

Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 1

Here is an Epistle to the saints. And, blessed be God, we are saints, though we do not deserve to be. People in their ignorance, say, "Saint" Peter, and "Saint" Paul, but God calls all His people saints. "Sanctified by God "that is, separated by God, —the "garden enclosed,"—a holy people to begin with. Then we are to live holily. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." As we are holy, we are to pursue after holiness. Just to remember what God has made us! When tempted to sin, to remember God has made us saints. Only in this Epistle and Colossians are they called "faithful "as well, showing a striking resemblance between them. They particularly fit together.

It implies that the truths they contain are specially meant to comfort the hearts of His faithful saints. "To the saints and to the faithful,"—as if those who were faithful required showing from God's Word those things which would keep them strong.

Verse 2.—"Grace be to you, and peace," etc. I am not tired of that expression, and the Lord repeats it, as we needed line upon line, and precept upon precept, as if we needed it fresh and fresh. The grace and peace of yesterday is not enough. God wants us to have it fresh. It assumes that God would have us in the perfect enjoyment of peace. He still says "Peace," as if He would

rid our hearts of every quiver and make us quite at home. If the Lord Jesus and the Queen of England walked into this room, which would make our hearts flutter most? The Lord Jesus would say "Peace"; the Queen could not. There would be no cause to flutter if the Lord Jesus came bodily. He would not allow anything like the contradiction of peace. He would make us free and easy in His presence. God our Father loves us as much as Christ, and Christ as much as God. What a comfort.

Verse 3.—"Blessed be the God and Father," etc. The Epistle begins with God in relation to Christ. It is remarkable how frequently the name "Christ" is mentioned in this first chapter. Nothing without Christ! The apostle is going to open out grand things; that is the reason it does not say "Paul, and Timotheus, and Silvanus." It was truth only revealed to himself.

"God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." An expression in Scripture we should always notice. Not a strange God; not merely the God of creation: but the God with whom we have to do is the God of Christ, so our God. The Father of Christ, and so our Father. I stand in relation to Christ, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is the way I get relationship with God. A living, holy God who made all things, came down and got to me, and lifts me right up to Himself through His beloved Son. Then there is a relationship to His beloved Son: He is my "Lord."

"Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings," etc. Not who will, not who wants to, but who "hath blessed us." What a beautiful "hath!" He has given us everything already, given us His Son, His Spirit. What can He

withhold when He has given Christ? “He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” Observe, they are spiritual blessings,—that is, blessings for the spirit. My spirit, by nature, is dead, with no desire for God. “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.” And now, though the body I have, drags me down, He will presently change my body, and give me one suited to my spirit, which will be a help and not a drag. In these opening verses we see God intends us for Himself,—specially, peculiarly, and our new-born spirits rejoice in God’s purpose.

“In heavenly places,” or “in the heavenlies,” we have our home. Our proper home is above. You will never be at home until you get to heaven. We have never been fully, completely, in our home yet. What a strange thing, we have never really seen our home yet, but God has given us a new nature, and made us strangers here. We long to be where Jesus is,—to have our “affection set on things above.” Wicked spirits are in the heavenlies at present, as in chap.6:9: and we know from Rev. 12:7, that the church will then fight under Michael and cast the devil and his angels out of heaven.

How wonderful that God should use sinners as we were to cast them out for ever. “They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb.” God will make us finally quite at home in His presence for ever. “Rejoice, ye heavens,” etc., that you and I are at last at home.

“I go to prepare a place for you.” The place is not now being prepared, but ready,—ready for you. I go the way of death and resurrection to prepare a place for you.

And now that He has died and risen again, the place is prepared.

When it says, “the heavenlies,” it means God is working in a way different to any He has worked before. He has made everything suited to the place where He has put them in creation, as birds for the air, fishes for the sea, etc. But God is going to do a new thing,—take a number of poor things and put them where His Son is. Our place is where Christ is. Oh! what a thought! That is the true meaning of John 14, “I go to prepare a place for you.” He drops the word place, and puts in “Myself.” If I may so say, the private apartments of the Lord Jesus in the uncreated glory where He now is. Where Christ is, is our home. When he says, “Come unto Me,” that is where we are welcome. “The heavenlies.” That expression occurs several times in Ephesians. This is the first time. The great God, who does everything according to His own will, determines to put us where no creature ever got, and where the blood of Jesus alone entitles us.

Verse 4.—“According as He hath chosen,” etc. The heavens are His. He has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies,” and chooses us to be before Him, to be in our home in heaven. God has called us to His own eternal glory. Oh! what a wonderful word. Once God was in man’s home, and the Lord God walked in the garden. He came to look after His creature man. Man cast Him out, and now He calls us to His home, and His eternal glory. That thought is brought out in many Scriptures. In Jude, verse 24, we read “Now unto Him,” etc., so in this Epistle, chapter 5:25, 27, “Christ loved the church,” etc. “Before Him “under His eye. What a strange thing that I shall never feel quite at home till I am in the very presence of God, the very place I should

once have shuddered at. What a change! and what a grand future to be “before Him.” “Thou settest me before Thy face for ever.” It is wonderful! People choose their companions, and God chooses His. He chooses us in Christ. Oh! to take these things into one’s soul and spirit. How it endears God!

“Before the foundation of the world.” That expression shows we have nothing to do with this world,—we only pass through it. The earthly people are chosen from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; Matt. 25:34), the heavenly people before the world began. God thought of us before He thought of Israel, and yet we hear of Israel first. This world is something like a hotel, where people put up for a little time. We are going home. The only singular thing is, we are going to a home we have never seen,—grander than our hearts can conceive. I don’t feel I half enter into these wonderful, deep counsels of God, but God will do it for all that. “Hath He said, and shall He not do it? “He has loved us, chosen us, called us, sealed us, and “those whom He justifies He glorifies.” Chose us that we should be holy? “Is anything too hard for the Lord? “It is wonderful that God should look at me and love me, who was a wretch and a rebel. Anyone else would have said, “What! that one to become holy? “Yet, blessed be God, He has done it.

“In love.” In Colossians we read, chap 1, ver. 22, “To present you, holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in His sight.” He would have us grounded and settled in His love. He chose us in order that we should be surrounded on all sides by His love, as we are by the atmosphere. We are to be brought home before Him “in love.”

The right way of looking at verses 3 to 6 is to look at them as a chain. They are the links of a chain; then whichever end you touch first, it is the way of reaching the other end. "God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ," there is the first link. Why did He do so? Because He "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." He does not intend that when we come to heaven we should be penniless, empty beggars. God in Christ has blessed us, because He chose us in Him, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love "that we should have everything suited to the place. Not merely in there, and before Him, but everything there ours. The next link. He chose us "having predestinated us." It implies that He predestinated us before He chose us, to sonship. He determined we should be sons, so he chose us, notwithstanding all the mess and misery we had got into: that did not alter His purpose. He chose to lift us out of the mire, even before we got into it. How was it that He predestinated us to sonship? Because He took us into favour in the Beloved One. (Verse 6.) Then we get to the end: "To the praise of the glory of His grace." Whichever way you look at it, whether from ver. 3 to 6, or 6 to 3, it is a chain. When He saw us in Christ He could do nothing less than make us His sons. It is a beautiful way of looking at those verses. God hanging everything of ours to that Foundation Stone, "taken into favour in the Beloved One." It is enough to make our hearts leap for joy. "The Beloved "is vague. It should be "The Beloved One." So in the Lord's prayer, "Deliver us from the Evil One," and "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." (1 John 5:10.) It makes it more distinct. So here: "The Beloved One." There is the foundation of all our blessing.

Verse 4 gives an answer to an important question, which was much discussed about two hundred years ago. Some persons say God loved us when He saw us in our misery; others, before—which is right? Verse 4, shows that God loved us apart from our wickedness; then there was provision for our misery. He chose us before the world began. He knew we should tumble into the mire, still He said: “I must have them in my presence.” It assumes that predestination was the foundation of election.

Verse 5.—“Having predestinated us,” etc. There are four links of the chain. He took us into favour in the Beloved One. As if God said—“That Beloved One is my Son,” I must have them for sons too. I must get them out of the mire to be before me. They must have everything. So He has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” A chain of things, all in the heart of God when the creature knew nothing about it. They were deep counsels in the heart of God, “or ever the earth was.” Thoughts of love and grace towards us, who should be living now. Oh! when I get before Him, how I’ll praise Him! Oh! my God, to think Thou didst look at me in Thy love, predestinated me and made me holy! Oh! what cause I shall have to praise Thee!

There are two great reasons why we should praise God. 1. What we are saved from. 2. What we are saved to. (1), When I think of all the wretchedness, mire and sin His mighty arm has lifted me out of; and (2), When I see that dazzling brightness that mighty arm has lifted me to, I shall indeed have cause to praise Him. It is mentioned three times, to “the praise of the glory.” (Verses 6, 12, 14.) 1. About God. 2. About Christ. 3. About the Holy Ghost. As if, really and truly, we had enough to make us praise Him. We shall praise Him, we have been saved

from Hell. "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Praise, praise, praise! Shall we not praise Him? Oh! if God did all this on purpose that He might get praise, shall we withhold it? Whoever praises Him, surely we should.

"The more Thy glory strikes mine eye,
The humbler I should lie."

Oh! to think of God taking up such wretched objects and making them fit for His own glory and presence. Why does He do it? God answers: "That I may get praise."

Verse 6.—To the Father it is, "Praise to the glory of His grace." Verse 12.—To Christ, "To the praise of His glory." Verse 14.—To the Holy Ghost, "To the praise of His glory." Anyhow the great lesson is "Praise, praise, praise." Oh! if angels praise Him, how much more should we? "To Him be glory in the church throughout all ages." God wants praise. God wants worship. He gives us everything; He wants praise. Surely we may give Him that.

Verse 5.—We could not be sons without Christ. So in John 1:12: "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Sonship through One who is the Son. The Son makes us sons. God is "bringing many sons to glory." What a singular way He is bringing them, and what a singular world He is getting them from. It is remarkable how the sovereign will of God is referred to. God is seen to be acting as an absolute Sovereign, doing as He likes.

He does it "According to His own will." Three times we are told about His own will. "I will it." As if God's will bore down all opposition. Had he willed it, He could

have done it otherwise; it shows He could have left us. It reminds me of a passage in Matthew where Jesus said: "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. 11:25, 26.) The sovereign will of God, "I'll have it so." That infinite God who gives no account of His matters, only so far as He pleases, does as He will "in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth." Oh! how comforting it is, that that will of God has willed that we should be saved! Sometimes we find it hard to say, "Thy will be done." If we thought, "It is His will," it ought to be easy.

Verse 6.—"Wherein (in which grace) He has graced us (or taken us into favour) in the Beloved One." In John 1:17, we read: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came (or became) by Jesus Christ." If there had been no Christ, there had been no grace. God could not have shown favour without Christ. Christ was His resource to carry out these deep counsels of His love.

"Made us accepted in the Beloved One." Great force is in that expression; it implies, in the Beloved One I am loved. It is a great wonder why God should love me, and yet easy, because He loved Christ, and I am in Christ. Most wonderful, and yet most simple. As we sing sometimes:

"The love wherewith He loves the Son,

Such is His love to me."

Another question arises, Why did God take us into favour, and leave others? I cannot answer that. No explanation can be given. Not merely He chose the Church in Christ, but He chose each one separately in

Christ. In chapter 1, God deals with individuals; in chapters 2, 3, 4, collectively. Before God shows us about building a Temple, in chapter 2, a Body, in chapter 3, or a Bride, chapter 5, there are the individuals in chapter 1. Each stone in the building is dear to God. We all know that God loves the Son more than angels. Then He has taken us into favour in the Son; that is, He loves us as much as His Beloved Son. I was reading to-day of the people beginning to lower His Christ. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" "They said "David's." A very little answer. God's way of lifting up sinners is in Christ, to the association of His Beloved Son.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace." God wants praise; He wants worship from those He has thus blessed. He does not get much. We are prone to be occupied with our wants and our trials; but if He has loved us in such a way, why surely we ought to praise Him.

Verse 7.—"We have redemption through His blood"—the Beloved One. How precious that blood must be! It explains why that blood is so powerful when you plead it: it is the Blood of the Beloved One. My sins have been very awful. That is a matter between me and God. But after all, they don't reach up to this—the blood of the Beloved One. "Oh, my sins, my sins!" I should shriek if I were dying, if it were not for the blood of that Beloved One. The more I know of the wickedness of my sins, the more I know the value of that precious blood. God teaches us all our lives through, these two together. I see more of the wickedness of my sins now than I did ten years ago, and I see also the blood of Christ more precious. They go together.

“In whom we have redemption through His blood.” What a wonderful word.

“Redemption” is an Old Testament word. A redeemer had to do three things: 1. To redeem a person who was sold; 2. To redeem his kinsman if taken captive; 3. To avenge the enemy who had wronged him. Now Jesus is our Redeemer. An old saint said, “I know that my Redeemer liveth;” and we are here taught that Jesus is our Redeemer. “In whom we have redemption.” We were sold captives of Satan at His will. Christ has redeemed us; paid the full price for our deliverance; and now Satan has no claim on us whatever. We have redemption. We have been brought near. We belong to that Redeemer, and He will also inflict vengeance on the foe. Satan will be dealt with, and cast into the lake of fire.

“Redemption through His blood.” We had got away from God by sin, but the blood puts away our sin and brings us nigh to God. Thus we are “redeemed. We had sold ourselves, and are now brought back to God. What a beautiful word. “We have,” “Being justified by faith, we have peace,” etc. (Rom, 5:1.) “Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” We are not poor and empty now. (Heb. 10:20.) In Christ we have redemption, peace, boldness; and God has us.

“In whom we have redemption.” “According to the riches of His Grace,” so not merely forgiveness, but according to the riches of His grace, and love. It shows how heartily, thoroughly, and fully, God forgives. Could you conceive of God giving niggardly or grudgingly? One person may only half forgive another. That is not God’s way. He forgives frankly, so that we hear nothing more about it. So there is great emphasis on these words. God

does nothing niggardly, so, of course, He can't forgive niggardly, for that is what He loves to do. How Jesus loved to forgive sins when on earth! "Daughter thy sins be forgiven thee." Oh! if we knew God better!

We have forgiveness of sins in a divine measure, "According to the riches of His grace." God must cease to be Himself, before He could forgive sins in a niggardly way. Do we realise God forgiving sins in this hearty way? Have we the consciousness of sin forgiven? If we have committed a million sins, He does not forgive all but two. "When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both." (Luke 7:42.) Do I believe that? Does my soul enjoy that? Am I sure there is not a sin left? "Clean every whit." We have the "forgiveness of sins."

"Riches," imply He gives it liberally. "According," shows what measure God uses. And that measure is "According to the riches of His grace." That suits me. The whole passage is a very precious one. I don't know a more precious verse in Ephesians than this verse 7. There is no other allusion in chapter 1 to sins. If it were not for the blood of Christ, God could not have forgiven sins. May the Lord write this word on the consciences of every depressed soul.

The two expressions are put as if to explain each other. Redemption is forgiveness of sins. As long as there is sin in the way, God is not our God. Christ has put that out of the way which hindered me from coming to God and enjoying the love of God. "Forgive us our trespasses" refers to daily failures. It is right that every day, as we commit sins, we should confess our failures to God; but it is one thing for the lump of sin to remain unforgiven, and another thing for me, having Him for my God and

Father, to know I fail constantly, and to confess it,— knowing that nothing alters the relationship. I am still his child, “clean every whit;” (John 15:3). But although God is my God and Father, alas! do I never give way to temper, or indulge in anything contrary to God? And it is then I should look to Him as my Father, and confess these things to Him. He is our loving Father, who has done so much for us, and that makes us sorry we grieve and sin against Him. May we never get above confessing our failures and shortcomings and sins. It is a very healthy exercise. Let us keep on believing in that blood, so shall we enjoy it more and more. It is a grand thing to know that my Heavenly Father has nothing against me. What He has to say is about the precious blood of Jesus. When I commit sin, I don’t enjoy God until I have confessed it.

“We have redemption through His blood.” It is the blood of the Beloved One. Only to think of the Beloved One hanging on the Cross! The Beloved One did not shed His tears only, but His blood. God has a great many who are taken into favour in the Beloved One. Where are they? Many of them on beds of pain, some knowing not where they shall get their next meal. Does Satan tempt you by suggesting that God does not love you much to let you suffer so much. Look at the Beloved One on the Cross. If He let Him suffer so much, you must not be surprised if you suffer too. It may be all the beloved children sigh, groan and shed tears, but only the Beloved One endured such agony on the Cross. “The blood of the Beloved One!” He was spit upon, He sank to death, was put in the grave, a stone was put upon it in derision. At last God spoke out, and now there is a Man on the throne of God. God brought Him out, and so He will us. It does not

follow we are not loved because we suffer. Dispensational truth is a grand thing to study. Ever since the Cross of Christ, it is rather a mark of favour to suffer righteously. "If ye be reproached for Christ, happy are ye." (1 Peter 4:14.) Oh, what a plea I have, when I talk to my Father about the blood of the Beloved One. In Exodus 12:13, we read, "When I see the blood," but here, what blood? The blood of the Beloved One! "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet." (Song of Solomon 4:3). Why compared to a thread of scarlet? Because I talk about the blood. I don't know the preciousness of that blood, but Thou dost. I can dare to think about my sins when I have the blood of His beloved Son. It makes it easy for God to forgive, when it is the blood of the Beloved One. Christ said to the woman who washed His feet, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The Pharisees murmured. They little knew though He spoke it so easily, what He had to pass through to earn it. His blood shows it was a hard thing. God could make a million worlds easier than forgive one of my sins.

"In whom we have redemption." I don't know which word is the most delightful. Until all the work of the Cross can be undone, I have redemption. There is no blood in the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus.

"Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." What a beautiful illustration is the Lord's Supper! The loaf and the cup denote the blood and body have been separated. If there were blood in the body, there would be no redemption. The blood of Jesus has been shed, Jesus has died, and I "have redemption through His blood." Within twenty-four hours I may die, or Jesus may come, but whatever comes, I have forgiveness of sins.

Verses 8 and 9.—God is called “the only wise God.” He has made known unto us “the mystery of His will,” made us to see things from God’s standpoint,—what He is doing with us, and what He is going to do. We are not only saved, but we know we are saved, and God weaves our circumstances according to His own purposes, and the Holy Ghost has been given to us that we may know Christ and His glory, and our calling,—that we may “know the things that are freely given unto us.” Then there is the mystery of the Gentiles being brought in; (chapter 3:8) then the mystery of His coining,— (1 Cor. 20:51) “we shall not all sleep.” This is a mystery, a secret which God has told us; so then, we are put into possession of it. Then this mystery, that Christ gave Himself to and for the Church,—Christ as a Bridegroom. Oh, this is a great mystery, a great secret! Now, here is another,—“Having made known to us the mystery of His will.”

Verse 10.—He will head up “all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth.” God is preparing all things for heaven, calling His own for heaven, training them for heaven. The earthly people are set aside for awhile. He is now preparing a people for Himself. He has two spheres, earth and heaven. Now He is not dealing with the earth, but with the heavenlies. He is now preparing the church for Himself. Oh! what a wonderful way. God is to train His people for Himself before we get there. He is teaching us that our Head and Lord is Christ. He is the Head of authority. All fulness flows to the church from Him. He is the Head of all affection: He is always thinking about us, watching over us: and He is the Head of all fulness. We are trained to regard Christ as the supreme One. All our life

proceeds from Him, day by day, minute by minute, and that Head is the "Beloved One," and He is coming for us. Then He is the Head of the angels. He is called, "The Archangel." (1 Thess. 4:16.) We only read of one Archangel. Jesus is the Plead of all heaven, always put first in His place by God. God's first thought is about His Son. Here you see then, God is determined to put His Son as the supreme One both in heaven and on earth, and God would have every one in heaven to own everything to Him. We are learning to give Him the supreme place in our hearts, in our affections, but we let earthly care or something else get between us and Him. Then God has to fight with us for the supreme place. He will have it; so God's first thought, His middle thought, and His last thought is, His Christ. That He might head up "all things in Him"—in Him,— in Him. Some people talk about having an interest in Christ, but it is God having an interest in Christ, and for Christ's sake, having an interest in His people. Yet another mystery. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." (2 Thess. 2:7.) Things are getting worse and worse and will; but Christ is secretly looking after us. He is, as it were, hiding Himself,—that is, from the world at present. We are not of the world; we are Gershonites,— "Strangers there," a heavenly people. It is as if we were up there and looking down. We are only waiting for the liberty of the glory, then we shall be thoroughly at liberty, perfect freedom.

I once had a little linnet, but he longed to be out of his cage, so I let him out. We that are in this tabernacle do groan. Mr. Angel once said, "We do groan, but we don't grumble; but we long to be at home." We want to be headed up in Christ,—the Church all home together. One

day there won't be a speck in this world, but what will be filled with His glory. God knows the exact time, the exact moment He is going to send His Son to fetch us home. God will put all things under His feet. Oh, what counsels God has to accomplish for us! All we have to do is to go on quietly plodding along "till He come."

"Both which are in heaven and which are on earth."

Everything will be in its proper place. There will be unity in the entire heaven and earth, like as everything is in its place in the human body. God is working now to bring the heavenly family to the place He has prepared for them. Heaven and earth are all to be put right, clean and beautiful and perfect, then Christ will hand up the kingdom, that God may be all in all. In Ezek. 1, we see the same idea. There is much about the cherubim, and the wheels, and the fire enfolding itself:—

Wheels—God's government in heaven and earth. So in Ezekiel 41:18. It is all designed in God's own heart to put everything right. Then He has made known to us His purposes (ver. 9). He seems to love to put us into His secrets, to tell us everything about His counsels, and our place in those deep counsels.

Verse 11.—"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." That is the very thing God is doing now. He is attending to the heavenly people.

"Being predestinated." It is all His own sovereign will and pleasure. So it seems good in His sight, and He will do it.

Verse 12.—"That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ." In the original it is in the plural, "The first trusters in Christ." It refers to us, that we are the first since His Son has been rejected and His

name cast out. It is so lovely in the sight of God that He finds us a special place, after this there will be the others as in Rev. 7. We being connected with Christ in rejection, shall be associated with Him in the glory. Some even say, “who first trusted in Christ before the glory,”—that makes it more vivid still.

“To the praise of His glory.” When it speaks of our inheritance, of our getting a place in heaven, then it is, to “the praise of His glory.” That will be to the glory of God, we shall have our place in all that system of glory according as God has determined. “Those who first trusted in Christ.” As if God were so pleased at those who trusted Christ where He is despised and rejected of men, as if it were such a grand thing, that He could not stay His hand in blessing them. Though many persons do not care for Christ, God does, and He has special blessings for those who do. It is assumed as if we got everything if we trust in Christ. It is worth a million of rivers of tears.

“We” properly means the Jews, and in verse 13, in whom “Ye” that is the Gentiles, put together as one. God knows His people that trust in Him. They are all one in Christ, neither Jew nor Gentile now.

Verse 13.—“After that ye heard the word of truth.” It traces how we are brought to be saved. You hear the Word. It has got down from God, having predestinated us to hearing the message. It is God’s Word, so it is “the Word of truth.” “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that word shall never pass away.” God gives the gospel, commands His servants to preach it. We are to believe it and to trust in Christ,—that pleases God. The gospel does us no good if it does not lead to this.

“The gospel of your salvation.” That shows we are to know we are saved. Not my salvation but yours. is no good if is not yours. It is sometimes called God’s because God gives it. Here it is called your salvation. Thank God I am saved, whether Christ comes or I die. “Your salvation.” Notice the beautiful way the Epistle to the Ephesians is written. It begins from the tip-top, till it gets down to you. Not merely salvation from hell, but from sin. The gospel is to save me from self, and from bad temper, etc.

Then God gives us the Holy Ghost; everything follows in beautiful order. “Sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” God gives us His Spirit to seal us, to christen us, to anoint us, to put His Name on us. Saying “They are mine.” Like as a farmer puts a mark on his sheep. The mark God puts upon me is His Holy Spirit. His Spirit makes me like to Christ. If there is no likeness to Christ there is no sealing of the Holy Ghost. When God gives me the Spirit, He never takes Him away. “That He may abide with you forever.” He is called here “The Holy Spirit of promise.” When Christ was on earth He said, “I will send the Holy Ghost,” and He has come, that is why He is called the “Spirit of promise.” The promise is in John 14. It shows that God remembers Christ’s promise, and that Christ keeps His promise. The greatest promise of all is “I am coming again,” and He will keep that too. And this is a great promise: “The Comforter shall come.” We all know how much we need a Comforter in this weary world, and He has come. How faithful God is! What a blessed thing it is to believe in Christ! How do I know I have the Holy Ghost? I have His Word, He promised, and I feel His Spirit in me. The Spirit gives me to enjoy Christ. The freer and happier I am with God, the

more markedly I have the Spirit of God. "Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty." The Holy Ghost draws us and makes us believe in Christ, then He comes to indwell. No time elapses between a man believing in Christ and the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost came as a rushing mighty wind to show God did not delay to keep His word. So the Holy Ghost came down at once. If the Holy Ghost had delayed, it would have looked as if God were not quite satisfied with Christ's work. Oh! what a mercy it is that in this wilderness world we have the Holy Ghost to enable us to enjoy God now. As one of our hymns says, "We are not left to walk alone,"

So it is not all future.

The Holy Ghost has come, and wants to be our Comforter. May we be led by the Holy Ghost as Eliezer led Rebecca of old, telling us of the love of God, and the grace of Christ, giving us tastes of heaven before we get there. How good of God to give us the Holy Ghost! What a difference from the last dispensation! What a high honour is put upon the saints in this dispensation, to have the Holy Ghost to dwell in them personally! Oh how I should seek to walk carefully and holily, humbly and godly, in this wilderness world.

How solicitous God must be for my welfare. How carefully I should walk when I think what a Spirit dwells in me! How I should take care not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God! "Let all anger and wrath and malice and evil speaking be put away." (Chap. 4:29.) May I be careful not to grieve that good Holy Ghost.

Verse 14.—In 1 Cor. 2:12, we read that God has given us the Spirit that we may know the things that are freely

given to us of God. Like as the spies brought the fruits of Canaan to the people in the wilderness, so the Holy Ghost brings us something of heaven before we get there. Oh! if you want, to have much, the way is, to think much of God's love, and as you think of it, believe it. Think of what the Scriptures say about God's love, and be sure to take it in, and the Spirit of God will give you a little sip of heaven. That is the earnest, when your heart begins to expand and almost makes you wish to be at home. The seal is more clearly seen on some Christians than others. Some Christians are more like Christ than others. May we seek to be filled with the Spirit. The babe, and the man of forty both have life, but it is stronger in the man of forty; so if we have divine life, we cannot perish. All saints are in Christ, but the likeness to Christ is more manifest in some than others. So with the earnest. Some have more joy of heaven in their souls than others. The great hindrance in one is unbelief; in another worldliness; taken up with the things of this life. If persons don't allow themselves time to read the Bible, no wonder their souls are lean. Have we really the earnest of the inheritance? Do we really know something of heaven before we get there? It is solemn and searching,—“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Feelings are right in their place. There is a deal about feeling in Rom. 8. Faith first, feeling second.

“After that ye believed.” You cannot feel till you believe, because, God puts honour on His Son. “At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Strictly speaking, we are not there yet because we are not in heaven, but the Holy Ghost has come on purpose to give us tastes now, and we should take care we get a bit too.

The Spirit is also given to help our infirmities. We have infirmities. "The earnest of our inheritance." We cannot have the earnest without feeling, for, it is having the heart brimful of God's love. "The love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 5:4.) We cannot taste the love of God without feeling it. We cannot enjoy all the love of God. But the more we believe, the more we enjoy. "According to your faith, so be it unto you." If we live a worldly life, or if we are taken up with the cares or pleasures of this life, we cannot enjoy the love of God.

What is our inheritance? In one sense God is. "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Heirs of all the love of God; we begin to see God is our Father and Friend.

Verse 14.—"Until the redemption of the purchased possession." When Christ will be Lord of every thing in heaven and earth in power. He has not yet asserted His power, He is waiting for the co-heirs, then we shall be the sharers in all, as the purchased possession. "To the praise of His glory." This leads Paul to go on his knees, verse 15. We need the Holy Ghost to reveal these things unto us, and keep on petitioning God to teach us these things by His Spirit. In verse 14, it is called "our inheritance." In verse 18, "His inheritance." God is our portion; we are His. God owns us, we have claims on God. God is our Father, we are His children. God will get glory through us, God is our glory. O God grant that we may be filled with Thy Spirit, that we may have as much of heaven now as God can give us. The flesh hinders. "We see through a glass darkly," it is better than nothing. But "What will it be to be there? "God only gives us enough to whet our appetites. God will never love us more in heaven than He does now. He owns us

now as much as ever He will, and we shall be sure to get there and enjoy those heavenly blessings. Now we only enjoy them by faith, but then, faith ebbs and flows, sometimes strong, sometimes weak. Cares, and the flesh drag us down, but it is His holy and blessed will to cheer our hearts with tastes and sips of His love in the wilderness. It is a beautiful arrangement of God. If some one has property coming to him at twenty-one, he cannot touch it till then. That is not God's way with us. He wants us to touch it, gives us the Spirit that we may enjoy heaven now. He can give us as much as we can bear. We ought to be exercised how much we enjoy of the love of God and heaven now. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes."

"The earnest of our inheritance until." My faith may be weak "until." I may be very downhearted "until." "Fightings without and fears within," only until. Until Christ assumes His rights in power, and brings us home, where He prayed God we might be brought. You enjoy a little of the love of God two or three times a day, "until." Ah! then you will enjoy it all the day, all the week, all the month, all the year, all through eternity. Thank God for that word, "until!"

What a blessed word, too, that word "our" is. It is ours. In this world they say there is nothing more sure than an inheritance. God says, "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings." How long have we to wait? Until Christ redeems in power everything He has redeemed in blood. "Ask of Me and I will give thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." (Psa. 2:5.) He is not asking that yet. He is asking, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given me may be with me." When that is fulfilled, He will ask the other. There were two kinds of redemption in the

Old Testament,— by blood and power. Christ has redeemed all by blood. “The earth is the Lord’s.” When we “see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,” He filling all creation, then He will redeem in power. (John 1:31.) That is the time of the inheritance: when He reigns we shall reign; when He is crowned Lord of All, and we sitting by Him. Christ is waiting, and we are to wait. When Christ gets possession, we shall too. When He comes, it will be no more “the earnest.” May we seek to walk in the Spirit, and not grieve the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. May God’s Spirit be poured into our souls.

Verses 15-20.—What a grand prayer. Paul prays this for other people, not for himself. Our prayers are nearly all taken up with ourselves. This prayer was for saints He had not even seen, for He says, “When I heard,” etc. (ver. 15.) Think of us praying for saints, say in Japan, a prayer like this, “Making mention of you.” God grant we may give a large place in our prayers for others. I believe it does us good. We have not much, comparatively speaking, to pray for, as we have to praise for. If we prayed for others, we should take more interest in them; it would warm our hearts.

Verse 17.—He prayed that prayer for those who had the Holy Ghost (ver. 13). Hence we learn that many saints who are even sealed with the Holy Ghost are not very well up in His ways,—not wise to understand the things spoken of in this prayer. Many Christians do not understand their heavenly calling and place in Christ, so Paul prays “that He may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom,” etc. We may not be wise in Greek and Hebrew, but wisdom in “the knowledge of Him” that is wisdom To

study Christ, God's thoughts of Christ, and God's dealings with us in Christ.

Verse 18.—“The eyes of your heart being enlightened.” (r.v.) It shows us the heart has eyes as well as the body, and that the eyes of the heart should be occupied with Christ, as much as the eyes of the body can gaze on the sun.

It is a thing of the affections. If your heart is disposed toward Christ rightly, you will begin to understand God's thoughts rightly.

Now follow three prayers, and very wonderful prayers they are. The more I keep my eye on Christ, the wiser I shall get with heavenly wisdom,—with eternal wisdom.

1. “That we may know what is the hope of His calling.” When God calls us, He gives us a hope. “The God of the hope.” (Rom. 15:13.) He calls us for something: what is that? Not merely to be saved and to go to heaven, but a distinct thing—“the hope of His calling.” Twice in this Epistle we read of “the hope of His calling,”—here and in chapter 4:4. The idea of “hope” is something in the future. We have not got all yet. “One hope.” It is very beautiful. It shows that all the people of God have one single hope. All that believe have precisely the same hope. “One hope:” a very important word is that word one. It shows that all the people of God will be lifted up together into heaven. The coming of Christ is the hope of the weakest, the poorest saint, as well as of the strongest and most advanced saint. The moment He gives the signal, every saint in all the whole world will go up. “The hope of His calling.” It implies that God's love in giving His Son to die for me, is not so great as in God's Son lifting me up to heaven along with Him. The

one is the means to the other. He fixes our eye, not merely on the Cross, but on the glory. Was it greater grace for Christ to come into my place, or to lift me up to His? It seems as if this passage answers the question.

2. "That ye may know what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." There are such a number of "ofs," one is quite overpowered. "His inheritance." God has an inheritance. In verse 14, we read of "our inheritance." God has an inheritance in prospect, so have we. What is God's inheritance? His saints. God has everything,—glory, grace,—but He wants vessels, and that is what He has in us. It is a wonderful thing that we should be God's inheritance,— "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." I read here of God's inheritance in the saints. He is not rich in possessing stars, but possessing sons. It is not His inheritance through the saints, but in them. That He might own us as His peculiar possession, His peculiar treasure. Rest assured He will carry out all His purposes and counsels. All we have to do is to have patience, and keep a good conscience, and if we study Christ, we shall learn His deep counsels. "The Lord's portion is His people." He needs poor sinners to enjoy all, as the sun needs the earth to shine upon, and He has got them.

"The riches of His glory." He wants to pour out His glory; He wants His saints to flood them with His grace and glory. Oh, this good God! If God wants us to know these things, we must study Christ. All these great prayers are that you may know Him. All to be made like Him! Oh, what a time it will be when we are all made like Christ? It seems almost too wonderful to be true.

3. Verse 19.—“What is the exceeding greatness of His power,” etc. When God raised Christ, He began a work which has been carried on until now. The same life with which He raised Christ, is the same resurrection power He puts in me. Christ was raised the third day, and the Church will be raised at His coming. “Destroy this Temple and I will raise it again.” Life is coming down from Christ. He is “the God of the living.” Every time you draw nigh to God, that is an exercise of divine power. You sometimes find it hard to believe: then, the power is not so acting upon you at that particular moment. When you enjoy the love of God and drink it in, then the power is being exercised in you. It is a power that sustains us in the believing. It requires God to keep the stars in existence every moment. “By Him all things consist.” So with us: we needed the power of God to enable us to come to Him at first, and we need the same power to enable us to keep on coming. These things are wonderful, for Paul prayed that we might know them. God grant we may know them.

Verses 19, 20.—That is the connection between us and the same power. It requires some power to lift up this Bible, but if there were heavy chains attached to it, it would require an extra amount of power. God begins to work upon our spirits: He will work upon our bodies in time. Now, when God lifted Christ out of the grave, it seemed comparatively easy, but a number of things were connected with it. When God raised Christ, all our spirits were dead, and He wanted to raise Christ and all our spirits too. When God lifted up Christ, He has lifted us up with Christ; and the process has been going on for 2,000 years. It was a wonderful feat on the part of Christ, to lift us from earth, and to get us to believe in

the love of God. It also points to heaven (verse 20): "And set Him at His own right hand."

"And you" (chapter 2:1, 5, 6). Chapter 1:21-23 is parenthetical. Leave out "hath he quickened," in chapter 2:1: it spoils the sense.

God, when He lifted up Christ, lifted up a tremendous, ponderous weight. It involved the quickening of our dead spirits. Every time a believer takes in more of the love of Christ, it is in connection with the resurrection of Christ. "He has made us sit together,"—that is, He has put us in His very presence. Suppose the chains were changed into wings: that is what God does with us. We were dead in sins; God raised Christ, and us in Christ; and instead of being dead, we delight to be in His presence. God has raised us and made us His children. Oh, what a wonderful God ours is!

With verse 20, read chapter 2:1, 5, 6. It is implied it is the masterpiece of God's work. It is a beautiful way of talking about God. "More to follow." But He wants more faith to follow,—to take in more of the love of God to-day than yesterday. When some verse comes with more power, you are feeding on the truth. I was reading John 17:24, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me," and never so enjoyed it before. Thus God is working to bring us to believe, and all in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When He has got all His predestinated ones to believe, He will raise our bodies in an instant; thus this mighty work in connection with the resurrection of Christ will be finished. (Romans 8:11). It is the Holy Ghost in me that enables me to say "Lord, I believe," and enjoy God,—it is the same power, and the Holy Ghost is to quicken my body when Christ

comes. The wicked will be raised by the fiat of Omnipotence,—the same power that made the stars. In Rev. 20:they are called “dead” three times, because the spirit is dead though the body is raised. He raises our spirits, and then gives us suitable bodies. (1 Cor. 15:45.) Jesus is a quickening Spirit. This poor mortal body, the subject of disease and infirmity, shall be raised. This is a wonderful passage.

“My spirit longs for thine embrace.” Like a bird seeking its home, my poor body holds it down, but God will put forth His power on the body as He has on the spirit. Chapter 2:2-4 are partly parenthetical. What a change when God does change my body. I can’t read my Bible as I like; there is a clog. Oh, to think of a body to help and not to clog! “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” After we are brought to believe, we are kept here on purpose that the little chink in the heart may get wider, and the darkness will go altogether. “The Lord direct your heart into the love of God.” (2 Thess. 3:8.) Our hearts are dull and dark by nature, and God pours out His love that at last we believe in the love of God (what a strange thing!) and come to believe in it more and more. Every time you feed on the Scriptures you grow. It’s a grand thing to take in a little more of the meaning of a text. “The darkness is passing.” I wish it were passing more from my heart. God is scattering it, and we are getting more into the love of God. I believe in the love of God more than I did ten years ago, but the more I know, the more it makes me long to know. God is my Father, the Friend who loves me most.

Verse 22.—Grand words these are, the winding up of verse 21. “All things under His feet” (verse 21). It implies our Lord Jesus Christ is in the place of intimacy;

the One who has taken up our cause is where creatures never came. "Far above all principality." Jesus is also the Head of the Church: we shall see it more by contrast. See where the devil is (chap. 2:2). "The prince of the power of the air." How different to Christ, as respects exaltation. The sphere—the air, and Christ up there in the presence of God, where Christ and God can have that glory with Christ.

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church in three senses.

1. As regards fulness. Everything that God can create in us in the way of want is supplied in Christ. All fulness dwells in Him. All life is in Him. First, God trusted it to Adam. He ruined His work. God does not trust the source, the spring of a new life to us; it is in Christ. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3.) So believers can't perish till the Head is touched. The life is in the Head. He raised Christ first, and you. 1. God raised up Christ. 2. Christ raised Himself, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it." 3. He was "quickened by the Spirit." All cooperate in the resurrection. As long as Christ lives, I live. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." All in Christ. In fact, there is so much in Christ, we could not tell everything; and a great deal more than we do or can want is in Christ.

2. Christ is the Head of all authority. "Head over all things to the Church." Christ's will is our law, Christ's commands we are to attend to, we should always ask, "Will it exalt Christ?" "We should give the Lord His place. People want to get a republic,—rule from beneath, like the toes of the image, clay. God knows nothing of that. The Lord Jesus, He is to be supreme. We gladly give

Thee the homage of our hearts. “He is the Lord thy God, worship thou Him.”

3. Christ is Head of all affection. Eph. 5:25-29 shows that so sweetly. Oh, to think what an intensely divine yet human love is in our Lord Jesus Christ for us,—“to the church, which is His body.” Wonderful love! One single, divine piece of mechanism, this mystical body, Christ and all His members. He wouldn’t be full without us. Like as a man is not complete without his wife, so Christ is not complete without His Church—any more than the Head would be complete without the body. God contrived this all in love; Christ wrought this all in grace. He could have done without us, but now that He has died, He could not do without us. He has got nothing but in association with us, blessed be His Name. “Complete (or filled full) in Him.” See the difference: when it says, Col. 2:9, 10, “filled full in Him,” it shows He is our fulness; in Eph. 1, we are His fulness,—“the fulness of Him,”—we go to fill Him up. He is incomplete without us. “Ye are filled full in Him.” The church is His fulness, and Christ is our fulness. It has been compared to a cup and saucer,—each requires the other: the one is the completeness of the other. Your completeness is Christ. He needs us; we need Him. He cannot do without us; we cannot do without Him. Blessed be His Name!

Chapter 2

The thought of this passage is—striving to be greater. The god of this world is the devil. All fleshly rivalry, is to be a little bit greater or grander, or excelling one's fellows. "We walked." Doing the works of the flesh,—emulation, strife. The mind,—the devil in all, ruling over all. "The spirit that now worketh." Contrast chapter 1:20: God working,— which He wrought in Christ, which He energized in Christ. God's energy lifting us up to that height where no creature, as such, could ever reach. Here is the devil's energy, leading men to act according to this world. Then we were dead, and God comes in, in grace, and lifts us to His own presence. The children of the world have no heart for being lifted up where God is. We were such. God's crash of judgment will come down when we get to that height of glory, as on the Tower of Babel, Nebuchadnezzar, and Haman. God has delivered us from all this. (Jer. 45:5.)

Make me little and unknown;

Loved by God, and God alone.

Instead of caring to be great in the opinion of our fellows, we are to be great in the Judgment of God: in God's favour, His smile, His love.

Verse 7.—"Ages which are advancing." This is one of the few hints in Scripture about the eternal state. The chief passages are Rev. 21:1-8, 1 Cor. 15:27, 28. A glimpse is given in 2 Peter 3, "We look for new heavens." During the millennium, sin will be in the world. Christ will be reigning as Son of Man. In eternity, God will be "All in all."

Verse 7.—This is a very precious verse. God will not have done with us, no, not when He has brought us into His presence. We might have thought when He had raised us up and seated us together with Him, we should have got to the end; but it is only the beginning. He will be going on and on. Look what He has done in the past. 1. Put away sin. 2. Given everlasting life. Can God go beyond that? Oh, yes. What next? The Holy Ghost has come down and been given to believers. What more? “Strengthened with might by His Spirit,” etc. The Holy Ghost is given on purpose to make plenty of room for Christ. What more? “That Christ may dwell.” (Chap. 3:16-19.) That you may get up to know God (verse 20, 21). Anyhow, we shall get home some day and get beyond that. “In the ages to come,” etc. “Thou shalt see greater things than these.” God has two ways of showing. 1. To show to sight alone. 2. To sight and feeling too. Angels learn the first, saints the second.

In eternity He will be done with the creature, and the creature will be done with itself, and occupied alone with God. Oh, to think of “the exceeding riches of His grace.” We have not learned that yet. To all eternity God is going on. Oh, what a future this opens to us.

“In His kindness to us.” We are the objects of it; we may enjoy it. The only persons He could expend this on, were those He had got up from the very depths of woe. That He may lift them out of all their filthiness of sin, and have all the glory to Himself. Those who know most of God will most glorify Him. “Ages to come.” God fixes our eye on the future, as well as the past. Ages past, show us our badness: ages to come, God’s goodness.

Verse 8.—“Ye are saved.” Not ought to be. Saved from what? From self, the flesh, everything that you were, out of it. Risen life. I am a saved man. Positively, towards God; negatively, from all I was. Grace gives me salvation, faith takes it. Think of two hands, God’s loving hand and your little finger of faith, (Rom. 1:16). The old nature is in us, we are not in it. When the temptation comes, say, “I cannot; I am a saved man.” These are, as it were, bells from heaven, “Ye are saved.” These words could not have been written till Christ said, “It is finished.”

Verses 9, 10.—What a contradiction that sounds. That is a specimen of many others in Scripture. If we are saved, we are created for “good works.” “In Christ Jesus.”

Christ Jesus, refers to the Lord in resurrection. The idea is, a risen Christ, risen men. We belong to Him up there.

“That we should walk in them.” What good works? (Ch. 4:1, 2). If God has lifted us up so high, no need to strive to be great: grace can let everything go. Jesus was the Son of God, therefore He was lowly. So He says to us who are saved, walk “with all lowliness and meekness.” So in (Phil. 2:1-3). We can afford to be lowly minded, seeing we are so exalted in Christ. God took particular care to map out what are good works. If we are saved to joy in God, trust all and leave everything to God. Copy Jesus. God was His Father. He let God vindicate Him “leaving us an example,” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Verses 11-17.—This passage shows how Jew and Gentle become one. Verse 11: “Wherefore remember,” etc. He firsts puts me right at the top, and then tells me to look down. Oh, what a way I have to look! We learn that when in heaven we shall look down and remember what

we were, and from what we have been saved. Plenty of cause to be humbled.

Seven things to remember. Verses 11, 12: A Jew was naturally a religious man; a Gentile, an irreligious. The distinction originated with God. Christ was “the Light to lighten the Gentiles,” or to bring them to light. Without hope; without God,—Atheists. God would have us remember it. What an awful condition I was in, when His mighty hand lifted me out of it.

Verse 13.—“Far off,” the Gentile; “nigh,” the Jew. The blood of Christ brings God near to man, and man nigh to God. The blood was shed to gratify the heart of God. “Let us draw near.” (Heb. 10:20). One is experimental, the other doctrinal. Once “far off,” “without Christ,” “without God,” now nigh, with Christ, a good hope. I have got to God, God is my Father, Christ my Saviour. A good hope, He will come again. The blood does the whole thing (Rev. 5). See Rom. 5:9, 10: “What is called the blood in verse 9, is explained to be death in verse 10. The outpoured life, the surrendered life.

Verse 14.—“The middle wall of partition.” That is, between Jew and Gentile.

Verses 15-13.—Jew and Gentile; now both one new man in a risen Christ. How are believers to be banded together? Christ is God’s way of union. We have one life. What a blessed way is God’s.

There are three things about Christ and peace. Verse 14: “He is our peace.” Verse 15: He makes peace. Verse 17: He preaches peace. How intent He is that we should have peace: “Peace be unto you.” “Preaching peace” here refers to John 20: It also refers to peace between two believers, Jew and Gentile. Join verses 11-14: both

have the same nature. "Of twain, one new man." When we live on Christ, the more do we feel drawn to each other. God's remedy for everything is Christ. What a full Christ He is! The Devil seeks to draw all believers from Christ. To the spiritual Christian he comes as "an angel of light." What is to hinder in my soul every atom of unquiet? Himself: "That in Me ye might have peace." Christ the Preacher, His servants the under preachers. Christ is continually telegraphing peace down to my soul from the throne of God. If I want something besides Christ in my life, I shall not have peace in my heart. There will be unquietness.

Jesus, Thou art enough

The mind and heart to fill.

Verse 18—"Both have access," still Jew and Gentile. In verse 16: "Reconciled to God." Verse 18: Access to the Father. After the cross, all is settled. There is great exactness in Scripture. "One new man," a new creation, (ch. 4:13, Rev. 12:5, Col. 3:20 and 1:12). "Meet," through having the new nature, to enjoy the inheritance. "Reconciled to God" is a thing done for ever. "Access to the Father" is constant. May it be so now. Ch. 3:12: "Access with confidence." It is a precious little word: not afraid of God. We may run to Him, get into His presence, abide there, feel at home there. Chap. 6:12: These will try and keep us from being in our proper place.

"We have access." Many things in the New Testament we have. We have "peace," a "Great High Priest," "boldness," "access." It is our proper portion, our proper place,—right up to Him, where Christ is, where God is,—there is our home.

Verse 18.—Father, Son and Holy Ghost mentioned. Oh, to think, that every Person in the Godhead is interested in our drawing nigh to God,—Christ the way, the Holy Ghost the power. When I draw nigh to God, Christ takes me by the hand, the Holy Ghost fills my heart, and God bends His ear to listen. The children of the world are taken up with transitory matters, God with the whispers of His children. Have I a care? I have a Father, I have access, I have a welcome, a privilege to come at any time and tell my Heavenly Father all about it.

Verse 19.—“No more strangers.” This is not ourselves drawing the deduction, but God Himself. If I have access, I can’t be a stranger. How kind of God,— as if He were so intent upon setting us at our ease in His presence,—to be in the habit of telling Him everything, one of His own family. How wonderful.

Verse 20.—It means the prophets of the New Testament. Thank God, there is a Corner-stone, Jesus Christ Himself. “The Lord Himself shall descend,” etc. My soul is to lean on Him: have to do with Him.

Verse 21.—“In whom every building,” etc. When there are a few souls gathered around Christ, there is a building. Christ first, Christ last, that is the great thing.

Verse 22.—“In whom,” etc. “In Christ,” put three times over. Let Christ be the Centre. “Ye are builded,” etc. May the Lord save us from all wilfulness, and give the blessed Son of God His place.

Chapter 3

Gentiles should be heirs together, a body together, and partakers together” Together is mentioned three times.

Then three times over in this section we read of the “mystery.” That is explained in verse 5. Something not made known, but revealed now. The great mystery, Christ and the Church. God is putting His saints together. After the flood, God dealt with individuals, then families, then nations. Now God is taking people of all sorts, ages, races, uniting them to the Head up there, and by the Holy Ghost uniting them down here. The subject of Romans is the Gospel; in the end of Romans the Holy Ghost gives a hint that God has something more to disclose (chapter 16:25-26). God gives a hint that the Holy Spirit would bring out what is revealed here (verses 3, 4). The formation of the mystical body of which Christ is the Head (Rom. 15:8-12). God had largely revealed that He was going to save Gentiles, but here it means Christ and the Church, —Christ the Head, we the members, all knit together in one. The same life, same Spirit, same standing, same love of the Father, same home, same everything. A body, and that body called the Church (chap. 5:30), ultimately the Bride. (Rev. 21)

Verse 3.—A distinct revelation. It is God’s will that we should help one another, live for one another, in preparation for the time when the Bride shall be manifested. God is at work during all these centuries of sorrow, fashioning His Bride for Jesus to present to Himself on the resurrection morn. God is pursuing His

purpose silently, slowly, all through this painful night, but it will be seen all beautiful at last.

Verses 7, 8.—“The unsearchable riches of Christ,” in God through the worthiness of Christ, being able to lift up sinners and make them one with His beloved Son. God raised up Paul, and to him was given to bring out the doctrine of the Church. We see our beautiful place. We are to think of the Head. He thinks of the body.

The greatness of this work of God abases Paul, and makes him speak of himself in terms of self-abasement. It makes him feel his own littleness, that God should use him to make this mystery known. “Unsearchable riches of Christ” still refers to this wonderful display of it, that God should be able to fashion a body suitable and fit for the Head in heaven. It must be through the exceeding value of the preciousness of Christ.

Verses 9, 10.—“Hid in God.” Reserved for the time, till after His Son had come and been rejected, on purpose to tell out the infinite unutterable worth of His beloved Son. Every member of the Church displays the love of God and the work of Christ. All the patience exhibited, the tender, loving dealing of our heavenly Father to each member, goes to display it. “The manifold wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:27-31.) The Wisdom of God is displayed in three ways—righteousness, sanctification and redemption of the body. Here there is something more added—“the manifold wisdom,” fold within fold; the more you understand these things, the more you see them. These things ought to awe our spirits. When Paul thought of the wondrous love of Christ he bowed his knees. The very angels learn something of the manifold wisdom of God. Not fallen angels here, as in chapter 6,

but holy angels. "Power" means authority: (1 Cor. 11:19). The hair of a woman should be long, in token that she is under subjection to her husband: so the Church is under subjection to Christ. Angels are learning how God can take lost sinners and make them His own authority in His own house. Angels are to learn God's excellencies in His kindness to us.

Verse 11.—How wonderful is His eternal purpose! The Holy Ghost teaches what it is, and our share in it— our own position in the Church of God. It is a grand thing to be a member of the Church of God. Let us wait God's time, and be content till Jesus comes.

Verse 14.—It is a great thing to have the heart open in reading Scriptures like this. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts" There are two great prayers in Ephesians, chap. 1 and here. The first is more for the mind, the second for the heart, "To know the love of Christ; that the love of Christ may so overpower the soul, that you may be on your faces before God.

The theme is the love of Christ. What a theme that is. Why is it put in here? In preparation for chap, 5, about the Church being the Bride of Christ. Every bridegroom should love his bride. If the marriage is not for love, it is not a holy, healthy, happy marriage. Here we are sure it was for love, specially on the part of the Bridegroom. We have been spoken of as sons of God, a building, a body: what can be more? A Bride. In all marriages love ought to precede marriage, though it may increase after; only with Christ He cannot love more. Hold tight that the Church is the Bride of Christ, the highest feature of the love of Christ. The love of Christ is being conveyed in love-messages to the soul by the Holy Ghost. In chap. 1

the prayer is addressed to the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ: here to "the Father," who will join the hands in time, and pronounce them one.

Verse 15.—"Every family." If we want that love to be our portion, we must give up everything that indisposes us for the enjoyment of that love.

"The riches of His power." The great display of the power of God is "glory." God is going to do this by the "power of His glory." The Spirit works by strengthening our faith; when we believe, to make us believe more. "Kept by the power of God." "The love of God is poured out." As love becomes more real, Christ is more at home as it were.

Verse 17.—"That Christ may dwell." Faith puts out feelers like a plant in all directions, and takes hold of the soil. What a beautiful soil is the love of Christ! The love of Christ is past, present and future. Past: is not all the truth, "Who loved me." Present: there is the love of Christ to-day as our High Priest, Intercessor, behind a heart of love that leads Him to do all things. His whole heart set upon it, His whole soul in the work. Future: the love of the Bridegroom. "Christ loved the Church:" love before union. What bridegroom loved his bride as Christ the Church? Oh, it is delightful to be loved. Every man likes to be loved, however cold he may be. "To Him who loves us" (Rev. 1:4). "Having loved His own" (John 13:1). Every time there is a good thought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, it is the love of Christ. Every time we are kept from doing something wrong, it is the love of Christ. When He has got us to Himself He will be satisfied. He has just got what He wanted.

“Rooted and grounded in love.” Your experience “of Christ’s love the Holy Ghost compares to a little tiny feeler of a plant. There are piles and piles of Christ’s love that we never have enjoyed. We may know more in the head, but not enjoy it and live on it in the heart. It does not speak very highly of us: “Rooted and grounded.” So in the Epistle of John,— all are called “little children” (1 John 2:12) fathers and all.

Verse 18.—“May be able to comprehend”—to grasp. To hold it. It is a thing for the heart to be exercised upon. Nothing in Him contrary to the new nature. The more we know of Him, the more are we gladdened and joyous.

Verse 19.—“To all the fulness of God.” God goes on. He wants us to grow in “the knowledge of Him.” May we chew the cud, and see to it that our foot is divided,—that as our heads are filled, our hearts may be exercised.

What a mercy these are the very desires of our hearts, the very things our God wants to give us. His love, not our love. “Rooted” denotes the love getting down. “Grounded” refers to the foundation, and on that build the superstructure,—it looks at the love getting up. What a delightful thing to think the love of Christ passes my knowledge. It is pleasant to be loved, more to be loved a good deal. Here is One whose love “passes knowledge.” One passage says, “We shall see Him as He is.” Another, we shall “know as we are known,” a third “when that which is perfect is come.” This passage says, “To know the love of Christ,” etc. If the love of Christ is infinite, we must be infinite to know it.

Verse 20.—Not can ask or think, but do ask or think. We ought to ask more.

Verse 21.—The Lord gets His praise specially from the Church.

God would have us be occupied with this love. By nature men care for the esteem of their fellow men (chap. 4:1, 2). What does it matter whether we are despised or honoured by men when there is that love of Christ? He cuts you from things here. He takes away the rush-lights to give you the sun. Let us study the love of Christ as the Holy Ghost reveals it in the Word.

It is a great relief to the soul. If you can't grasp it, God can do it; He will discover it to us. He is able. "Now unto him, who is able." Oh, this power of God exerted to enable us to grasp this love of Christ. God is intent upon your knowing He loves you very much indeed. What food for the soul! That is a nice little prayer "Stay me with flagons." (Song of Solomon 2:3.) "Oh, I want so to know Thy love. Lord Jesus, give me draughts of it. Comfort me with apples." I want to devour it. Don't let us indulge ourselves in anything contrary to it, for His Spirit is easily grieved. Nothing hinders like giving way to the flesh. Do we covet to know the love of Christ? The Bible should send us to our knees, and prayer should drive us to the Bible.

"According to the power that worketh in us." "Kept by the power of God." Guarding, shielding us from extreme foes. Here in us to occupy us with Christ, God is evidently at work to fill you up in Christ. He wants us to praise Him.

Verse 21.—"Unto Him be glory." "Throughout all the generations of ages of ages." God is going to get praise from the Church for ever. "This people have I formed for Myself, that they should shew forth My praise."

Chapter 4

“Therefore I beseech you,” etc. If Christ loves us so, and God, what do you want with anything else? That is yours; let go everything else down here. The heart must be taken up with something. God says look at the love of Christ; let that satisfy you. He fills you with heaven that you may let go everything the heart craves after.

“I beseech you;” not command you. Some things are only hinted in the Word; the child of God should be sharp to catch His will.

Ephesians is divided into two parts—chapters 1 to 3 about Christ’s love to us; the last three chapters to beseeching us to walk correspondingly. As we don’t enjoy the love of Christ, we don’t walk in the Spirit (verses i, 2). This is the first piece of God’s entreaty. I have put you so high, be lowly.

“All lowliness;” not sometimes, not lowly outside, and the reverse inside “I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29.) “With longsuffering,” etc. Beautiful words. God grant that we may commend them to one another in practice, forbearing one another. I would to God it were more so in my life. He spares me that He may get a new thing into me. If older in grace than others, then these graces ought to be more marked. They have to be learned. “Learn of Me.” That’s the way. To copy Jesus. There is a spurious love, and gentleness which is fleshly—natural amiability; persons can be soft, silky and oily, who are full of sarcasm.

Verse 3.—“There is one body;” not try to make one. Christians strive after uniformity, instead of unity. God

works from within. The way for hearts to be drawn together, is to make Christ the centre. To gather on the ground of the one Head, not of the one body. How is it to be done? "In the bond of peace;" in the co-bond of peace; which puts the two hearts in one. (Col. 3:12, 14.) Two ways of growing, "Knowledge puffs up; love builds up." (1 Cor. 8:1.)

Verses 4, 5, 6.—Seven unities divided into two threes. 1. One body, one Spirit, one hope. The Church, Spirit in the Church, directing the eye to the Hope. 2. About Christ, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Takes in all believers; the larger scope. 3: "One God and Father," etc.

Verse 4.—"Even as," throws the weight on the Hope (Rev. 22:17; Heb. 3:6). Something beyond the Hope; to rejoice about it. The object of the Hope is to excite your joy. Joy is a substance, something one can appreciate. "One Hope." worldly people have twenty hopes; we have one between us to share altogether, —a tremendous Hope. "The hope of the calling" begins with God's call; then the next step, "the Hope." God always likes to go on. It is substantial, real.

Verse 5.—"Denying our only Master and Lord" (Jude 4). "One Faith." Obedience is trusting Him. When I want my own will, I don't trust Him. "One baptism;" that is in water. Faith precedes baptism.

Verse 6.—Striking variation, "in you all;" that shows limitation.

Verse 7.—"Every one, grace." Redeemed by the same blood, loved, with the same love, indwelt by the same Spirit, all stand on the same ground, all to be brought to the same home.

Verse 8.—Three points. 1. The eye fixed on Christ in glory. It means the Man. There is a Man on the throne of God looking after us, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth. 2. “He led captivity captive.” The devil led us captive and now he is Christ’s captive. 3. “Gave gifts.” It assumes that until Christ died and rose again, everything was to be done. Now every enemy is worsted. The “rebellious” (Psalm 68:18) left out, because the insubjection has been overcome; it would not be proper to call the church of God, “rebels;” we are His children, His friends, saints. We were rebels, but we desire to be in thorough subjection to our one Lord. In the Psalm, “He received gifts for men;” here, “He gives gifts unto men.” God has given Him gifts, but He does not want them for Himself; He gives.

Verse 9.—Exactly opposite to verse 10, to impress upon us that wherever Jesus is, He is the same. As He loved us on the cross, so He loves us now, and when He comes again. The same Heavenly Lover. Before He could ascend, He must descend. Think what an exalted High Priest and Lord we have. “He has gone far above,” etc. He came down from there: think what a Saviour and Lord we have. The argument is this. Who has gone up so high? The Person who “humbled Himself, and made Himself of no reputation,” who took upon Him the form of a servant, who walked with all lowliness and meekness. The person who ascended came down. Is your hope to go up, and be with Jesus? Remember He came down. Who is our Lord? He that descended; stopped at nothing, was despised, misunderstood. The great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls descended. We hardly realize we shall never lose by making ourselves of no reputation. “We did think He would have redeemed

Israel," etc. God put Him on His throne. "With all lowliness "to trust Him. "The lower parts of the earth." "The Abyss," bottomless pit, the heart of the earth. His sufferings were over on the Cross, but He went down into the lower parts of the earth. Now He has gone up to the throne of God. What a descent! What an ascent! The way to heaven is a subterranean way.

Verse 11.—"He gave some apostles," etc. To do His work on earth, He keeps on giving. There are two marks of an apostle. He has seen the Lord. He has been sent by Him. Strictly speaking there are no apostles now, only in a subordinate sense. A prophet is one who can unveil the mind of the Lord to a soul walking in darkness. Pastor and teacher may refer to the same person, one who can serve by teaching. An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel. Having more to do with sinners, and getting at souls.

Verse 12.—For the perfectly fitting of the saints in two ways. 1. "For the work of the ministry." 2. "For the building up of the body of Christ." The Lord gives all these things, may we keep our eye on the Lord.

Verse 13.—"Till we all come," etc. As we have not yet come, it is implied that these gifts are continued to the present day. Gifts in 1 Cor. 14:are not promised to the end. "Till we all come." Oh! what a work God is doing.

Verses 14, 15.—The remedy for all bad doctrine is Christ. It implies as if there were plenty of bad doctrine about. Men do it by cunning craftiness, giving distorted views of truth. "Grow up into Him." The way to avoid bad doctrine is to attentively survey Christ. There is Christ up there in the glory; we are united to Him by the

Holy Ghost, and we are to study Him and so get stronger.

Verse 16.—Christ our Head, and all of us taking our proper place under Him; all life and nourishment, power and growth coming from the Head. When God looks at the Head, He sees the body.

Verses 17, 18.—The way is traced in which this life is to be developed. He begins by showing how we were in a state of death. 1. “In the vanity of their mind,” empty. 2. “Mind darkened.” 3. “Alienated from the life of God.” Did not understand God, His love and grace. (Col. 1:21.) “Alienated from the life of God,” means from the very source and fountain of life. “The Son quickeneth whom He will.” There was death and darkness in our souls. “This is life eternal, to know Thee.” (John 17:3.)

Verse 19.—If we get away from God there is not a sin we may not fall into. What an awful state we were in by nature. All that sin is in our hearts.

Verse 20.—“But ye have not so learned Christ.” The idea is, Do you want to see your standing before God? Christ, the Anointed One, and Christians—anointed ones, stand together. What a change between verses 19 and 20. It also implies, we are learners of our standing, of our completeness and safety in Christ. God make us to enjoy these things as well as talk about them.

Verse 21.—He has to teach us “line upon line.” “As the truth is in Jesus.” “I am the Truth.” What is truth? Truth about God. The glory of God revealed in Him. Peter saw himself there. If we study God as revealed by Christ, we shall see what lost sinners we are. For us Christ had to hang on the cross. “Truth in Jesus” refers to His life all through before God and man. “I am the Truth.” Jesus

told the truth about the world, and He told all the heart of God. All outside Jesus is a lie.

Verses 22-24.—These words “put off” and “put on” in the original are in the past tense—have put off, etc. as in Col. 3:9. To put off anger, because you have put off the old man.

Verse 24.—“A new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). I am to live as a risen man. Everything hangs on Christ, and we are to follow Jesus. “Have put off.” “Have put on,” what a perfect deliverance. We have the flesh in us, but God gives us deliverance in this way. God does two things: Forgives my sins, and delivers me from my old nature, by grafting me into a risen Christ. Verse 21, is literally “In the Jesus.” That One who came from the bosom of the Father, and told out His heart of love, that is the One.

Verse 24.—“True holiness,” no ceremonial holiness. It denotes a very intense thing. A delight in God, (Phil. 4:8).

Verse 25 and following, apply to those things in everyday life. God takes notice of matters we might be tempted to think unimportant. The Apostle appeals to us by the love of God, the Holy Ghost and Christ to have done with sin. It is an appeal for holy living by the love that has been shown to us by each Person in the Godhead. How affecting! There is an allusion also to the commandments, though we are not under law. All negatives were the old, but if grace has been given and the Holy Ghost is in us, we are exhorted to keep from sin.

Verse 26.—Be angry at nothing but sin; don’t be angry about your own interests but God’s. Take care of God’s,

and God will take care of yours. "Let not the sun go down upon your exasperation" If exasperation is not stopped, it will degenerate into hatred.

Verse 27.—Not only to not do that which is wrong, but do what is right: and we have power, there is nothing we cannot do. "I can do all things through Christ."

Verse 29.—God tells us a deal of what comes out of our mouth. We are surrounded with shams. There is a deal made of what goes in. The Lord keep us from all such spurious Christianity! O Lord write on our hearts, "Not that which goeth into a man defileth." Don't let lewd things come out of the mouth, but good things "that may minister grace to the hearers."

Verse 30-32 to ch. 5:2. Three wonderful appeals to walk in this holy, happy way. Think of being sealed by the Holy Ghost; of the love of God in Christ forgiving you; and of Christ giving Himself. One would think they were too grand for such simple things. Life is not made up of a few grand things, but a great number of trivial circumstances. God would have us control even our ordinary conversation, He would have us weigh our words, control our thoughts. 1 Cor. 6 says—Don't commit fornication, for don't you know your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? God brings these great realities to influence us in everyday life, and yet we are prone to forget them.

Verse 30.—"Day of redemption," Redemption in right is a fact, not a power. (Chap. 1:14.) Of all He purchased. He bought the whole of you, He will have everything, not "a hoof left behind." (Rom. 8:23.) Redemption in Power and Glory: when He asserts His right in power. Have them He must, blessed be His name. Our part

reminds me of the book of Ruth, "Sit still my daughter, for the man will not be in rest, until He hath finished the thing." We are to take care not to let the flesh reign in us, for all is His by right. "We are sealed." Did He redeem me? There is the mark. When Jesus has bought me, He puts the mark. Every time you walk after the Spirit, other people can see the mark; when you enjoy fellowship with God in the closet, you feel the mark. God knows them that are His. We are "to depart from iniquity." The main point is, Think of the Holy Ghost condescending to dwell in us. What a wonderful thing that is, "I will dwell in the high and holy place," etc. It is by little matters the Holy Ghost is grieved, either by giving way to the flesh or by not walking after the Spirit. Wonderful, that God should take such pains, such amazing pains, with such hell-deserving sinners. God is doing every thing He can to bless us, and He can only bless us by making us holy. Between the first and second appeal, appears again verse 31.

Verse 31.—"Forgiving one another" should be "forgiving yourselves,"—as if all were one, and if we wronged others we wronged ourselves. "Even as God in Christ hath forgiven you." As a matter of doctrine, God has forgiven all our sins, but He forgives in practical detail every time we confess. "Don't let any corrupt communication," etc. I have forgiven you. "The love of God is poured out," etc. These are pathetic appeals for holy walking. God expects us to be very precise and upright, for He is holy. Let us show grace, but take care of righteousness. We should always begin at the top, and what we are in Christ. We should be always correcting our experience and walk by this wonderful love of God. Don't let there be any bitterness or wrath, for God in

Christ has forgiven you. Let us get a correct view of God. God could not forgive us as He wanted to do until the Cross. Before the Cross He loved us, but His love was blocked up by our sins. He is a righteous God.

Chapter 5

“Be ye therefore followers of God,” etc. (This chapter should be joined to the last). We are all prone to imitate those that we admire, those that we love. “Be ye imitators of God.” He won’t do anything for us but for the highest reason. God in Christ’s love to us. Correct everything in your walk by what you are in Christ, else your walk will be very incorrect. “Be ye imitators of God.” “Walk as dear children of God.” Sometimes you can see the ways of a father in a child, as well as his likeness in the face.

Verse 2.—“Walk in love.” Beloved children. By practise it gets more natural to walk in love, walk in light, walk actively. “Walk in love as Christ has loved us.”

Throughout there is an appeal. Oh, that you may know the love of Christ. He expects that His love should be reciprocated. The Bride and Bridegroom drawn together, and then He will come and meet her. “An offering and a sacrifice to God.” It is an allusion to the burnt offering. An odour of Christ’s sacrifice, very savoury to God. We are told we are loved from everlasting, the odour of that love of Christ reaching from everlasting. You can’t be surprised at one going to Paradise, though he was a thief. I think how full must be that sweet odour in the heaven of heavens. Are you surprised that God bears with your poor prayers and that you get such beautiful answers? There is the odour of the incense, that is the reason for it. What a beautiful thing it is when we try to please God; our faint endeavours are perfumed in this way. (Phil. 4:18.) “Christ gave Himself for us,” an odour of a sweet smell

before God. God says, “Don’t do so and so, for Christ died for you.”

Verses 3-4.—“Foolish talking “put along with fornication, as if all comes from the flesh. The one may be a speck, the other far bigger, but God puts them together.

Nothing to provoke a laugh in heaven. “Which are not convenient,” it means they don’t fit a son of God; such a walk and such a talk, they don’t match. Satan will try and bring you down to unguarded language, but if you are overflowing, giving thanks, you will not give way.

Verse 6.—“Let no man deceive you.” If I do believe in Christ, I am a changed man. If I am not changed, I believe as the devils—they believe and tremble. It is one thing to believe in Christ, and another to believe you are saved; our faith gives us the victory over the world and over the flesh. We should be changed as to our tongues, our thoughts; our affections should be set on things above. If we are God’s children He expects us to be holy. He has given us the Holy Ghost and the glory, which gives us the power.

Verse 11.—“Have no fellowship, with the unfruitful work of darkness.” We are children of the light and we can’t love the darkness.

Verse 9.—“The fruit of the light”—that is the proper rendering. We are to live as sunbeams, prove it, show it out to the world. Righteousness is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Verse 14.—“Awake thou that sleepest.” Rise up from among the dead ones and Christ will give you light. Obedience is the way to get light. God expects you to obey first, and then He will give you more light. In Jeremiah 32:we read that God told Jeremiah to to buy a

field just when the land was going to be devastated by Nebuchadnezzar. He did as he was told. When he had obeyed God and bought the land, then he asked God what it meant. It seemed contradictory. So in the new Testament, Jesus told the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth. He might have said, "I cannot," but he stretched it out, and in doing as he was told, he got strength. If you want to see clearly, be obedient. There is always blessing in obedience. (See 2 Cor.6:17, 18.) Think of God pointing out the way we may enjoy His love. We are to obey according as He marks our path before us, then He gives us more joy and peace as we go on acting out. Particularly separate from the dead ones. We have no business to worship with the dead. Thus we become like the Lord Jesus Himself. There is a striking passage in Rom. 1:3, 4. Christ was the Son of God before, but God marked Him by resurrection "from out of the dead ones," so when we believe in God we have everlasting life and come out from the dead ones. He will mark out who are His sons by the voice of Christ, and the sons of God will come out from the tomb. God is now making us hear the voice of Christ in our spirits. As we get light we are to act out that light.

Verse 15.—"See that you walk circumspectly." It is in the original "accurately,"—walk as a resurrection man. Does it become me as a risen man to act so? How would an angel act in Regent Street? Would he look in every shop with longing eyes? If we see a drunken man, are we to laugh? No, an angel would weep. Is that like the path of a resurrection man? If you have any doubt, see that you "walk accurately."

Verse 16.—"Redeeming the time." It should be "opportunity." The opportunity to know more of His will.

You are threading your way through this wilderness to another world where all is beautiful.

Verse 17.—The meaning is this. The Lord expects that you will care to please Him, to have a tender conscience, a single eye, to tremble at the thought of sin. He has given His blood to get you. Read verses 14 and 17 together, just to get the thought. The great secret is to keep clear from communion with dead souls. If we do realise that the blood of Jesus was shed, God says, “Will you value My will more than anything else?” “I will, Lord.” And when you are separated from the dead and stand with Christ, plenty of things will appear very different to what they did before; then you will see your difficulties clear away and everything be made plain. If two Christians differ one must be wrong. They should not agree to differ, they should pray to God to make it right. If our walk is inaccurate, we are stumbling at some part of the Scripture. (See 2 Tim. 3:16.) Rest assured we are spiritually squinting. It is the effect of the heart, not of the eye.

This Word is an appeal to our love. “Do you love me? Find out My will.” “But Your will is difficult.” “You get out from among the dead ones, I will give you light.” He begins by telling them His love, and making them obedient; they wonder they have been in darkness so long.

Verse 18.—See 1 Peter 4:4. “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.”

Verse 19.—Oh, what a life that is! A Christian ought to be a happy man, if anybody is.

Verse 20.—To know that what comes, comes from the Father's hands. Thus to know that God takes care of us. He watches over us to do us good; we are to walk in faith.

Verse 21.—Though there is a making melody, there is a reverential, not slavish, fear. We don't want to displease Him, and so we are to be on our guard.

Verse 22.—“Wives, submit,” etc. It is the way of the Lord to put in grace the weaker first,—the wives before the husbands, children before the parents, and when it says “unto the Lord,” it teaches us that the Lord has established subordination, one under another. May we acquiesce in His arrangement, and what a way it is of God. Here we see that speaking of the wife and her subordination is used to introduce the grand truth of the church to Christ. In the former chapters, God has been looking on all believers as Sons, then as a Temple, then a Body, then here a Bride. Like as Eve was taken out of the body of Adam to be fashioned as His bride.

Verse 30.—“We are members of His body,” etc. The one denotes union, the other relationship. The church as the bride denotes that she appreciates His love, that she loves Him, that her affections are His and His are hers.

On Saturday night God made Eve, and this is particularly the Saturday night of the world. God is now bringing it to see its emptiness.

Verse 27.—There is only one, the church glorious. Adam did not present Eve to himself, the Lord God brought her unto Adam; but here Christ Himself brings her to Himself. The Holy Ghost says seven things. 1. Christ loved the Church. 2. He gave Himself for it. 3. He sanctifies it. 4. He cleanses it. 5. He nourishes it. 6. He

cherishes it. 7. That He might present it. The first two. Each believer can say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20.) Christ sanctifies, washing our feet. (John 13:3-6.) He cherishes the church, that is, He warms her. Christ will present the church; Christ will present me. In the Epistle of Jude, “He is able to keep, and to present us,” etc. Every particle of the church is so dear to God. No husband so loves his wife as to love every particle of her. We can appropriate every one of these in particular, and yet how little we value them. “Christ loved the church,” etc. Christ “nourisheth;” that is provides food, “cherisheth,” warmeth. Every time your soul is refreshed and strengthened, that is Christ doing it. He likes giving whole loaves. Sometimes when your spirit feels depressed, and you feel as if you were in a valley, then He warms your soul by the smiles of His face. To nourish, “that He might present.” So that even now when He gives us food, His purpose is to present us faultless under His eye. Don’t let us leave out any of these sevens—one future, two past, four present. It looks as if present were the most important, then the tiptop one future. What He will do.

Verse 26.—“Sanctify and cleanse.” There is a difference; cleanse it from impurity; sanctify to God. When my heart is drawn from Him, I am wrong; when my affections are drawn to Him, He is sanctifying me. He wants us for Himself, and He won’t consent for the heart to be divided. The Lord wants every atom, every corner, “that He might sanctify it.” He is wooing us. Will I do? You have lost so and so? Will I do? You have given up the world. Will I do?

“With the washing of water through the Word.” The water is the Holy Ghost applying the Word to our

conscience, to our walk,—every-day walk, Sunday walk, Sunday worship. He can but do us good. Why should we shudder at being delivered from everything that displeases Him? The 3rd and 4th give some pain. The 5th and 6th give joy. Is it some new thing to be torn away? But as He operates upon us, He nourishes us: He is giving us some of the old corn of the land. Our joy in the Lord ought to increase the more we know of Him. So it seems to me these four are balanced in pairs.—One involves pain; one unmitigated delight to the Spirit. How perfect His ways are! Then comes the 7th.

Verse 27.—Who says she is “glorious?” God. (Rev. 21:9-11.) If a husband selects a wife, he can’t make her just what he would like. Christ can. He wants a Bride of surpassing glory. He who brought this world out of nothing, can take out of the sweepings of the Gentiles, and can present to Himself a “church glorious.” When? At the time of the rapture. The time of the coming of the Lord. It should be “with Jesus” in 2 Cor. 4:14. That may take place at any moment. How far we have got on in the Saturday night I don’t know. And in the Sunday morning God will bring this heavenly Eve to Adam. In the meanwhile each individual member may say,—He cleanses me for Himself. He is going to present me to Himself. That is the way to eat the Word. When you read the Word, take it to yourself, so as to get nourishment and warmth from Christ Himself.

Chapter 6

“Children obey your parents,” etc. There were children in the church at Ephesus and Colosse. The Lord has a word to say to them. He speaks to them before the parents. They are to be obedient to their parents.

Verse 2.—What a singular recipe God gives for long life! Not a cold bath every morning, or abstinence from food, meat, etc., or so much exercise, but to honour the father and mother. It is a blessing to live. There is an old heathen saying, “Those whom the gods love, die early.” Scripture seems to go the other way. This Scripture and others show it is a mercy if He continue His people in life. See Phil. 1:21, 22. Increasing years of service to the Lord will bring increasing reward in that day, when He dispenses His crowns. It is a real thing to live, and be spent in His service. God grant us grace to do it.

Verse 4.—Parents are prone to neglect to train their children. They shelter themselves with the excuse, “I cannot give them grace.” No, but if you bend a growing tree in any direction, it will grow strong in that direction. Parents often look after others, and neglect their own homes. If we train our children, He pledges His word they shall not depart from His way when old.

Verse 5.—“Fear and trembling” are rather favourite expressions of Paul. How wonderful that the Lord will accept the work of a servant! Rom. 16 mentions servants. No path is too humble to serve the Lord. In fact we are all servants. (Tit. 2:9, 10.)

Verse 7.—A diminution of reward for wrong doing. (Col. 3:22, 25.) 2 John 8, explains that passage in Colossians.

We may be Christians, and yet backslide and get worldly too, though we could not lose heaven. We may lose the reward, so Now to watch, to work, to war, And then to rest for ever.

Every bit of service I do for Jesus He will reward. What does it matter about our being ridiculed by poor, dying worms, when there is the glory? "Strengthened with all might, by the power of the glory." (Col. 1:10.) The glory has the power to nerve me to watch, to work, to war. It sheds its light on the world, and shows its temptations.

Verse 9.—Masters should seek to act kindly to servants. Forbear threatening. No one likes to act under a threat. If God puts these things in His Word, we should seek to obey them. Brethren, servants, children, masters, all stand together on one simple level, saved, washed sinners, sons of God, equally dear. In Col. 4:3, Paul asks for all to pray for Him. In Philemon, the robber and the robbed, both on the same level.

Verse 10.—"Be strong in the Lord." The very power of God should be used to fight with. Do we realize it? Do you say "I am so easily tempted or overcome." Be strong in the Lord. Has the Lord any strength? It is mine; use it. God will equip you for the battle, strengthen you for the fight. The weapons are all provided. The whole armour of God (verses 13-18.) We are not only called to be pilgrims, but soldiers. We are not only in a foreign country, but in an enemy's land.

Verse 11.—"Wiles." Deceits, cunning. Not his might, but his wiles; not his power but his cunning. "Calling evil good, and good evil," etc.

Verse 12.—This is the conflict with Satan in the heavenlies. Christians are in two places: 1. Here, in the

wilderness. 2. Up there with Christ. This speaks of how we are to live up there, in the presence of God. Satan tries to get us down; our wisdom is to stand, to stay where God has put us. We do have conflict with the devil in the wilderness. There he is called the “roaring lion,” but here, Satan is in the heavenlies, and we fight wicked spirits. When Israel got to Canaan, they had to fight every inch of their way. We have died, been buried and raised with Christ, then we have to fight. A conflict here with the devil presupposes we have perfect peace with God. The devil troubles those who have believed; them he tries to ensnare. This armour is to fight with, not in our own strength.

Verse 12.—The allusion is to the Hittites and Amorites. The word “heavenlies” is used several times in this Epistle. The fighting is going on there now.

Verses 13-14.—Ever to watch the avenues of the heart; to guard against everything that God wouldn’t give us. We must rein in our desires. Just now (“Your loins girt about with truth”). When in heaven, there will be no need to rein in the desires, but now we are to “set our affection on things above,” etc. (Col. 3:2.) Gird our desires with the belt of Scripture. Whatever is inconsistent with His will, do not desire it.

“The Breastplate of Righteousness.” It is a practical righteousness. If I don’t want the devil to gain an advantage over me, I must act righteously. If I have something preying on my conscience, either a command neglected, or His will disobeyed, then I am standing to fight without the “breastplate of righteousness.” And Satan gains an advantage.

Verse 15.—“Feet shod,” etc. Not “peace with God,” for Christ is my peace and that cannot be touched. It is the enjoyment of the peace. He can touch that. God would have me so to live in the enjoyment of that peace, that I may be a blessing to others; rivers flowing out. “Shod,” that is constant habit. Blessed are the peacemakers.” There are seven pieces of armour.

Verse 16.—“Over all, the shield of faith,” etc. The devil tries to distress us with unbelieving thoughts of God. When we get into perplexity or trial, he says, “There now, you can’t say God cares for you now.” So we are to take the shield of faith. “He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32.) There is a specimen of faith. God lets us pass through trial. “That the trial of your faith,” etc. When the devil would inject hard thoughts of God, when trouble comes, remember it does not alter God’s love, or God’s heart. “The trial of faith” which is more precious than gold. (1 Pet. 1:7.)

“Able to quench all the fiery darts.” Thoughts that would deny His love, thoughts that wrong God. Take the shield of faith. I believe God. He loves me still, as much as when He gave his Son to die for me.

Verse 17.—“Take the helmet of known salvation.” That is for the head. Not the same “take” as in verse 13: it is a more passive word—“receive.” It is all God’s gift. Simply to take the consciousness of a known salvation that God has saved us, that we are dear to Him. A Christian should never have a fear or doubt about his salvation.

Oh! to think I am God’s child. It is through the blood of Jesus, and with the Helmet we are to stand, surely.

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”
What a blessed thing to have the Word of God; we need still to use it.

Verse 18.—“Praying always.” It is one of the weapons to fight with. It comes beautifully last. To fight on our knees, to stay in the place in which God has put us. The Lord Jesus has carried us right up into the presence of God. If we are giving way to sin, we cannot enjoy the consciousness of being up there. I have not the “breastplate of righteousness” on, if I am coveting after something God doesn’t want me to have. Then I shall not have the “loins girt about with truth,” I am not reigning in the desires, so that the devil gains the advantage. Or, if when I go abroad, I am quarrelling and upsetting other people, then my feet are not “shod.” If you have to earn your bread with the ungodly, in a very humble sphere, God would have you go with a smile, and so be a blessing to others, so that they may feel there is a difference, and the Scripture will be fulfilled, “Out of him shall flow rivers of water.” Or again, “The shield of faith,” etc. As long as we are in this world, we shall know what it is to be tempted with unbelief; then take the shield of faith and say, “The living God is my Father and Friend; He is ordering my steps; they are all right, though they may be rough.” What a blessed thing to know whatever betides us, He is at the helm.

“The helmet of a known salvation.” Mind, you keep that on the head. It is terrible to have the head exposed. How can you fight calmly, resolutely, boldly, if the helmet is not on? In Acts 27:23, Paul had the helmet on. God has done that. The blood of Jesus has done everything. Now fight, knowing without a doubt that you are saved. This is because you are God’s child, the devil tries to drag

you down. As He is, so are we. "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."

"The Sword of the Spirit," etc. "It is written again." The great snare with Christians is, they are prone to think that one side of truth sets aside another. We must take the entire Word of God. Ephesians says we are in heaven, Peter says, we are in the wilderness. So then let us watch and war, soon we shall "rest for ever."

"Praying always." Never forget the way that Satan drags down spiritual souls is by quoting Scripture. Deal with the Word of God wisely, prudently, carefully. Pray always, pray everywhere. The soul is in a good state, when it is in the habit of referring everything to God. It is a blessed thing to tell God everything at any time, anywhere. "Praying always? shows God would have us pray when off our knees. However busy we are, we can lift up our hearts to God. All sorts of prayer, at all sorts of time, in all sorts of ways. Some prayers are wrung out of an anguished spirit, squeezed out in sorrow or temptation; others more peaceful, when we are conscious that God's eye is upon us. Some prayers look for an immediate answer; some, that we may be keeping up a general current between God and our soul. No need specially pressing, but we like to tell Him everything. "If we know that He hear us, we know we have the petitions that we asked of Him." He would have us know He hears us. There are three things we should know; 1. That we are in His presence; 2. That He hears our prayers; 3. That we please Him. These three are essential to communion with God. God is teaching us by His Spirit how to behave before He takes us home. We should never let a care get between us and God, but always cast it on God. There is the living God. We cannot pray

as long as we have a care on our mind. When you draw near always seek to get rid of the care. When there is any temptation or sin, begin by confessing that. "And watching thereunto." Watch one's thoughts; keep on calling them back. Watch things that would hinder. The moment you take the eye off God, you begin to wander. The Psalmist said, "Bow down Thine ear, O God." If God puts down His ear, how nice that we may put our mouth close, as it were, and tell Him all.

"For all saints." I don't think we pray enough for other Christians. Prayer for the saints draws out the heart to them. Our prayers are often too selfish, we should have a heart for all saints. Each has his own distinct trial, therefore we should pray for them and they for us. They are all our brethren.

Verse 19.—"And for me," etc. To think of the great apostle asking even children to pray for him, for from this chapter we learn there were children in the Church at Ephesus. "That utterance may be given." Not like the preachers now a-days who preach the same sermon in twenty different places. No, what Paul preached, he got directly from God.

Verse 20.—"An ambassador in bonds." Suppose our country's ambassador were put in prison in Germany, war would be the consequence. Our God is patient. He lets His people be in bonds. He not only sent His Son, and that Son was crucified, His Spirit and that Spirit rejected, but He lets his servants be in bonds. And that good God is still patient. When He does come down, He will come down heavily, but now He is patient. (Rom. 15:3-5, 2 Peter 3:9.) He will show other parts of His

character some day as the God of judgment, but now He is saving, reconciling and showing patience to man.

Verse 23.—“Love with faith.” Keep the two together. Putting on the breastplate of faith and love. If I believe, I am to love.

Verse 24.—“In incorruption.” We can’t tell a person’s heart whether he loves God sincerely, but we can tell a person’s life. If he is seeking to avoid disobedience—to tremble at God’s word—to shudder at sin, “grace be with him.”

“That love our Lord Jesus Christ.” What an appeal this is at the end of the Epistle. Think of everything in heaven being ours, that we owe it all to Jesus; what should I have been but for Jesus? Well may I love Him. He does care for our love, it is a wonderful thing. “Our Lord.” He is yours, he is mine. Some one has said, “My Jesus—Our Lord—God’s Christ.” Anyhow, He is our Lord, and we are to love Him. “We love Him because He first loved us,” but we are to reverence Him also.

Christ is the servant of all, and yet He is Lord of all.

END.