before the presence of the Bride, Christ's glory. Literally, they will be presented right over against, right opposite to, the Queen who will sit by the side of the King as "His glory." John speaks of a wonderful company "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne" which, doubtless, refers to "the assembly glorious" of which Paul wrote. But he speaks also of a "great multitude, which ... stood before the throne, and before the Lamb." See Revelation 4:6 and 7:9. Jude, no doubt, addressed the latter company in particular.

Of course, the people who will occupy that highest and nearest and dearest place to Jesus the Bridegroom will be held in highest repute or honor. They will be superlatively glorious. Hence, they must be without "spot" or stain now, and free from contamination with all that defiles. Now they are cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" - II Cor. 7:1. A clean face in the natural is free from freckles, moles, and blotches which would mar its beauty and suggest bad blood. It is an index of good health. Bride saints cannot be disfigured with any kind of blots, not even pious freckles which may be the most subtle. Their sanctification is perfect here. Wrinkles suggest age and infirmity creeping on. With them may come loss of appetite or poor digestion. Bride saints have none of these. Their appetite for Truth never wanes. They love God's Word increasingly, and eat it with unbounded relish. Their step becomes firmer and more agile. Their youth is renewed like the eagles. If they should die as to the body they fall asleep at Jehovah's command as did Aaron and Moses, or at the time of their departure as did Paul. They are not victims of death. They are ripening for glory, not for the grave. If living when Jesus comes, they are ruddy with resurrection life and bridal love and are ready for translation. Like Enoch, such saints have this testimony that they please God now. What a standard! What a goal! What a culmination! "Too good to be true, too great to be possible," someone exclaims. But "with God all things are possible." "All things are possible to him that believeth," said Jesus. "Holy and without blemish" or blame is the high water mark of bridal saints. The faith of Christ in us looks above and beyond our own imperfections and beholds the Perfect One. Thus, by beholding Him, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." For this very purpose, He reconciled us "in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight" - Colossians 1:22.

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

Women cover the spots on their faces with powder; but the spots are still there. The vanity box does not remove them. People try to hide their religious spots and wrinkles by pious forms, holy airs, and sweet words; but their pious vanity box fails. Flour washes off easily. But our heavenly Bridegroom uncovers the spots and wrinkles and removes them. As we yield to the Word and to the Spirit of God, everything superfluous, all that would mar our spiritual beauty, all that would jar on fine spiritual taste, all that grieves the sensitive Dove - the Spirit - disappears. Christ grows up in us. We increase "with the increase of God." The Truth becomes incorporated in us. We become like the Book we eat. Do you know that eating certain foods will change and improve our physical condition? How much more do saints become Christlike by feeding on Christ in worship and through believing His Word! We grow more even and gentle, tender and kind, beautiful and loving, mellow and mild; and yet more fervent in spirit, more loyal and uncompromising. Finally, we become "in His sight," free from "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" - not having even a resemblance of a spot or wrinkle. We become here and now, "holy and without blame before Him in love," to which He chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world" - 1:4.

THE MEASURE OF MARITAL LOVE

"Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself" - 5:28 Revised Version, Again, we exclaim, "What a standard!" Observance of Paul's instructions here certainly purifies, beautifies, and ennobles the marriage relation. I fear that few saints study and heed them. The Church is Christ's Body. He loves it as His own Body. He never indulges in any flirtations. He knows only one people. Organized systems may claim to be the Church, but Jesus does not know them as such. He knows "no man after the flesh." If any persons in such systems are saved, He knows them as His disciples and seeks to bring them "without the camp" to Himself. That is the way husbands should love their wives, even as their own selves, because their affection figures the love of Christ for His own. Furthermore, he that loves selfishly, really hates and injures himself. The wife is a vital part of the husband - "They two shall be one flesh." Hence, he that loveth his own wife loveth himself. The next verse expresses the reason. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church" - 5:29. It is unthinkable that any man should hate his own flesh; but he cares for it like a mother cares for her children. The word translated "nourish" means "to rear for oneself." The word rendered "cherish" means "to foster, to warm in one's bosom, to inflame." A true loving husband watches over and looks after his wife with the unchanging tenderness of a mother. With flaming love, he presses her to his bosom. He comforts her in sorrow, heals every wound, shows her every attention, and supplies her every need. That is a typical husband; for so the Lord treats the Church. He nourishes it, feeds and trains, and makes it to grow for Himself. The Lord fosters His people tenderly. He holds them in His loving arms, comforts them in His bosom, dries their tears, allays their fears, and abundantly supplies all their needs - spiritual and material. He knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust, and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Jesus has us on His heart. The adverb "as" or "even as" occurs seven times in these last twelve verses. "For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones" - 5:30. All who believe on Jesus during this age are members of His mystical Body, which is called the Church - 1:22, 23, Some would eliminate the last two phrases. Why? Does not our Lord have a body of flesh and bones in Heaven? Did He not ascend thus? - Acts 1:11. Of course, His are glorified flesh and bones; that is, a glorified body. Natural "flesh and blood cannot inherit the

Kingdom of God" - I Cor, 15:50. But Jesus said also, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" - Luke 24:39, Even our flesh and bones are reckoned glorified, because "the redemption of our body" is assured - Romans 8:23. "God ... calleth those things which be not as though they were" - Romans 4:17. Our old corrupt life, represented by the blood, was poured out in the death of Christ. There is no blood in His body now. There will be none in ours then. We will have glorified flesh and bones, even as Jesus now has.

MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB SYMBOLIZED

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" - 5:31. The purpose of the wedding in Eden was to typify the wedding in the air. This is the meaning of every Scriptural wedding, as this verse declares. Adam "is the figure of Him that was to come" - Romans 5:14. Likewise, Eve is the figure of a company of saints who shall be His Bride. As a man leaves his parents and is joined to the one he loves, so God's Son left His Father to be joined to His Eve. Adam was a full-grown man; but he was alone.

Therefore, "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him" - Genesis 2:18, 20. His like could not be found among the creatures which he named. He had no fellowship with them. He needed a companion of like intelligence and wisdom with himself. "And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept." Then He took out one of his ribs. "And the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made He (builded He into) a woman, and brought her unto the man" - Genesis 2:21, 22 R.V. We are not drawing farfetched conclusions from the narrative in Genesis two. We are simply pointing out that Paul used that marriage to illustrate the marriage of the Lamb and His Wife in glory. Indeed, the Holy Spirit employs those identical sayings to teach us concerning this great mystery. "Adam said, This (Eve) is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"; and in Ephesians we read, "We are members of His (Christ's) Body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Ephesians 5:31 is almost verbatim as Genesis 2:24. Now, lest we should see only the natural relationship here, the Holy Penman announces, "This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church" (5:32 R.V.); that is, "the Church glorious" (5:27 Wuest). It is profoundly significant that at this time believers are growing up into Christ and looking forward to being in the glorious Bridehood of the Lamb. A religious sleepiness is over believers today. The Laodicean condition grows denser and denser over Christendom as a whole. Even so-called spiritual saints are overcome with the religious drowsiness of the times. Is it any marvel that in this very chapter (5:14 R.V.) we hear the loud cry, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee"? Saints are sluggish toward divine things. They are not hungry for the Truth. Some are not thirsty for the "rivers of living water," the Holy Spirit - John 7:38. Many talk and write about Jesus' coming, but do not act as if they believe it. Some teach and live as they teach, that all believers will be in the Bridehood, no matter how young in the Lord they are or how much they flirt with religious lovers. But, God be praised, some saints are running for the Prize by qualifying for the out-translation. Now the Bride in mystery is, doubtless, being builded. Now the election out of the elect is going on. People are finding their respective ranks, in spite of the fact that some do not believe in ranks. Now the choice one of her mother (Song of Solomon 6:9) is hearing the Voice of her Heavenly Solomon, saying, "Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away" - Song of Solomon 2:10, 13. Just as truly as God took a rib out of Adam's body while he slept, so He is separating a company of believers from the Church the Body of Christ today. The Body does not believe it and does not realize it, but it is true. Did Adam marry his entire body? Nay, only "a rib" - a strong, durable, small portion of his body. Out of that rib, divine power "builded" a woman. See Genesis 2:22, margin. The Bride of Christ is being builded of saints who are weak in themselves - sheeplike, helpless, dependent on God. They boast only in Christ and the Cross. They have "a little strength," being "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." They are self-denying, wholehearted, deeply devoted saints. They have a single eye to God's glory. Christ fills their vision and satisfies their hearts. They "know ... no man after the flesh." Bride saints count all things refuse that they "may win Christ" as their Bridegroom. They yield to no compromises with semi-spiritual people. They have swung out into full sympathy with present truth, and declare it with no uncertain sound. Their hearts are enlarged "to believe all that the prophets have spoken," and their mouths are also enlarged to proclaim it.

Many halfhearted or quarter-hearted believers, who are intellectual and worldly-minded, seek for

a proof that they will be a part of Christ's Bride. But they are not willing for the separation and training mentioned above. Hence, they are far behind in the race. When will they catch up? Never. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the Prize?" - I Cor. 9:24. Surely, only those who love as indicated by Paul in this chapter will win the Prize. Certainly, only those who with Paul "press on toward the goal unto the Prize of the high (upward) calling" will share the highest glory with Christ. If we do not "so run" that we may obtain, how can we hope for it? If our devotion, our loyalty to Jesus, our spirituality are not at high water mark, how can we expect to occupy the highest place in the glory? If our separation unto Christ and our yearning for Him are not extraordinary, if we are not intensely imitating Paul as he imitated Christ, what Scriptural ground have we for hoping to be in that highly favored rank? If the Candlestick Examiner does not find us blameless Philadelphia overcomers, how shall we obtain the superexcellent reward promised to such saints? Study very patiently every line, every statement, of Revelation 3:7-13.

THE DIVINE PANOPLY

Chapter Six

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" - 6:1. The first nine verses of this chapter properly belong to chapter five, because they continue and conclude the family relationships as figurative of the great family of God. The four leading words of this section are: "Children," "fathers," "servants," and "masters." The instructions to each are very plain, so that we need not comment upon them. We need, rather, to consider that they are true types of the same relationships in "the household of God." They are the final teaching, in this epistle, of the ranks among believers. God is our Father, we are His children; and children are of various ages and grades and experiences. The Apostle John, in his first epistle, emphasizes this truth. First, he addresses his flock as "my little children," because he was quite aged in the natural; and, hence, he was also quite a father to them in the Lord. Then he recognizes three distinct grades or spiritual ages, which he distinguishes as "fathers," "young men," and "little children." See I John 2:1, 12-14. Certainly, these distinctions are not natural but supernatural. He witnessed these three degrees of experience among the believers in his congregation. Paul taught the same truth also.

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

THE EPHESIAN CONTEST

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

Ephesians 6:10-20 is a very marvelous portion of Scripture. In this place only, there is set before us the whole equipment with which to meet our archfoe and his servants. Why? It is because only those, who see and hold their seat in the heavenlies with Christ, can have any correct conception of the devices and power of the devil. Ephesian saints learn by experience, as no others can, that there is a real devil. Others have trouble with themselves, with their petty weaknesses, and with other people; but Ephesian believers have indescribable fights with Satan himself. It is because they take the realm by faith - even the heavenlies - which Satan claims as his central dominion. They expect to dwell there some day. Hence, he contends against them on earth, knowing that their persistent faith will finally oust him from his present place and dominion in Heaven. It is evident, therefore, that we need to be panoplied from on high; which means far more than being initially filled or sealed with the Holy Spirit. However, this sealing or anointing with the Spirit is the absolute prerequisite for wearing the armor here described. Paul wrote these urgent exhortations to Spirit-anointed saints.

In Ephesians 1:3, we saw that God has blessed us already in Christ "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." We are blessed provisionally even as Christ is blessed, because we are in Him. We saw also that God has already "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," having "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" - 2:6; 1:20. We learned that the divine purpose of all that was, "in order that there might be made known now to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places through the intermediate agency of the Church the much-variegated wisdom of God" - 3:10 Wuest. Most people think that our testimony and holy living affect the inhabitants of the earth only. Nay. Ephesian testimony and triumph seriously affect the inhabitants of the heavens. The holy angels are amazed and gaze down upon us aghast; while unholy angels are disturbed and enraged against us, because we are taking their dominion away. Our conflict is no sham battle. Then we learned (chapter five) with overwhelming astonishment that God will present to His well beloved Son a Bride, the deserved product of His sacrifice and toil, who shall adorn and glorify and satisfy Him forever and forever. Hallelujah! These verses are poorly understood, being little read and studied. We learn here that there are organized bands of wily foes in the heavens - wicked, dark, mighty, and desperate. They inhabit the very region which God has given us as our eternal abode. By faith, we are seated "in heavenly places"; that is, we accept our Father's promise and rest upon it. But Satan tries to disturb our rest. Though our members are on earth, yet our fight is as if we were where Satan now dwells. Therefore, the first and basic admonition is, "Be strong in the Lord." We have no strength in ourselves. We cannot cope with the devil. Some people ignorantly imagine that they can withstand the foe. Especially after they receive the Spirit they think that by speaking in tongues vigorously, or by pronouncing the Name of Jesus, or by "pleading the blood" vehemently, Satan will retreat. If our faith is in God and His Word, the enemy will flee; but, if it is simply in some vigorous self-resistance, we will be defeated. To "be strong in the Lord" means to hide away in Him, trust Him calmly, rest on His Word solely, and count on His Presence and sufficiency. Then at the needed time, the Holy Spirit will move us, if He will have us to act. Then Christ, the new man, will be in evidence.

Paul admonishes us to be strong "in the power of His might." Human words melt before Satan. Human logic or argument fail. Learning, or craft, or physical force avail nothing. Numbers, influence, wealth, intelligence all quail before the armed forces of darkness. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" - II Cor. 10:4. "Not by might (an army), nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" - Zechariah 4:6. Therefore, the apostle adds, "Put on the whole armor of God." He names seven invincible parts to this divine armor, which we will consider later. What is the primary feature of our combat? It is defensive. "Stand ... wrestle against ... withstand ... stand ... quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Satan is the aggressor. We have been seated by Christ's ascension in our blood-bought abode. By faith, we have laid hold of our rightful possessions. We would not need to fight, if the devil would not disturb us. Our conflict is not to OBTAIN our inheritance, but to HOLD it. It is already ours in Christ; hence, we maintain it by a fight of faith. Saving faith brought us "into the Kingdom of His (God's) dear Son" or "the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13), the principle part of which is "His heavenly Kingdom" - II Timothy 4:18. But fighting faith contends for our heavenly governmental rights in the Kingdom. Note the first named obstacle - "the wiles of the devil." The word "wiles" means "methods, cunning craft, artifices." Satan does everything by diabolical method. Our first act of resistance is "to stand against the wiles (methods) of the devil." For this, we need to be arrayed in the whole armor of God. Then our resistance will be simple and without method. The Lord does not act by method - organizing God's people - neither do His people who move as panoplied from on high. To fight and work methodically in divine things, is to attempt to be strong in one's own might, which means defeat always. Bear in mind that method in religion is satanic; and, the more pious and wise it may appear and the more it appeals to the intellect, the more dangerous and destructive it surely is. Method is always subtle or crafty. Methodical fellows generally have a selfish ax to grind, and expect someone else to furnish the grindstone. Method is the very center or hub of the unconquerable wheel of organization. This is why organization in God's things is so demoralizing - ending in formality, and finally in spiritual death.

Who are our foes? Where are they? The apostle answers in verse twelve - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (governments), against powers (authorities), against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (literally, "in heavenly places," as in 1:3). Our fight is not against people, though Satan operates

through them. It is against wicked spirits, of which Satan is the chief. Satan is "the god of this world," "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" - II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2. The devil has organized the wicked spirits into "principalities" or dominions, which are controlled by wicked authorities. John saw these devilish dominions symbolized by "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" - Rev. 12:3. Those heads, or authorities, are here declared to be "the world rulers of the darkness of this age" (Greek). How tremendously solemn, that Satan is the first organizer. Since I learned that fact from this very Scripture, my whole being recoils from the thought of organizing God's people. Organization is a blinding snare, a crafty trick of satanic invention. Saints are fooled by its methodical chains; and they never realize its fear-imposing power until they are wholly delivered from it and swung out into the blood-bought "liberty of the children of God" - Romans 8:21. From Genesis to Revelation, we see that God controlled His people by His own Voice through a trusty agency, without the slightest semblance of organization. The Headship of Christ is ignored by organization, because one body cannot have more than one head without confusion. The freedom of the sovereign operation of the Spirit is sadly hindered, and the growth of the saints is rendered impossible, by organization. I praise God for untrammelled freedom in Christ Jesus - the glorious realm which very few saints enjoy. Consider a further word about this age. In Gal. 1:4, we learn that the evil of this age consists in its religiousness; hence, it is termed "this present evil world (age)." The apostle contrasts divine spirituals with the spirituals of the devil - I Cor. 12:1, 3. The phrase "spiritual wickedness" is "the spirituals of the wickedness," in the Greek. "The depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24) means the developed spirituals of the devil, who operates powerfully through his "sons of disobedience" - Eph. 2:2 R.V. and Col. 3:6 R.V. These sons of Satan are very polite, pleasing, and religious. They are usually diligent Bible students and teachers. By their unique personalities, inspired by the devil, they mislead many people. Of course, the darkness of this age is its religiousness. At this very time, "the god of this world" is marshaling all forms of religion to move side by side with the national and political powers. Church and state are coming closer together day by day, and will move "hand in glove" in a gigantic union against Christ and His people. It is a tremendous fact that Spiritism, Theosophy, Millennial Dawnism, Adventism, Catholicism, Universalism, and Protestantism are being manipulated by the wicked authorities in the heavenlies. Misnamed Christian Science and Unity are also in the same demon-directed multitude. Every dark den, every dark movement - national or religious - is directed by wicked spirits whose head is Satan and whose headquarters is in the heavens. Our constant contest is against the unseen horde of organized evil spirits, which comprise one third of the angels. These are fallen angels, of course - Rev. 12:4. Joined to them also are the myriads of religious demons. These systematized unseen hordes of demons and fallen angels infest and control the religious organizations named above. Do you wonder that our fight is so fierce? Is it any marvel that so few actually overcome? On the other hand, what are these combined forces before the Omnipotent Triune God? "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" - I John 4:4. Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" II Kings 6:16. Yes, with us are two-thirds of the angels. Hallelujah!

As intimated before, our warfare is primarily defensive. The enemies fight us, but we stand against them. Observe in these verses, that the word "stand" occurs four times; hence, the absolute need of the whole armor of God. We are not called on to lay siege against Satan and his movements. We can never change the current of the times. People pray in vain in that direction. We do well to stem the tide and reach the goal in time for the Prize. God has not bidden us to reform the world of debauchery, drunkenness, white slavery, and infidelity. He has not sent us to overthrow Christian Science or Romanism, nor to recover Protestantism from apostasy. But we are to witness to the people and thus rescue individuals who may listen, out of these conditions, by inducing them to believe on Jesus Christ. As pilgrims and strangers passing through, we are not to yield to the inhabitants of this world. In doing so, we would be yielding to the devil. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" - 5: 7. " Be not conformed to this world (age)" - Romans 12:2. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" - 5:11. Here is where our fight arises. Our old nature, if not curbed, would readily follow the customs of the world and accept the deceptive religious theories afloat. This is true of beginners in particular. But here is also a wonder. After we go on with the Lord - learn His Word and grow up into Christ - even our very flesh recoils from the alluring things of men and cries out against them. Of course, it is not

we but Christ living in us who refuses to allow sin to have dominion over us.

The tendency of the times is to make spiritual things soulish. Men worship God soulishly, rather than spiritually. They harness divine things in man-made methods, and cause their flocks to "walk as men." Thus, Christendom has drifted away from "the simplicity that is in Christ," from childlike devotion, and a happy dependent service. Very few, comparatively, are moving on with the Holy Spirit and operating according to the pattern shown in God's Word. This is too commonplace for the flesh, though it still wants to pose as religious. People clamor for splendor, display, brains, and wealth in the churches. They love form rather than fire. They prefer the fire in the stove, rather than in the heart. They have left the "upper room" and have gone down into the supper room. We see the stone cathedral, the pipe organ, the paid singers, the salaried pastor, the stiff program, the official board, the visiting committee, the educated, clergy, the denominational college. These all have "a form of godliness," the religious sham battle, the cross without the Christ, the Christ (in Name) without the cross, the congregation of sinners, the pulpits staged with atheists, and the rejected Jesus standing on the outside crying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My Voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" - Rev. 3:20. Thank God for the individuals who hear and invite Christ in, sup with Him, and then follow Him out; for neither He nor His followers are allowed to remain. Some are learning to "fight the good fight of faith" and run for the Prize.

THE SEVENFOLD ARMOR

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

"YOUR LOINS GIRT ABOUT WITH TRUTH." This is the primary piece of the armor. It is the solid base on which the other pieces rest and into which they are joined. The Truth is so essential, that it is also the sixth piece of the armor, expressed by a different figure - "the Sword of the Spirit." The loins speak of a man's strength. To take in the Word of God with all the heart is to have the loins girt with Truth. Some know and admit the Truth. It is in their heads. But it is of no practical profit to them, because they do not believe it and rest upon it. They have loins; they are strong in themselves. But, in the real test or contest they fail, being weak before the foe. Oh, the need of knowing and believing the Word of God! Jesus' fight with Satan is an example of having on this piece of the armor. To meet every onslaught of the devil, He exclaimed, "It is written." He was girded with the Truth. He was filled with it. He lived by it; for He said (quoting from Deut. 8:3), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" - Matthew 4:4. When the Jews condemned Him for calling Himself the Son of God, He answered them, "Is it not written in your law (the Old Testament), I said, Ye are gods?" - John 10:34. Likewise, if we know and believe the Word, the Holy Spirit will bring it to our remembrance when we are beset by the enemy.

"HAVING ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." When men shoot, they aim at the head or heart; and so does Satan. But, if our head and heart are shielded, he cannot harm us. He knows that we cannot obtain nor hold a place in the heavenlies by any human righteousness. Therefore, he seeks to condemn us. He finds fault with us. He says that we are not the sons of God, even as the Jews accused Jesus. How, then, may we meet his onslaughts? Again, the conduct of the Lord is cited in Isaiah 59:16, 17 - "His righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate." The Lord is righteous in Himself. That was His defense against the foe. But we must obtain righteousness from Him, having none of our own. We must walk righteously before God - Eph. 5:8-10. We overcome by faith in the blood of the Lamb, which purchased divine righteousness for us; and by our testimony that we have put on the righteousness of Christ - Rev. 12:10, 11. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" - I John 3:7. This piece of armor is very intimately related to the first; hence, they are named together. We shout it against the enemy that, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth," God chose us unto salvation - II Thess. 2:13. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" - Romans 10:10, 11. The truth that Christ died for our sins and rose for our justification is an impenetrable breastplate

against the cunning insinuations of the devil. Hallelujah! "By the Word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" - II Corinthians 6:7.

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

"ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." In the sevenfold archway of the divine panoply, faith stands in the middle at the highest point - "above all." It reaches back to the girdle of Truth, to the breastplate of righteousness, and to the shod feet. It reaches forward and connects vitally with the three remaining parts of the armor. Every manipulation of every weapon is by faith. Faith in divine Truth makes that Truth practical and powerful in our lives. Faith in the righteousness of Christ enables us to walk uprightly in this evil world, so that Satan cannot condemn us before men, and God will not disapprove of us nor be ashamed of us at last - I Cor. 9:27; I John 2:28. Thus we to run, not as uncertainly; so fight ... not as one that beateth the air" - I Cor. 9:26. Our impenetrable "shield of faith" wards off and quenches Satan's burning darts of ridicule, criticism, accusation, condemnation, and reproach. His kindled darts are his most painful attacks. Thank God, faith in the precious Word rises and overflows them all like a stream of water that extinguishes a flame.

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

"AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, which is the Word of God." The first weapon named is the "Truth," with which we should be girded. We should be filled with a knowledge of God's Word rightly divided. We saw that the Truth was the base for all the other weapons. The Greek term,

here translated "the Word," is not "logos" which is the usual word thus rendered; but, it is "hrama," which means "a saying." The definite article is not expressed. It does not read, "ho logos," "the Word"; but "hrama," "a word," or "saying." When a word is needed for our defense or to rout the foe, the Holy Spirit finds it lodged in our heart and hurls it at the enemy. This shows us the advantage and necessity of possessing a correct understanding of the Bible. This weapon is named here, because the Spirit employs it in connection with all the other pieces of the armor and against every attack. He enables us to use the "Truth" with which we are girded. He enables us to use our "breastplate of righteousness." He makes us to run on our fittingly "shod" feet, and wield "the shield of faith," and wear "the helmet of salvation." The Holy Spirit alone knows how and when to use the armor, and prompts us to use the particular part needed at each particular time. He brings to our remembrance the appropriate "hrama" or saying of God, that will vanquish the power of the devil. We are weak; but He is mighty, even Almighty. David said, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" - Psalm 119:11. Thus, by one Simple verse or sentence, we may be delivered from a terrible attack of Satan.

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

We said at the outset, that our warfare is primarily defensive. We "put on the whole armor of God," that we may be fully able to stand against the methods or cunning artifices of the devil. We are plunged into a wrestling match against the fiendish forces of organized wicked spirits in the heavenlies, whither we are bound. Six times the preposition "against" occurs. We stand and fight against the devil and his hosts, because we are determined to have the place as our eternal abode which they now inhabit. But our combat develops into an offensive contest. The phrase, "having done all," suggests this. The original for this phrase means, "having conquered all things." We cannot be passive, and let Satan run over us and crush us. Our firm stand becomes an aggressive engagement in which we conquer every opposing thing and power. "We do more than overcome" - Romans 8:37 Greek. We take the spoil of the enemy and the heavenly country by a vigorous fight of faith, and "STAND" until the trumpet blows and calls us Home. Hallelujah to our Victor, Jesus Christ, who has been anointed "King of kings, and Lord of lords!"

"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT." This is the last weapon mentioned, but it begins to be in use with the first - "praying always." Men have written essays and books on prayer, but there was no life or power in them. Here we have an invaluable commentary on real, intelligent, effectual prayer. After all, the way to understand prayer is to pray after the fashion indicated in these verses. Pray and you will learn how to pray. Observe the time of prayer - "always." The quantity is "all prayer." Its intensity is "supplication." Jesus said, "Ask ... seek ... knock." He said also, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" - Matthew 11:12. Real prayer bears down on the promises of God and comes boldly to the throne of grace; that is, the throne which has authority and power to grant all that the redemption of Christ has purchased for us who believe on Jesus. Hence, the exhortation is emphasized by saying, "And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication." Saints faint and fail in the use of this everyday weapon; hence, they lose many victories. Satan gets the ascendancy over them, and laughs at their defeat. The purity of prayer is "in the Spirit." Oh, how many vain and unscriptural petitions are offered. People do not know the Bible; hence, they annoy the Lord with a thousand things in which He is not interested. Also they cry to Him to do things, which He has done already, and which they are invited to receive by simple faith; and, because of ignorance, some saints actually pray against the foretold purposes and judgments of God. For example, some imagine that by praying they can set aside the tribulation days and the calamities prophesied long ago.

Of course, such praying is not "in the Spirit"; for He indites no petition contrary to the written Word. Beloved Reader, do you see the absolute necessity of being filled Scripturally with the Holy Spirit? Those Ephesian saints were anointed, or sealed, with the Spirit. Yes, they were filled after the pentecostal pattern; for "they spake with tongues, and prophesied" - Acts 19:6. Only

Spirit-anointed believers can learn to pray in the Spirit. Then follows the guard of prayer - "watching" - which also is by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the chief object of prayer - "all saints." All who believe on Jesus with the heart constitute the children of God, the household of faith. Paul instructs us to pray for the whole family. Whether they be saved under the ministry of James, Peter, or himself, he loved them and sought their highest welfare. He was in no sense sectarian.

Think it not strange that the apostle added, "And for me." No selfish motive prompted that request. He was the primary and most necessary messenger of the mystery. The enemy withstood him fiercely; hence, he was in prison, even when he wrote this epistle. Why did he ask for intercession in his own behalf? He says, "That utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel" - 6:19. To the Colossians (4:4) he added, "That I may make it (the mystery) manifest, as I ought to speak." Dear Reader, let this speak to your heart. As you value the truth of God's grace and of the mystery revealed through Paul's ministry, you certainly will pray for his successors as outlined above that they also may speak boldly. Satan will tie the tongues and padlock the mouths of the messengers of divine grace who speak in the power and liberty of the Spirit, if he can. Will you, by fervent and persistent petitions, do your part in preventing him? Will you do your part - "helping together by prayer" - toward disseminating this glad Message? We cannot dispense with the first six pieces of the armor of God and hold the victory in our own lives. Likewise, we dare not neglect the last one, which is so essential in helping other saints to obtain and hold the victory for the rapid running of the Truth. Certainly, with such a divine panoply, we are fully able to withstand and repulse the foe and his hosts.

PAUL'S PERSONAL CONCLUSION

"But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts" - 6:21, 22.

The name "Tychicus" means "fortunate." He bore Paul's letter to Ephesus. He was indeed fortunate to hear the Gospel of grace and be associated with Paul. The latter also felt himself fortunate to have such a choice spirit with him. He could not call every brother in the Lord, "a beloved brother." Neither can we, though they be in the Lord. Even some grace preachers, so-called, are unbrotherly. They have no scruples, if they think that they can undermine a brother and take his flock and crown from him. Tychicus was not that kind. Nay, but he was a "faithful minister" - faithful to his spiritual father and faithful to the saints - because he was faithful to the Lord. In Col. 4:7, he is also styled a "fellow servant in the Lord." He moved side by side with the apostle in his self-sacrificing labors in divine things. Hence, Paul entrusted him with a similar message to the Colossians as to the Ephesians. He was so beloved and faithful that he was one of the seven workers who were with Paul when he wrote to the Galatians. See Acts 20:4 and Galatians 1:2. His whereabouts are mentioned in II Timothy 4:12, and he carried greetings to Titus - Titus 3:12.

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

THE DIVINE PERFECTION

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

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

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

3. Epaenetus, which means "praiseworthy" or "laudable," was "the firstfruits of Asia" and not of

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

4. Observe Romans 16:20 - "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." To whom can these words be addressed more appropriately than to Ephesian saints? Being seated in the heavenlies, and being instructed that their conflict is against Satan's organized forces and being armed to cope with them, they are the very company of saints to whom especially this promise shall be fulfilled. Appropriate statements and promises are always made by the Spirit to the appropriate parties. Others would not understand them; hence, would not receive them.

5. Romans 16:21-23 is just as plainly not addressed to Ephesus. This is indeed a portion of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul wrote Romans in the home of Gaius in Derbe. Compare Romans 16:23 with I Corinthians 1:14 and Acts 20:4.

THE VALUE OF THE CHAPTER

This record of names is of no little importance. It is a very fitting finale to the Ephesian Epistle. Consider the following reflections: All of these parties, to whom the apostle sends greetings, were held in the highest esteem by him - not in the natural, but in the spiritual. They were choice saints. True to his teaching, he knew no man after the flesh; but he loved them dearly in Christ. Four times we have the phrase, "in Christ"; six times, "in the Lord"; and once, "unto Christ." He speaks of three of them, not simply as helpers, but as fellow-workers with him - 16:3, 9 R.V. He calls four of them "beloved." The word "greet" or "salute" means "to welcome warmly by embracing gladly." Paul requested the Ephesian Assembly to extend the fervent love of his heart to all these representative Ephesian believers.

Note the significant number of names - twenty-seven in all - three times three times three. The indispensable and indivisible number "three" expresses the number of the Godhead all through the Scripture; and it is especially made plain in the New Testament as being the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Salvation is altogether of grace. The members of the Body of Christ are the result of God's call of sovereign grace. The Church of Christ, "the mystery of Christ," is altogether divine. Hence, this number of Deity is profoundly illustrative of the "fullgrown man ... the stature of the fulness of Christ" - Eph. 4:13 R.V. This number "twenty-seven" can be divided by no other number than three - the number of Deity - or its multiple nine. God set the members in the Body as it pleased Him. He holds them together, and He only has the right or power to make separations. "My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" - John 10:27, 28.

NINETEEN TYPICAL MEN

The first man is Aquila, "eagle" or the ascending one, who with his wife Priscilla, "the ancient one," "laid down their own necks" for Paul's life. Of course, Christ is the Ancient, and the Ascending One; but full-fledged saints partake of these elements in being "partakers of Christ." Study the biography of this devoted couple. Then note the last of the twenty-seven names - Olympas, "heavenly"; and marvel at them - at their meanings and order. Jesus came from Heaven, and went back to Heaven. We are born from above, and we shall ascend whence we came. Observe closely the meaning of each of these names, bearing in mind that all these characteristics were necessarily true of Christ the Head of His Body the Church; and they must also be true of the Body as well. Doubtless, each one of those who constitute the Bride of Christ have all of these qualities, because they share jointly with the Head in all things.

Following is each name and its meaning, with a fitting comment:

Aquila - "an eagle," the ascending man; referring primarily to Christ, then to all His people.

"Looking unto Jesus," they become -

Epaphroditus - "laudable," the praiseworthy man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Olympas - "heavenly," the supernatural man.

Note here, that there is a remarkable gradation in the first eight names. Ascending or looking up is laudable, and increases to excellence, and finally into fullgrowth. Of course, a full-grown man is looking at eternal things and is sure to be fruitful. Such a man has no capacity for carnal things; hence, he is "approved in Christ." Having come up through these different degrees, how fitting for him to be the "best counselor" - the necessary man. Finally, this man becomes Herodion, "the valiant," or the one whom the whole Church lauds - that is, Christ. Narcissus illustrates the one who, like Paul, was dead to the world and the flesh. He denied everything that would hinder his fellowship with Christ.

"The blood of the Lamb" was necessary to produce such a wonder; hence Rufus "red," or the sprinkling of the blood, comes next from behind the screen. He is called "chosen in the Lord."

Thank God for Calvary, where our sins were put away forever, where the world was crucified unto us and we unto the world. Viewed numerically, we stand aghast. Rufus is the eleventh character here. Eleven is the fourth number that cannot be divided. Christ died once for all men; all men died once in Christ. That which cannot be divided stands as an eternal divider between the world and believers. Therefore, the "incomparable" Asyncritus comes forth, forever separated unto God. Of course, he becomes Phlegon, "burning" with zeal for the Truth; which makes him the "paternal," or fatherly Patrobas. Do you marvel that this man develops into Hermas, who is destined to "gain" the Prize? Certainly, the following trinity of qualities is absolutely necessary to gain it - Philologus the "lover of the Word," the resurrected Nereus "a water nymph" or offspring of the deep, and the "heavenly" Olympas.

EIGHT TYPICAL WOMEN

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

In the meanings of the names lie the climaxing marvel of the chapter. The first woman and the first man, as well as each of the others, have each the proper place. Phoebe, "the radiant one," whom Paul calls "our sister," was a servant or deacon of the assembly in Cenchrea which means "small, like a millet seed, granular." She was not ashamed to minister to a little flock. She was "a succorer of many, and of myself also," says the apostle. That word "succorer" means "a first rank protector." How expressive of the teaching of ranks, and that those in the first rank are indeed "radiant" because of an inward glory. Phoebe went before many and served many, even protecting the apostle in her service of love. She possessed the Spirit of Christ. See Hebrews 2:18. Phoebe always shares with Christ in His service and suffering here, and will share with Him in His radiant glory hereafter.

Priscilla, "the ancient," received her life and call from "the Ancient of days"; and she was among the first rank laborers with Brother Paul. By running with him, she was qualifying to "win Christ." With her husband, she laid down her neck for Jesus Christ, in doing so for the apostle. The

Priscilla folk are doing the same today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

These are eight expressive characters, forcefully figuring the company of full-fledged overcomers who shall reign conjointly with Jesus for ever. Oh, the wonder of God's Holy Word! How little we had supposed that all these precious things were hidden in the aforementioned names. Is it any wonder that Satan tried to confuse Bible students by causing translators to misplace this name chapter? Is it not unanswerably evident now, that this chapter completes the Ephesian Epistle? Is it not glorious that what is taught in type for our hope, in Ephesians 5:22-33, is prominently set on an embellished pedestal of eight pillars - eight pronounced Christian characters!

Do you now wonder that the seventh "P" in our Ephesian Pod is "The Divine Perfection"? It is written - "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new Name" - Revelation 3:12. Who is this overcomer, but the Bride of the Lamb!

THE END

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