

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

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PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS: WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN (W. BUNTING)

There can be no doubt that this is one of the “prison” epistles. Three times the apostle refers to himself as a prisoner. “I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles” (Eph.3:1¹); “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called” (Eph.4:1²). When writing of the mystery of the gospel, the apostle states, “For which I am an ambassador in chains” (Eph.6:20³).

It will be observed from the marginal note in the Revised Version that some doubt exists as to the words “at Ephesus” in the opening verse. Some very ancient authorities omit these words. The view has been advanced that this was a circular letter, and copies may also have gone to other churches. If this were so, we would have expected to find it addressed to “the churches in Asia”.

We know from Acts 20:31⁴ that Paul spent three years in Ephesus, and during that period he must have built up an intimate knowledge of the saints in that city. In his letter, he does not

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.20>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.31>

mention one. Indeed, the only person mentioned is Tychicus, “the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”, whom the apostle sent to make known all things regarding his state. The same brother was sent to Colossae (Col.4:8⁵).

Being chained to a Roman soldier, and in close contact with the Roman Legions, may have influenced the apostle as he wrote in detail of the armour of God (Eph.6:10-18⁶).

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.8>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.10-18>

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 1

Eph.1:1¹

Not of Jesus Christ, as in AV/KJV (but in 1 Cor.1:1² we have, “Called an apostle of Jesus Christ”; also Rom.1:1³, “a servant of Jesus Christ”). See 1 Cor.1:1⁴: In Gal.1:1⁵ he puts special emphasis on the divine character of his apostleship. “not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father”. See Col.1:2⁶, “To the saints and faithful brethren”. Alford says, “The omission of the article before pistois (faithful) shews that the same persons are designated by both adjectives”; thus “faithful” conveys the same thought as if we were to call the faithful “believers”. Note the distinction in Philippians where Paul addressed “the saints ... with the bishops and deacons” (Phil.1:1⁷).

Eph.1:2⁸

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.1>
 2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.1>
 3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.1>
 4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.1>
 5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.1>
 6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.2>
 7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.1>
 8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.2>

This is the customary apostolic salutation. Peace was the greeting of the Hebrew (1 Sam.25:6⁹; 1 Chron.12:18¹⁰), to which the New Testament salutation of grace is prefixed.

Eph.1:3¹¹

Paul strikes a note of eulogy or praise to God, not as Abraham's God, nor as Jehovah, Israel's God, but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is thus described as the One to be praised in this dispensation. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ bespeaks the humanity of Christ. He who as Jehovah's Servant had a God to whom He was entirely devoted, whom He adored and served. His God is also His Father; this tells of a divine begetting, and of the ineffable relationship which exists between the Father and the Son. Not one who became the Son of God in time, "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him" (Jn 3:17¹²), but One who was the Son of God ere He came into the world. "The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn 4:14¹³). God is also our God and our Father (Jn 20:17¹⁴), but the One we bless (praise) is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. See 2 Cor.1:3¹⁵ and 1 Pet.1:3¹⁶ for other reasons why God is praised.

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.25.6>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Chron.12.18>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.3>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.17>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.14>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.17>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.1.3>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.3>

The word Eulogia = blessing is used three times in verse 3 in different ways. I, in praising God, II, in God pronouncing or conferring blessing, III, and of the spiritual blessing bestowed. See Heb.7:6¹⁷ and compare Gen.14:19¹⁸,20¹⁹, where Melchizedek is shown blessing (praising) God and also bestowing, in the name of God Most High, blessing upon Abram. “In Christ,” defines the heavenlies where we and our blessings are. We also read of the heavenlies where spiritual hosts of wickedness still lodge (Eph.6:12²⁰). Spiritual blessings are “the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor.2:14²¹), which are revealed through the Spirit to the spiritual. (Comp. 1 Cor.2:9-16²²). In contrast to these spiritual things Israel in the land enjoyed all earthly blessings in a land which flowed with milk and honey. These earthly and material things were for the natural comfort and enjoyment of Israel after the flesh, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. To be diligent to understand our blessings is our privilege and responsibility, for God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

Eph.1:4²³

The blessing of God is based upon His election. He chose us out of the world; He made a choice; He chose us in Christ. Israel was chosen in Abraham. The promises were made to Abra-

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.7.6>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.14.19>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2014.20>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.12>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.14>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.9-16>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.4>

ham and his seed, even before Israel was born. But in our case long millenniums rolled across the sea of ages between the choice of God and its realization. We were chosen before the foundation of the world. This views the believer as eternally set apart and without blemish through the work of Christ, and that in a state of eternal love, “that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn 17:26²⁴). Every state of earthly love is rendered impure, because of the unholy state of the human heart through sin; thus love is fouled at its fountain. But here is a state of abiding purity and holiness in the sweetest and best of all emotions – love. The saint is holy and unblemished before God in love, without fear, sorrow, or shame. What was lost through the fall is restored to God’s chosen ones through grace. What we are should find expression in what we do, and even now a saintliness of behaviour in Christian affection should be manifested.

Eph.1:5²⁵

God who chose has predestined or marked out beforehand His saints to adoption, that is, to be given the place of sons (adoption as sons: Gk. *huiiothesia*: *huios* = a son; This which comes from Gk. *tithemi* = to place, put, set, etc.). Those who are sons (Gal.3:26²⁶) will through Jesus Christ be given their place as sons; this God has foreordained according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace. Moses of old said, “Shew me, I pray Thee, Thy glory”, and God’s answer was,

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.26>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.5>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.26>

“I will make all My goodness pass before thee ... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious ... ” (Ex.33:18²⁷,19²⁸).

Eph.1:6²⁹

He freely bestowed or made us objects of His grace; “in the Beloved” is the term of endearment by which God describes His Son. In Col.1:13³⁰ He speaks of the Son of His love, a somewhat similar description. It is because of His Beloved that God has lavished such abundance of grace upon the saints.

Eph.1:7³¹

See Col.1:14³²: His blood-shedding is the basis of redemption and forgiveness. Here we have the redemption through the Passover and the forgiveness of the Day of Atonement joined together. (Redemption: Gk. *apolutrosis* = redemption, from *apolutroo* = to release or dismiss on payment of a ransom. Forgiveness: Gk. *aphesis* = dismissal, a letting go). You have here the release of the believer from the bondage of sin, and the dismissing or sending away of his sins as was done in the past dispensation when the scapegoat was dismissed into the wilderness with the sins of Israel upon it. Trespass literally means a fall, hence a failure or offence. Sin signifies a missing of the mark.

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.33.18>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2033.19>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.6>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.13>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.7>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.14>

Eph.1:8³³

The wisdom and intelligence of God lie behind forgiveness reaching the object of God's grace. The Spirit breatheth where it willeth (Jn 3:8³⁴). The word, the divine seed, guided by the Spirit falls where divine wisdom directs: there is nothing haphazard, however marvellous may be the way and means by which souls are reached.

Eph.1:9³⁵

A mystery is something that is secret or hidden. There are many mysteries – the mystery of Godliness (1 Tim.3:16³⁶), and the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess.2:7³⁷); the mystery of the Church (Eph.5:32³⁸), and the mystery of Babylon (Rev.17:5³⁹); the mystery of the kingdom (Mk.4:11⁴⁰), of the Faith (1 Tim. 3:9⁴¹); the mystery of God's wisdom (1 Cor.2:7⁴²), and of the hardening of Israel (Rom.11:25⁴³) and so forth. The mystery of God's will as mentioned here is not concerning His present purpose amongst His saints, but concerning a purpose

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.8>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.8>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.9>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.7>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.32>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.%205>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.4.11>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.%203.9>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.7>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.25>

which He purposed in Him (Christ) in regard to a coming dispensation, in the coming reign of Christ; though, undoubtedly, the Body of Christ which the Lord is building in this dispensation, and also those who have been faithful to the Lord, shall have their place.

Eph.1:10⁴⁴

The times past and present (Gk. kairos = a point or period of time) require a fulfilment or completion. The prophets prophesied concerning the reign of Christ, and the New Testament is full of allusions to that dispensation, or economy of things, when all things in the heavens and on earth shall be summed or headed up in Christ. There is no reference here to things under the earth. There is no suggestion that this is the new earth; and it is clear that the present earth and heaven shall flee away from the face of Him who shall sit on the Great White Throne. The coming dispensation is the fulfilment of all periods of time which have been fixed by God concerning His dealings with men, and with the one that is yet to come earth's seasons shall have been completed.

This is undoubtedly the Millennium. This is proved by 1 Cor.15:20-28⁴⁵, for the Lord must reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet; the last enemy to be abolished is death, which, as Rev.20⁴⁶;,14 shows, is cast into the Lake of Fire. The Lord shall then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all, so that there is no dispensation contemplat-

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.10>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.20-28>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20>

ed after the judgement of the Great White Throne, for then the Son having delivered up the kingdom to the Father shall be subjected to the Father.

Eph.1:11⁴⁷,12⁴⁸

Who are the “we”? This is explained in the following verse: “We who had before hoped in Christ.” Who can answer to such as before hoped in Christ, but those of the Jewish people who gladly received the promise and also believed in Christ who fulfilled the promise? The heritage here is the Jewish remnant – “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom.11:5⁴⁹). “God did not cast off His people which He foreknew” (Rom.11:2⁵⁰).

Eph.1:13⁵¹,14⁵²

Note the change from “we” to “ye”; we Jews, ye Gentiles; the Gentiles also heard the word of the truth, the gospel of their salvation, believed, and were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, sealed as a pledge of safety and a token of ownership. Note how the 144,000 shall be sealed (Rev.7:4⁵³), also the Jews

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.11>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.12>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.5>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.2>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.13>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.14>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.4>

sealed the Lord's tomb against theft (Matt.27:65⁵⁴,66⁵⁵). See also 2 Cor.1:22⁵⁶.

Eph.4:30⁵⁷

Who dare touch the Lord's property in His saints who are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise? This seal is to them an earnest or pledge of their inheritance, "the word signifies the first instalment paid as a pledge that the rest will follow," and God has made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col.1: 12⁵⁸).

Eph.1:14⁵⁹

Already the saints are God's own possession, that which He has already acquired, but the day of redemption (Eph.4:30⁶⁰) will come when He will claim what is His own. Then the bodies of God's saints will know redemption, for we are waiting our adoption (Eph.1:5⁶¹), to wit, the redemption of our bodies (Rom.8:23⁶²).

Eph.1:15⁶³

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.27.65>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2027.66>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.1.22>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.30>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.%2012>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.14>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.30>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.5>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.23>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.15>

“Also we” (verse 11), “ye also” (verse 13), “I also” (verse 15); such is the sequence as he proceeds. The RV leaves out “the love” as in AV/KJV, but genuine faith can as truly be shown towards the saints, even as love manifests itself; in fact neither can exist without the other. Compare Jas.2:14-26⁶⁴ (which shows the working of faith) with 1 Jn 3:16⁶⁵,17⁶⁶ (which describes the acting of love). A dead faith may say to a needy brother, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled”; and Jn writes, “Whoso hath the world’s goods” (goods here is Bios = life, the natural things by which the world lives), “and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassions from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?” The living faith of Abraham gave Isaac, and Rahab by faith gave protection to the spies. By works is faith made perfect (Gk. *telos* = an end), it is brought to a finish or completeness. Thus the inward subjective faith of the heart in the Lord can be seen as an objective working principle, manifesting itself in good works towards the saints.

Eph.1:16⁶⁷

Paul was ever ready to commend the excellencies he saw in others. Here he gives thanks to God for the excellent qualities he saw in the saints, and he prays for their further enlightenment. It is one of the things God has enjoined upon us, to pray one for another. Samuel said, when Israel rejected Jehovah’s

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.14-26>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.16>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.17>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.16>

kingship and sought for a king, “God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Sam.12:23⁶⁸).

Eph.1:17⁶⁹

Spirit cannot refer to the Holy Spirit for they were already indwelt by the Spirit, but must be understood in the sense in which Paul speaks of “a spirit of meekness” in 1 Cor.4:21⁷⁰; it shows an attitude of the human spirit as wrought upon by the Holy Spirit – a state of enlightenment. David in his repentance and confession said, “Renew a right spirit within me” (Ps.51:10⁷¹). His spirit had got into a wrong attitude to God and he needed the renewing power of divine grace. The pronoun “Him” might be rendered “Himself” as is done in verse 5, as it is evident from the context that it refers to God and not to the Son.

Eph.1:18⁷²

It is not the understanding or mind here (as in AV/KJV) but the heart (as in RV), the centre of human being and the core of life, also the seat of affection. From what was once a dungeon where he sat in blindness, man by divine illumination may look forth and contemplate the purposes of God. The hope here is not the “one hope of your calling” (Eph.4:4⁷³), the Lord’s com-

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.12.23>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.17>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.21>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.51.10>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.18>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.4>

ing, “the blessed hope” of Tit.2:13⁷⁴, but it is God’s hope in His own whom He has called, the calling called in

Eph. 4:1⁷⁵

“The calling” and in verse 4 “your calling” – “Whom He fore-ordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom.8:30⁷⁶). God’s calling involves a company or church called out in fulfilment of His own special purpose in and through such. The Church in this paragraph is “the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (verses 22,23). God’s hope in His calling in this respect will be fully realized, but in regard to His call to separation and service He may be greatly disappointed, through lack of enlightenment on the part of His own, and in the case of some by the light that was once in them becoming darkness, and, how great is that darkness! Of old God said that his portion was His people, Jacob was the lot of His inheritance (Deut.32:9⁷⁷).

So precious were they that He kept them as the apple of His eye. His people had been saved from bondage to a temporal power, but His saints today have known eternal redemption and are in eternal union with Himself and shall be co-sharers in an eternal inheritance. God has great glory in the angels of His power, in the hosts of unfallen holy ones, who serve Him in His heavenly sanctuary and kingdom, but God has taken from

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.13>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204.1>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.30>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.9>

the human family those whom He has constituted holy ones – saints. Man through redemption finds a place amongst the hosts of God – a new creation in Christ. Men once corroded and corrupted by sin are made saints of God, and that whilst in mortal body. Who but God could have devised and carried out such a purpose? Think not only of His mysterious work in the regeneration of the individual soul, but of the realisation of His love for men who had become lost to Him through sin. (Heb. *Lo-ammi*) – not my people, was written across the death-pall of human sin, but now in such a place there stand saints and sons of the living God.

We may here listen to the oracle of Balaam: “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel ... Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrought!” What hath God wrought in our time! – “What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” “Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice” (Ps.50:5⁷⁸). Such was God’s will in the past dispensation, and such will be the will of God in the future when we shall gather together unto our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming (2 Thess.2:1⁷⁹); but we cannot be oblivious that such is His will today; and to fail to appreciate His present purpose and to be gathered according to His revealed will, will be serious in the day when God shall judge His saints.

Eph.1:19⁸⁰,20⁸¹

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.50.5>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.1>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.19>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.20>

This power is described to be the working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The same power is toward the believer, and no less power avails against the forces and foes that operate and cooperate against the saint as he pursues his course heavenward. Vain were the powers of earth and hell to keep Christ a prisoner with the dead, and as vain the power of the Devil, demon or man against the working of the strength of His might which is toward the believer. No weapon that is formed against him can prosper. Samson lost power with God when his locks were shorn, the token of his separation to God, but when these began to grow, and as he made sport for the Philistines, whilst he leaned upon the pillars, he prayed “O Lord GOD, remember me, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God” (Jdgs.16:28⁸²).

The prayer of faith brought the power of God. Let us avail ourselves of the power of resurrection through living faith and the time will come when “He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus” (2 Cor.4:14⁸³). And whether or no the power which is available is appropriated by us for our daily needs, that power is to usward who believe, and as surely as Christ was raised and glorified, so surely shall those that believe be raised and glorified with Him.

Eph.1:21⁸⁴

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Judg.16.28>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.4.14>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.21>

What a description of eminence lies in this verse Both authorities and names lie far below the seat of Him who has passed through the heavens, and has ascended far above all the heavens” (Eph.4:10⁸⁵) and has sat down on the right hand of God. The Sufferer, the Rejected One of earth is glorified, and He has won the Church for which He gave Himself, and she shall be co-sharer in His glory. God has given Him to be Head over all things to the Church.

Eph.1:22⁸⁶,23⁸⁷

There seems no doubt but that He that fills all things is Christ. Creation had been an empty vain thing but for the filling of all with Christ’s Divine fulness. Well might Solomon say of a world without Christ, “All is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labour?” “All things are full of weariness” (Eccles.1:2⁸⁸,3⁸⁹,8⁹⁰). But Christ gives a new meaning to life, and even the most ordinary things, when viewed in relation to the One in whom all fulness dwells, are seen in a new light. Mankind will yet know this. The great void of earthly things and human hearts will yet be filled by Him. But He Himself needs to be completed by what is called “the fulness of Him” (fulness: Gk. *pleroma* = that which fills, complement) which is His Body.

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.10>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.22>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.23>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eccles.1.2>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eccles%201.3>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eccles%201.8>

Christ is not spoken of here as the Head of the Body, though that is implied, but as Head over all things, and as Head over all things God gave Him to the Church of which He is the Head. It is not here that the Church is given to Him, but He is given to the Church. This great reality of Christ and the Church lies behind the creation of man, male and female; the first pair to have dominion are a figure of Him who is Head who is given to the Church, which by her union with Christ is raised to be a co-sharer with Him in His authority over all.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 2

Eph.2:1¹

How tremendous is the contrast between the subjects of divine grace, when viewed as comprised in the Body, and what they were prior to their coming under the reign of grace – “and you ... were dead”! Their death was occasioned by their own trespasses and sins. The process is the same in Adam and his descendants, but there is this distinction between Adam and the rest. In his case sin entered: “Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin” (Rom.5:12²), but in the case of all other sinners, it is as Paul (a Jew) describes his own case – sin revived: “I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; ... for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me” (Rom.7:7-14³).

Sin external to Adam led him into disobedience and death, but sin internal (we being shapen in iniquity) in us revived and slew us, not by the law of Moses in the case of the Gentiles, but by the law of conscience. Being born with a corrupt nature and with a fearful disposition to sin, we early fell a prey to the serpent in our nature. Being dead through sin, no human remedy or potion could avail, we needed divine quickening by God “who quickeneth all things” (1 Tim.6:13⁴). To be dead or in

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.12>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.7-14>

death never means a ceasing to be or a suspension or destruction of personality.

Eph.2:2⁵

“Ye walked” is to be taken in a figurative sense, as is frequently done in this epistle, as indicative of their behaviour. This was according to the course (age) of this world (cosmos). The course, is not “the fashion (state or condition of life) of this world,” which, we are told, “passeth away” (1 Cor.7:31⁶). The course, or channel, remains in which this arrangement called the cosmos (or world) flows; the world’s attitude to God knows no change, because it is organized and regulated by the prince of the authority of the air. The world lieth in the evil one (1 Jn 5: 19⁷). The world’s essential features, the lust of the flesh ... the eyes, and the vainglory of life, which may be compared to the course of the age, will eventually pass away.

The prince or ruler is clearly the devil, who is also called “the prince of this world” (Jn 12:31⁸), and “the god of this world” (age) (2 Cor.4:4⁹). He rules the authority of the air. Though authority is in the singular, it may view the powers collectively or “the government” (the ruling powers, i.e., “the world-rulers of this darkness”) which is under the control of the devil. This government is further described as the spirit that now worketh

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.13>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.2>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.7.31>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.%202019>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.31>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.4.4>

in the sons of disobedience. This spirit is called in 1 Cor.2:12¹⁰ “the spirit of the world” (compare 1 Jn 4:4¹¹,6¹² with 1 Tim.4:1¹³), the spirit which controls and energizes this system of evil, and by which the sons of disobedience are impelled forward on their ruinous course, and operates in opposition to God’s Spirit.

Eph.2:3¹⁴

Such is the apparent paradox; “ye were dead” (verse 1) “we also once lived” (verse 3). Lusts are excessive or inordinate desires, and to such the flesh is ever subject. We lived our life in the lusts of our flesh and in those days we were found doing the wishes or desires of the flesh, the carnal principle which is enmity against God. The mind is the thoughts (R. V. marg.) and here we see the varied products of the natural mind by which the unregenerated man is moved about. Jude speaks of certain who “in their dreamings defile the flesh” (Jude 1:8¹⁵). “The rest”; it is always contemplated that besides the redeemed there is the rest of mankind. “Even as the rest, which have no hope” (1 Thess.4:13¹⁶). “By nature” describes the essential inner character and quality of what is in view as opposed to anything that has been imported or introduced. As illustrative of the force in

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.12>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.4>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.6>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.1>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.3>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.8>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.13>

the word nature see how Paul writes of the Jews, “we being Jews by nature” (Gal.2:15¹⁷).

Note his contrast again of Jew and Gentile in Rom.11:21¹⁸,24¹⁹, of what is according to nature in the Jew and contrary thereto in the Gentiles; of those who were cut out of “that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and ... grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree.” In the sense in which “nature” is used in Eph.2²⁰, both Jew and Gentile were children of wrath by nature, but sons (which describes the character) of disobedience as indicative of our practice. “Sons” are also spoken of as “sons of light”, “sons of the day”, etc.

Eph.2:4²¹,5²²

Wondrous pity to the wretched because of His great love moved God to act in grace toward us. Children of wrath have become the objects of divine mercy and such as are helpless and loverless are loved with an unchanging love – great love and rich mercy!

Eph.2:5²³,6²⁴

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.15>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.21>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.24>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.4>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.5>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.5>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.6>

God quickened us, this is a fact; He made us alive who were dead in trespasses, and He made us alive with Christ. He who quickened Christ quickened us together with Him, that is we are associated with Him in the same quickening. We think of the years that have elapsed, we who are creatures of time, but God views the saints as made alive in the spiritual quickening with Christ; and not only so, but we are viewed as raised up with Him and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We may say for the sake of explanation that it is not the “with” of time, but the “with” of association. God views as one fact the quickening of Christ and the saints, and their being raised and seated together in the heavenlies. We are not quickened as a distinct entity apart from Him. This great spiritual quickening of the soul once dead in sins takes place upon the faith of the individual believer in Christ. The quickening of the dead in Christ will in due time take place, and will become a fact because of their faith in Christ; because of spiritual quickening bodily quickening will follow.

Eph. 2:7²⁵

This verse casts us back upon the closing words of chapter 1 with reference to the future of the saints comprised in the Church, the Body of Christ, who have known such unique grace as having been raised from the depths of sin and as being sharers with Christ in the unique glory which is His. No commonplace favours are involved in the words – “the exceeding riches of His grace”. The words of the hymn aptly express the thoughts that fill one’s mind as one contemplates the fulness of

this expression: ‘Till worlds on worlds adoring see the part Thy members have in Thee.’

Eph.2:8²⁶

“For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace” (Rom.4:16²⁷). God’s grace and our faith are as truly joined as law and works were wedded in the past.

Eph.2:8²⁸,9²⁹

“And that”: What? something that is not of works? To say that faith is not of works would be redundant and irrelevant. The subject under consideration is God’s salvation, that those saints were saved by grace; this was not of themselves, the gift was God’s gift. It did not come by works; if it were so then man would have had whereof to glory, so it was by grace through faith.

Eph.2:10³⁰

God will never despise His own handiwork; what He hath done will remain – this spiritual and new creation in Christ Jesus. The old creation was created for good works, but man sought the knowledge of good and evil, and lost the power of doing good. “There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one” (Rom.3:12³¹) is the testimony of God concerning all

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.8>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.16>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.8>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.9>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.10>

mankind. We have been created to bear good fruit and indeed each tree brings forth according to what it is, and the tree is known by its fruit. We have been created anew for good works and all such flow out of “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God ... and thy neighbour as thyself”. Love is the spring of all good works. God had good works for us to do before we were created in Christ Jesus. No one in God’s arrangement for His saints should be either idle or inert; work is ready to hand if we have each the heart to do His will and accomplish His work.

Eph.2:11³²,12³³

Of old God said to Israel, “Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt” (Deut.16:12³⁴), so the saints are called upon to remember that they, the Gentiles who were called “uncircumcision” by the circumcision made by hands, were alienated from the Commonwealth (Gk. *politeia* – the state of being a citizen; the state or commonwealth. The word is used here in the latter sense) of Israel. When men apostatized from God at Babel and shut God out, then in due time God called Abraham and shut the nations out, and He covenanted with Abraham and his seed concerning Christ and gave him the covenant of circumcision (Gal.3:15-22³⁵). Moreover, the Gentiles had no hope such as Israel had, and they were without God in the world. Man’s disobedience and departure reached on to generations which came after. Yet in the fulness of the

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.12>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.11>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.12>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.16.12>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.15-22>

time the Christ who was promised to Abraham would reach and bless the nations according to the Abrahamic promise. God also covenanted with David that of his seed Christ would come.

Eph.2:12³⁶

No ray of revelation shot across the dark sky of the Gentile world. Even at Athens, the seat of man's learning, they offered "to an unknown god" (Acts 17:23³⁷). The nations had no hope here or hereafter; they knew not God and denied Him in such manifestation as His goodness revealed Him, and gave no thanks (Rom.1:20-25³⁸; Rom.2:4³⁹).

Eph.2:13⁴⁰

"But now", how great is the contrast between what the Gentiles were and what they are by grace! "In Christ Jesus," not simply in Christ who was promised afore in the Scriptures, but in the Christ who is Jesus, and not only so, but in One who has been raised from the dead, whose blood has been shed. En (in) is as characteristic a preposition in association with Christ Jesus as Gk. dia (through) is with Jesus Christ. In Heb.10:19⁴¹ boldness to enter into the holy place (holies) is by the blood of Jesus (see also 1 Jn 1:7⁴²) which presents the sin offering aspect of

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.12>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.23>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.20-25>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.4>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.13>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.19>

the death of Christ; but in Eph.2:13⁴³ it is not drawing nigh as worshippers, nor yet walking in the light as in 1 John, but it is being made nigh once for all and that by the blood of Christ, which seems to indicate the burnt offering aspect of the Lord's death. The burnt offering made atonement for the offerer not on the ground of any wrong he had done, but on the ground of what he was in the flesh – a sinner, and because of what he was he could never find acceptance with God, hence the need of an offering entirely devoted to God and consumed on his behalf. We are in eternal nearness and acceptance with God in virtue of Christ's acceptance with God, we who were Gentiles in the flesh.

Eph.2:14⁴⁴,15⁴⁵

Mic.5:5⁴⁶ says, "This Man shall be our peace: when the Assyrian shall come into our land". Peace here is used of the tranquility of a mind at rest because of the One to be born in Bethlehem, who would be great to the ends of the earth and who would restore the wastage of Gentile invasion. But He is our peace because of the reconciliation He has effected between the estranged Jew and Gentile, and between Jew and Gentile and God. He made both Jew and Gentile one, one in Himself, Christ Jesus, and He abolished in His flesh the enmity, the middle wall or fence, which He threw down; this fence was the law dogmatically expressed in its ceremonials and rites;

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.7>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.13>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.14>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.15>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Micah.5.5>

these shadows were done away in the flesh and death of Christ (Col.2:16⁴⁷,17⁴⁸).

Eph.2:15⁴⁹

Here is the work of the Creator in a new creation. In “the beginning all things were created” in (not by, but in – en) Him ... by (Gk. dia = through or by Him as the agent who was instrumental in creation) Him, and unto (Gk. eis = into or unto Him as the ultimate end and object of all creation) Him” (Col.1:16⁵⁰). Of mankind, expressed in Jew and Gentile, fallen and estranged, He is creating in Himself one new man, and peace, concord and harmony result because they are one – one new man in Christ.

Eph.2:16⁵¹

This is the Church which is His Body, and by means of the cross, which describes the work which the Lord effected thereon through death, believers are reconciled to God, but they are not here viewed as reconciled severally or individually, but as forming, and being in, the Body. They are not reconciled by bringing the Gentile on to Jewish ground, but by both being reconciled in “One Body”, a higher standing and closer relationship than ever Jew enjoyed. By the cross the enmity of such as were God’s enemies is slain, not simply the enmity between

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.16>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%202.17>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.15>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.16>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.16>

Jew and Gentile (which was an offshoot of the deeper thing), but the enmity of the carnal mind to God.

Eph.2:17⁵²

This seems to be by the coming of Christ in the Holy Spirit, and describes the continuity of His work as shown in Acts 1:1⁵³: “Concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach”. He began as described in the Gospels, but He continued in the Acts and afterwards. He preached peace as He did in Noah’s day (1 Pet.3:18-20⁵⁴). The preaching of peace to the Jew (those nigh) and to the Gentile (those far off) had as a basis the accomplished work of the cross, the foundation of reconciliation.

Eph.2:18⁵⁵ This verse would indicate what is previously stated that the preaching is subsequent to the descent of the Holy Spirit, for such as are reconciled (both Jew and Gentile) have their access through Christ and in the Holy Spirit unto the Father. This shows the liberty or boldness of our approach to God (Heb.4:16⁵⁶).

Eph.2:19⁵⁷ Having stated what they are not – strangers and sojourners, he states what they are – fellow-citizens (Phil.3:20⁵⁸);

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.17>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.1>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.3.18-20>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.18>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.4.16>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.19>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.20>

all saints in the Body of Christ are viewed in this heavenly citizenship. Gk. *oikeioi* = household, means those that are members of the same household or family, and would signify all persons who are born again. This seems to me to be the correct interpretation rather than that the term “household of God” signifies those who are in “House of God” and subject to divine rule.

Eph.2:20⁵⁹

Where prophets are mentioned before apostles they are Old Testament prophets and after apostles they are New Testament prophets. Here we have a change of imagery from the political and social view in the former verse to that of a building, a structure which rests on a foundation. The simile is similar to that presented in 1 Pet.2: 5⁶⁰, of stones (living stones) being built upon a foundation with a view to a house coming into being. The apostles and prophets equally with the rest were in the building which was built on the foundation, hence they cannot be in the foundation in the same sense. The foundation is of the apostles and prophets, because by their teaching and preaching of the word which the Lord gave them, thus they laid the foundation. “I laid a foundation” (1 Cor.3:10⁶¹), said Paul to the Corinthians. The foundation is God’s (2 Tim.2:19⁶²). It is Jesus Christ (1 Cor.3:11⁶³, 1 Pet.2:6⁶⁴). It was laid by God in

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.20>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.%205>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.10>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.19>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.11>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.6>

the resurrection, exalting and seating of His Son at His right hand (1 Pet.2:6⁶⁵). It was laid by the apostles and prophets by their preaching and teaching of the word of God with reference to Christ and His doctrine, which doctrine is called the apostles' doctrine in Acts 2:42⁶⁶ (1 Cor.3:10⁶⁷; Eph.2:20⁶⁸). He is the Head stone of the corner.

Not only is He the most conspicuous part in all the teaching which is foundational to the building of God's temple, but He is vital to the squaring of all parts of the building. The line and the plummet are associated with Him (see Isa.28:16⁶⁹,17⁷⁰). The corner Stone is set up first and all building is lined off and squared thereby. If Christ has His true place and His ruling on all matters adhered to, then the building will be according to the divine pattern (and He is Son over God's house; see Heb.3:6⁷¹). Alas when man usurps His place and human doctrine is taught for divine! When the line of judgement and the plummet of righteousness shall go forth, the refuges of lies shall be swept away and man's building shall crumble in the day of testing (1 Cor.3:10⁷²,15⁷³).

Eph.2:21⁷⁴

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.6>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.10>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.20>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.28.16>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2028.17>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.6>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.10>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.15>

No doubt the reading of the AV/KJV has led many to conclude that the building mentioned here is the Church, the Body, but the correct rendering of the RV “each several building”, or the marginal rendering “every building” (Gk. *pasa oikodome*) shows that this cannot be so, for the Body which is composed of members is never spoken of as being comprised of buildings. What is here under consideration is not the Body of Christ but the Temple of God. Note how it is possible to destroy or corrupt the temple of God (1 Cor.3:16⁷⁵,17⁷⁶); this could not be true of the Body of Christ. Each church of God is temple of God. Note the contrast between 1 Cor.3:16⁷⁷,17⁷⁸ and 1 Cor.6:19⁷⁹; the former scripture is descriptive of the church of God, while the latter relates to the believer’s body. Thus we have: (1), the believer’s body is temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19⁸⁰); (2) the church of God is temple of God (1 Cor.3:16⁸¹,17⁸²; 2 Cor.6:16⁸³); and (3) “each several building” (churches of God) fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the LORD (Eph.2:21⁸⁴). The last scripture views the temple as a whole.

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.21>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.16>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.17>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.16>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.17>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.16>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.17>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.16>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.21>

As illustrative of the buildings of the spiritual temple, note the action of the disciples with reference to the literal temple in Jerusalem: “His disciples came to Him to shew Him the buildings of the temple” (Matt.24:1⁸⁵). The temple was a pile of buildings joined together, built according to the mind of God. The words “fitly framed” are worthy of careful consideration as showing the intercommunion and fellowship which must exist between the several buildings, if there is to be such a thing in existence as “a holy temple in the Lord”. Believers just meeting as Christians and each company a self-governing unit is foreign to the Scriptures.

Eph.2:22⁸⁶

Whilst “every building fitly framed together” views the whole, this verse views the part; it describes the individual church of God, such as existed in Ephesus (Acts 20:17⁸⁷; Rev.2:1⁸⁸) and elsewhere. A company of believers may either be just “a meeting”, to use a common phrase, or a church of God, which is a habitation of God; they are either something or nothing in their collective capacity. Though churches of God may be diverse as to condition, as seen in the case of the seven churches in Asia (Rev.2⁸⁹ and 3⁹⁰), they must be divine and of the same quality as to their stand (the lampstand) or position; degrees of quality can never exist as to position; they are either golden

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.1>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.22>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%20.17>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.1>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%20.3>

lampstands or they are not; they are either habitations of God or they are not. All who are in the company may be children of God, but that fact does not make them the church of God where they are found together – it is necessary that they be builded together. A pile of stones does not make a house, nor a company of believers a building of God, a church of God.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 3

Eph.3:1¹

This casts us back on the previous chapter, from verse 11, wherein the purpose of God with reference to the Gentiles is outlined, as to their place being one of equality with the Jew in the one Body and also their position of being builded together on the divine foundation – that of the apostles and prophets – as an holy temple in the Lord. He speaks of himself in Eph.4:1² as being the prisoner in the Lord; “in the Lord” signifying how completely he regarded himself as subject to the Lord’s will, whilst outwardly a prisoner in Rome. “In Christ” as in 2 Cor.5:17³; 1 Thess.4:16⁴; and elsewhere, shows the abiding, eternal relationship of believers in this dispensation to the Lord, but “in the Lord” shows their relationship to Him as subject to His will; note 1 Thess.3: 8⁵, “if ye stand fast in the Lord”; 1 Cor.15:58⁶, “your labour is not vain in the Lord”.

There are many scriptures with these qualifying words “in the Lord”, which see. In Eph.3:1⁷ Paul speaks of himself as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus”. It is not that he had been apprehend-

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.17>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.%208>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.58>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1>

ed by Christ Jesus, according to Phil.3:12⁸, but that because of his being an apostle of the Gentiles, and by his preaching to the Gentiles, showing their position of equality with the Jew in this dispensation, he stirred up all the jealousy of the Jews (Acts 22:21-23⁹). Though he was a prisoner of Rome, protected as a Roman citizen, and having been carried to Rome to make his defence, he viewed the matter from a much higher point of view; he views his imprisonment, as bound up with his work, and part of the fulfilment of all that was connected with his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles. Think of the fruit of his imprisonment in such prison epistles, as Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; how enriched the Gentiles are by the very means of his imprisonment! How necessary was his oral ministry to the churches then, but how much more necessary and vital his written ministry inspired and preserved for all time!

Eph.3:2¹⁰

No doubt the Ephesians had heard of Paul's special ministry, remembering that it was in Ephesus he separated the disciples from the synagogue and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus, continuing for the space of two years (Acts 19:8-10¹¹; see also Acts 20:17-35¹²). The word dispensation (Gk. oikonomia = stewardship, economy, dispensation) has various shades of meaning, such as, the management of one's affairs, the dispo-

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.12>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2022.21-23>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.2>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.8-10>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.17-35>

sition of things, the method of operation, scheme, the peculiar character of a thing, etc. Alford says: "After long and careful search, I am unable to find a word which will express the full meaning of *oikonomia* ... so that our best rendering will be 'economy', leaving the word to be expressed in teaching." The peculiar character of economy of divine grace towards us who are Gentiles which was committed to Paul continues till now, and will continue till the Lord comes for His Church; just as the dispensation of law as committed to Moses continued to Christ; and that "dispensation of the fulness of the times" (Eph.1:10¹³), commencing with the coming of the Son of Man, will continue to be of the same character throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. We live in that dispensation of God's grace, wherein Gentiles are fellow-heirs, fellow-members (Gk. *sunsoma* = fellow-body) and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Eph.3:3¹⁴

Here Paul emphasizes the direct and immediate character of his knowledge of the mystery. "It is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal.1:11¹⁵,12¹⁶). The peculiar phase of the mystery of Christ is the introduction of the Gentiles as fellow-heirs with the Jews. The blessing of the Gentiles through Abraham and his seed is plainly revealed in the Old Testament, but this unique relationship of Jews and Gen-

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.10>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.3>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.11>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%201.12>

tiles in one Body is nowhere revealed. Not in a former epistle, but he refers to what he has written briefly in chapters 1 and 2 on this subject.

Eph.3:4¹⁷

When they examined the content of what he had written they would perceive his profound grasp of this great mystery, of the oneness of Jews and Gentiles through grace, and their union with Christ. The mystery of God is Christ (One who is God and Man) (Col.2:1¹⁸); the mystery of Christ is Christ and His members.

Eph.3:5¹⁹

Whilst the apostle shows here and in Col.1:26²⁰ that this mystery was not known in times before this dispensation began (Christ was known in other generations, and also the blessing of the Gentiles through the gospel, but not the mystery of Christ), yet he does not claim exclusive knowledge of the mystery. It had been revealed to him and his knowledge of it had not come through man, but he also says that it had been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets (N.T. prophets) in the Spirit. There is no claim here or suggestion that these learned of this mystery through Paul.

Eph.3:6²¹

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.%201>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.5>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.26>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.6>

Many are the promises in the O.T. of blessing to the Gentiles, which have a fulfilment today but like many prophecies have a double fulfilment, and these will be fully realized in the day to come; but in that day Israel will be found a restored and glorified people, in a nearer place of favour than the Gentiles. The gospel today declares something unique in its revelation and promise; the Gentiles are in no disparity and under no disability; they stand on terms of equality with the Jew in these; the highest of favours enjoyed or to be enjoyed by men in any dispensation is to be fellow-members of the Body of Christ, with all the blessing of the Spirit and of the love of Christ that that involves.

Eph.3:7²²

Paul was a minister or deacon (Gk. diakonos) of the gospel, a deacon in the highest deaconry, that of the word of God. He was a deacon of the Body, to fulfil the word of God (Col.1:25²³). How happily grace and power are joined together here! The gift of the grace which appointed him “a preacher and an apostle, ... a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (1 Tim.2:7²⁴) would have been fruitless, but for the effectual working in him of the power of God. “Ye shall be My witnesses,” said Christ to the eleven apostles, but this was wedded to the other word – “Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8²⁵).

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.7>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.25>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.7>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.8>

Eph.3:8²⁶

What humility and self-abnegation is expressed in this statement – “less than the least”! He who said that he was the least of the apostles and not meet to be called an apostle (1 Cor.15:9²⁷) here says that he was less than the least of all the saints. These were not the expressions of a false humility, but expressed feelings and thoughts which were in truest accord with the mind that is in Christ Jesus (Phil.2:5-8²⁸). “Unto the Gentiles” shows who were the special objects of his ministry; “the unsearchable riches of Christ” the character and extent of the subject of that ministry. In Rom.11:33²⁹ the word “unsearchable” is rendered by “past tracing out”. God’s judgments are unsearchable and His ways untraceable. God’s ways and Christ’s riches are so incomprehensible that they cannot be explored to their depths and in their vastness, yet there is a measure in which they are adjusted to the apprehension of our finite minds by faith.

They may be waters to the ankles, but soon they grow deeper and deeper till you cannot plumb their depths. We may see somewhat of the riches of Christ, but we shall never see all, but what we do see, that sample is ever of the same quality as the whole. God never covers a baser metal with gold, this is man’s way. God’s vessels were gold through and through. Christ’s riches, His mercy, wisdom, righteousness, salvation, etc., etc., are true riches, suited to our participation and enjoy-

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.8>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.9>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.5-8>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.33>

ment, what is not seen by us equally with what is seen. The riches of the glory of the mystery of Christ is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col.1:27³⁰).

Eph.3:9³¹

All men, the Gentiles equally with the Jews, were to be enlightened as to the “dispensation” (not “fellowship” as in the AV/KJV) the scheme, or plan, the peculiar character of this mystery. Col.1:26³² speaks of it as “the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations” which has now been manifested to the saints. Those who dwelt in bygone ages – the angels – knew nothing of this mystery, nor did the enlightened men in past generations know of it. Here we have part, perhaps the chief part, of God’s eternal purpose being brought to light. The Church the Body was in the secrets of God the Creator, hid in His heart, to be unfolded at the time of His appointment. The last wonder of all in the sequence of creative acts in Gen.1³³ was the creation of man, male and female, in the image and likeness of God.

This was the chief part of God’s six days’ work. God’s creative purposes (RV marg.) would, no doubt, have been as meaningless without Christ and the Church, as Creation in Gen.1³⁴ would have been without Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were a picture of the purpose of God yet to be unfolded, but neither

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.27>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.9>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.26>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1>

angel nor man who viewed Adam and Eve in the past had the slightest idea that they typified what was yet to be revealed. The Church is part of the creative purposes of God.

Eph.3:10³⁵

Here is a strange experience for the powers of heaven that they are now to acquire a knowledge of God's manifold wisdom by means of the Church. This is not the church of God, nor the church of the living God, but the Church which is the subject under consideration, i.e., the Church, the Body. Even angels may increase their knowledge of the purposes and works of God, which express God's manifold wisdom, by His work in beings of a weaker order than themselves, and who, though fallen in sin, are reclaimed, and so abundantly graced that they are united in the one Body and joined to the Lord of creation, by whom all things were made. God's wisdom is manifold or multifarious and can only be understood by a reverent consideration of each peculiar expression of divine wisdom. No created being has a mind of such capacity so as to contemplate the whole vast unity of divine wisdom in its detail and completeness. God's purpose in the Church expresses that which is unique in the works of God.

Eph.3:11³⁶

The RV marg. described it as "the purpose of the ages". It was a purpose to which the ages looked forward – a great consummating purpose – "in Christ Jesus"; the preposition in (en) is

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.10>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.11>

the characteristic preposition in connection with Christ Jesus, whereas through (*dia*) is the characteristic preposition used in connection with Jesus Christ. God's purposes are in Christ (the Son of God) who became known as Jesus. We read of "the child Jesus" (Lk.2:27³⁷) and "the boy Jesus" (Lk.2:43³⁸), but never of the child Christ, or boy Christ. All God's purposes and riches are in Him who is Christ and Jesus, who is both God and man; but God's will was effected on earth through Jesus Christ; through a child, a boy, a man, through Him who was divinely called Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Eph.3:12³⁹ The one in whom God has purposed "the purpose of the ages" is the one in whom we have boldness. Boldness means freedom of speech, but much more than that, namely, the freedom from any mental bondage to fear, etc.' it describes the inward liberty of conscience from which freedom of speech flows. If in Christ Jesus we have boldness, in Him also we have our access. It is not any quality in ourselves that gives us access. Our access to God is in Him. "In confidence" (Gk. *pepoithesis* = trust, confidence, reliance, which comes from *peitho* = to persuade) shows that the person who has this access to God has been fully persuaded of the complete satisfaction Christ has rendered to God and the completeness and unchangeable character of their acceptance with God in Christ Jesus.

The AV/KJV and the RV (margin) render this passage literally "through the faith of Him". Note the AV/KJV and RV renderings of Rom.3:22⁴⁰ and Gal.2:16⁴¹, "through faith of Jesus

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.2.27>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.2.43>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.12>

Christ". The Revisers judge the genitive "of Him" here has the force of "in Him" so that following them "the faith of Him" does not signify "the Faith" as that which is objective to our faith, but our boldness and access is through our faith "in" Him. Other scholars are of like opinion.

Eph.3:13⁴²

"Wherefore"; because of what he has brought before them in this chapter, not simply because of what is said in verse 12, as to their "boldness" and "access". "I ask" (you): here he asked them not to be timid or despondent, not to be dispirited or to flag, despite the fact that so illustrious a minister of Christ was a prisoner in Rome. There was a purpose in his imprisonment. "My tribulations," "your glory," these seem paradoxical statements, yet who can doubt that the sufferings of the apostles and martyrs are the glory of the saints? What proves the reality of the glorious portion and inheritance of the saints more than the sufferings of the saints? In proof of such reality we refer back to those who have suffered tribulation manifold, and truly such is our glory. The glory of the saints is not in such as rode to heaven in wealth midst praises of many, our glory is in such as were "made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things" (1 Cor.4:13⁴³). Yet we are ever prone to despond and become dispirited when the sufferings of others are making His people glorious.

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.22>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.16>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.13>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.13>

Eph.3:14⁴⁴

For the immediate cause that they be not despondent and dispirited, and for the whole reason of what he had placed before them in this chapter, because of which he is “the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles”. This shows a very correct posture of body in individual prayer, which is in harmony with the bowing of the spirit before God the Father.

Eph.3:15⁴⁵

“Every family” (RV) is, according to scholars, the better rendering than “the whole family” (AV/KJV). “Every family in heaven” does not give credence to the thought of human beings being transferred to heaven. Alford’s remarks on this passage are worthy of consideration: “Every Patria, compaternity, body of persons, having a common father, is thus named [in Greek] from that father, – and so every earthly [and heavenly] family reflects in its name [and constitution] the being and sourceship of the great Father Himself. But then, what are the Patriai in heaven? Some have treated the idea of paternity there as absurd; but is it not necessarily involved in any explanation of the passage? He Himself is the Father of spirits (Heb.12:9⁴⁶), the Father of lights, Jas.1:17⁴⁷: May there not be fathers in the heavenly Israel as in the earthly? May not the holy Angels be bound in spiritual Patriai, though they marry not nor are given in marriage?”

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.14>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.15>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.9>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.17>

Again he writes: “The word for family (Patria) being derived from that for father (Pater); that heavenly Pater from whom every Patria in heaven and on earth derives its name and its laws of being.” To this supreme Father of every “fatherhood” (RV marg.) of heavenly and earthly beings Paul bowed his knee. It would seem that God has grouped heavenly beings in fatherhoods as he has grouped earthly beings, though there is neither marriage nor birth in heaven. The relationship of such being spiritual not carnal.

Eph.3:16⁴⁸

In Col.1:11⁴⁹ we read of “the might of His glory”, by which the saints were to be strengthened unto endurance and long suffering. Eph.1:7⁵⁰ speaks of “the riches of His grace” according to which we have redemption and forgiveness. Here the apostle beseeches God that He would give to the Ephesian saints according to the riches of His glory (which describes the wealth and abundance of His glory), that they might be strengthened with power in the inward man. The Spirit of God is the One by whom this power is infused into the inward man, which describes our renewed and spiritual self. It is not the outward and natural man that is here empowered, yet the Spirit of God that indwells us is to quicken our mortal bodies, as shown in Rom.8:11⁵¹: Of this quickening of the body the apostle speaks

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.16>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.11>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.7>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.11>

in Phil.4:13⁵², where he writes of being hungry and abounding: “I can,” he says, “do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.”

This quickening of the mortal body is no doubt the outward effect of the strengthening of the inward man. The principle enunciated by the Lord remains: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing,” that is, the flesh in itself. The material thing is useless apart from the Spirit, for it is ever the spirit that is in a thing that counts. If there is no Spirit there is no life, no activity, no fruitfulness, there is nothing, only the barrenness of death. “But there is a spirit in man, And the breath (inspiration) of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8⁵³). “The Spirit of God hath made me, And the breath (inspiration) of the Almighty giveth me life” (Job 33:4⁵⁴).

Eph.3:17⁵⁵

Here we see the necessity of inward strengthening, that One so mighty as He who is the Christ should dwell in our hearts, which of themselves could not entertain or sustain the presence of so great a Guest. But though so high He deigns to dwell in the hearts of His own through faith. Here we have again the definite article before faith – “the faith”, but it does not here describe “the Faith” as the body of divine doctrine, but describes the faith as existing in the hearts of believers which is equivalent to “your faith”. The saints are described as being rooted

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.4.13>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2032.8>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2033.4>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.17>

and grounded in love, not that they should be as something that demands attainment or progress; but their being rooted and grounded shows something completed and upon this fact what is contemplated afterwards depends. We have in their being rooted the imagery of a tree and in their being grounded or founded that of a building. From the love in which they were rooted and founded they were to draw their strength as a tree does by its roots, as well as to find therein their strength as a building does in its foundation.

Eph.3:18⁵⁶

That is, that ye may be fully able to apprehend. “With all the saints” shows that the apprehension of what follows is to be the occupation of all saints, all such as are rooted and grounded in love. What is this of which we are to apprehend every dimension? The breadth of what? the length of what? Many and diverse have been the expositions of this passage. This verse (18) is sandwiched between such words “in love” (verse 17) and “the love of Christ” (verse 19). The breadth, length, height and depth seem to refer to the love in which we have been rooted and grounded; and we are to be strong to apprehend what is the breadth, length, etc., of the love in which we are rooted.

Eph.3:19⁵⁷

“To know” here may be linked with “to apprehend” of verse 18: We are to know what surpasses knowledge (truly a paradox!), and we are to apprehend what is boundless. Whatever

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.18>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.19>

breadth we apprehend, there is still breadth beyond it, and length, height and depth lie beyond our most extensive apprehension. However high the heights of apprehension we have scaled, there still lie range upon range towering high beyond. How great is the need to be strong “to apprehend” and “to know”! But such are the ways of God we may know the unknowable, that is, we may know in part, but the full compass we shall never know, though as to ourselves we shall fully know even as we have been known. But who shall ever fully know the love of Christ? it passeth all knowledge.

Yet we may know it and in this knowledge we rest as in green pastures till we ruminate what we have got, then as strengthened thereby, on we go again to acquire still more of what we have received. “Unto all the fulness of God” must not be confused with – “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9⁵⁸). The filling of God’s saints is measured by their capacity, which is conditioned by their “apprehending” (verse 18) and “knowing” (verse 19). As a vacuum is odious to nature, so also in grace, the fulness of God, who is ever full, would ever fill to the fullest extent the saints. Note the sequence: I. Strengthened by His Spirit; II. Christ dwelling in your hearts through faith; III. Filled unto all the fulness of God.

Eph.3:20⁵⁹

Here we have an ascription of praise to God. Much has been said in this chapter (Eph.3:1-13⁶⁰) of our place and portion in

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.9>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.20>

divine purpose, and of His gift (Eph.3:14-19⁶¹) through apostolic intercession; but He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or even think. He works out His purposes according to the secrets of divine counsel, and is not bound by the poverty of human thought or feeble supplication. What He does and is able to do is according to the power that worketh in us, which indicates the perpetual working of the Spirit of God within the saints. Therefore He is worthy to be glorified and praised for His excellent greatness, and He who works out His purpose in His saints does His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth besides.

Eph.3:21⁶²

The AV/KJV renders the passage “in the Church by (Gk. *en* = in) Christ Jesus,” but scholars add (Gk. *kai* = and) before Christ Jesus, as being in the original, which makes the rendering as in the RV Also the AV/KJV gives the following rendering – “throughout all ages world without end,” a most vague rendering. The RVM gives a literal rendering – “all the generations of the age of the ages,” which seems to indicate this present age, which is called “the age of the ages”; and God is to be glorified throughout all the generations of this age in the Church (that is the Church indicated in this chapter – the Church the Body) and in Christ Jesus. With “Amen” ends the first part of this epistle from which we may learn Paul’s understanding of the mystery of Christ, and of the peculiar character of this day of grace,

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1-13>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.14-19>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.21>

this dispensation, this economy of things which began with the descent of the Spirit and will end with the Rapture of the saints at the Lord's coming to the air. In all this time God is to be glorified in the Church and in Christ Jesus; in all this time the principalities and powers learn the manifold wisdom of God, whilst the saints with the eyes of their heart enlightened know of the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and of His power toward believers, and know too that love in all its immensity – its breadth, length, height and depths – which is particularly and peculiarly expressed in the love of Christ (who loved the Church), which gave them such a place and portion in Himself.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 4

Eph.4:1¹

“The prisoner in the Lord” shows the character in which Paul besought or exhorted the Ephesians. To Philemon he wrote at this same time, that though he had all boldness to enjoin that which was befitting, for love’s sake he would rather beseech, and this he did as Paul the aged and as a prisoner, also, of Christ Jesus (Philn.1:8,9). There is much pathos in such words. A prisoner “in the Lord” shows how completely he viewed his being in prison as within the will of God for him. “To walk” are words used in a figurative sense meaning the whole tenor of their behaviour. “The calling” is described as “your calling” in verse 4, and signifies the divine call in the Gospel to which they had responded, with which is associated a new manner of life as indicated by the word “worthily”.

Eph.4:2²

“Lowliness” means to be lowly in mind, both to feel and to exhibit humility. It is no pseudo- humility – proud yet only politely humble – but a lowliness which one inwardly feels and which is in consequence manifested. “Meekness” signifies to have a lenient, mild, forgiving disposition – a kind, non-retaliating, self-sacrificing spirit. These excellent qualities were fully expressed in the Lord, who said, “I am meek and lowly in

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.2>

heart” (Matt.11:29³). “Long- suffering”; how contrary this is to the nature of the “old man”! but how true it is of divine nature! How true of love which “suffereth long, and is kind”! “Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not” (Rom.12:14⁴). “Forbearing one another in love”; this shows that love lies at the bottom of all long-suffering and forbearance.

Where it is lacking, one word may provoke another, and one unkind act may hatch a brood of acts of unkindness, and soon quiet, happy assembly life and fellowship may become as a stormy sea swept by the gales of carnal strife, and alas, there may be much wreckage left from such scenes. We are liable also to go to the other extreme, and because of unkind words or actions to assume a cold, callous, indifferent attitude to such as so act towards us, so that whatever is done little notice is taken, because fellowship has become frozen. Those who love can never be indifferent to those whom they love, and believers who treat their fellow-believers with unkindness are to be borne with and prayed for that they may be saved from the carnal state into which they have lapsed. The Lord’s words are that His disciples are to love their enemies, and to pray for those that persecute them (Matt.5:44⁵). When we think of the inherited tendencies, the physical and mental defects, the acquired habits of believers, which can only be changed and modified by grace, we see the need of “forbearing one another in love”.

Eph.4:3⁶,4⁷,5⁸,6⁹

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.29>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.14>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.44>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.3>

How well has Satan managed to break the uniting bond of peace by divorcing what God the Spirit has joined together in unity! Seven ones form a unity:

(1) One Body, in which all believers are from Pentecost till the Lord's coming.

(2) One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, in whom all believers are baptized by Christ into the Body, and who indwells the body of each believer.

(3) One hope, the common hope of all believers in the coming again of the Lord, whom they shall meet in the air.

(4) One Lord, who is the Saviour and claims the obedience of each one whom He has saved.

(5) One faith, which contains the Lord's revealed will, both in the matter of salvation, and in His commandments given for the obedience of His own. It is the Faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jud.3¹⁰), for which the saints are to contend earnestly.

(6) One baptism, which is baptism in water, whereby a person acknowledges himself as having died to the world and to his old carnal self; hence-forward he is to be under the authority of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.6>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude.3>

(7) One God and Father of all, the Father of all believers in Christ, who is supreme in His Fatherhood, for He is over all. He is not only over, but He is through all, in the pervading presence of His Spirit, and is in all as indwelling all by His Spirit. Whilst in verse 2 we have the need emphasized for the manifestation of such moral excellencies as “lowliness”, and so forth, which are so necessary to Christian communion, we have in verses 3 and 4 emphasis laid on the necessity of maintaining that oneness in doctrine, described as the unity of the Spirit; and unless it be diligently maintained there can exist no unity amongst saints which can meet with divine approval.

This unity of the Spirit is to be kept in the uniting bond of peace. What harmony obtains when saints see eye to eye! what concord! ‘Tis as the sweet music of heaven breathed upon the community life of God’s together people. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Let peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces. For “behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” One in doctrine – continuing stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, and also exhibiting the moral qualities of Christian living in lowliness, meekness, etc., with the condition of the life of the believer in agreement with the doctrinal position he occupies, what can be more desirable or more to be sought after than this?

Eph.4:7¹¹

“Grace” and “gift” are the chief points in this verse. The greater the gift, the greater the measure of grace to fulfil the gift of service given. An apostle needed greater grace than a man of less-

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.7>

er gift; so the measure of gift Christ has given necessitates an equivalent of grace from Him.

Eph.4:8¹²

This is a quotation from Ps.68:18¹³ and has reference (1) to the going up of Israel out of Egypt to serve God in the sanctuary which they builded for Him; (2) and to the going up of David and Israel with the ark when God went up to Zion. We have also the same thought in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:12¹⁴). In David's day the service of God instituted by Moses had fallen into decay; the priests and Levites were not engaged in keeping the Ark, and the Ark when moved from the house of Abinadab was carried on a new cart, instead of on the shoulders of the priests the Levites. David learned the will of God later, and in those days of revival in David's reign the priests and Levites were reinstated in the God-given work, which was theirs from the days of Sinai in the wilderness.

God who had led forth His captives from Egypt, shook Israel free from the enemies round about in David's days, and they went up to serve God in agreement with His will. These types spoke of the time when Christ would arise and lead up His once captive people, not only those on the earth who had been bound by sin, but also his captives – “a troop of captives” – whom death had bound, who were in Hades, in the lower parts of the earth (see Heb.2:15¹⁵). In this glorious going up He gave

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.8>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.68.18>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Judg%205.12>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.15>

gifts to men – apostles, prophets, etc., whereas it was priests and Levites in the past. In this day there are no sacrifices offered on behalf of the people; the sacrifice of Christ renders such unnecessary, as God’s will is for all saints to be in a priesthood, both holy and royal (1 Pet.2¹⁶), wherein they collectively may offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Apostles, prophets, etc., were for the perfecting of the saints, by the ministry of the word of God.

Eph.4:9¹⁷ The Lord could not have ascended had He not first descended, for He is God (Jn 1, Heb.1¹⁸) and with God there can be no ascension, no rising higher. But He descended, He humbled Himself and became Man, and down to the cross He went, down to death and to Hell or Hades (Acts 2:27¹⁹). “He (David) foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he (his soul, verse 27) left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.” Note how Hades is called by the Lord “paradise” in Lk.23:43²⁰, and “Abraham’s bosom” in Lk.16:22²¹: To “Abraham’s bosom” all who died in the faith of Abraham went, whereas the unbelieving rich man, though a child of Abraham, went to the place of fiery torment, the lowest Sheol or Hades.

Eph.4:10²²

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.9>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.27>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.23.43>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.16.22>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.10>

The same person as descended has ascended; personality never changes. He was God before He came, God while He was on earth, and He is God still. But though He is God, He became Man for our redemption, but His being and personality never changed. He who is God and the Son of God has ascended to fill all things. He will give a fulness and completeness to all things which would be vain and void without Him. A universe without Christ ascended and glorified would be as the world without the sun. He shall fill all things with His presence; His fulness, His blessing and His glory will give a new and full meaning to creation.

Eph.4:11²³

Here we have the gifts indicated in verse 8: Apostles and prophets are men associated with the foundation (Eph.2:20²⁴); they laid the foundation of Christian teaching, and since the foundation has been laid it is the responsibility of all who teach to erect all their principles and to make all their deductions in strictest accord with the foundation, if they would minister to the upbuilding of the saints. They must, if they would be faithful ministers of Christ, use the complete revelation that has been given, without seeking on their part to add thereto or to take therefrom. The evangelist's work is specially associated with the Glad Tidings, whereas the work of the pastor (or shepherd) and the teacher is that of caring for the saints and ministering to them, and instructing them in the word of God.

Eph.4:12²⁵

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.11>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.20>

It will be acknowledged by all true believers that all such are perfect through Christ's sacrifice, but here we have a work of perfecting, which is carried on by spiritual ministry. The verbal form of this word (Gk. *katartismos*) is rendered "mending" in Matt.4:21²⁶, and "restore" in Gal.6:1²⁷, and "perfected" in Lk.6:40²⁸: "Everyone when he is perfected shall be as his master", which signifies one who is thoroughly taught. "Katartizo involves the notion of positive defect, which requires to be repaired, as the mending of a net, refitting a ship, setting a limb." The sense of "perfecting" in Eph.4:12²⁹ is similar to that in Lk.6:40³⁰: Each born again person is perfect in Christ, but in his understanding of the will of God he is ignorant, so he must be taught. The words "building up of the Body of Christ" signify the edifying of the Body, in the instruction of its members, as is indicated by the word "saints". Where was this edifying given? Undoubtedly within the churches of God, into which the saints had been gathered in their respective cities, in which the saints could together carry out the truth of God which was enjoined upon them in the ministry of the gifts of the ascended Christ.

Eph.4:13³¹

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.12>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.4.21>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.1>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.6.40>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.12>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.6.40>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.13>

There are two objectives in the ministry of the gifts – (1) “Unity of the faith,” (2) “Knowledge of the Son of God.” “The unity of the Faith” is more than a correct mental apprehension of the unity of the will of God, as expressed in the Faith; it involves unity in practice – a together people knowing and holding and practising the Faith is what is involved in the unity of the Faith. Indeed it is ever in the doing of the will of God that the difficulty arises. Every part of the Faith has had to be bought, often at a high price. Some believers regard the teaching of doctrine to be the cause of so much disunity amongst the children of God, but what is to be the effect of the ministry of the gifts? Is divine doctrine an evil thing? Are the words of the Faith not to be received and heeded? Is there to be no unity amongst the children of God? Must we descend to be together only on the ground that we are children of God? “Sound in the Faith and godly in life” are terms used by some, but they are of such nebulous and elastic character as to be quite incomprehensible.

“The knowledge of the Son of God,” means to have an exact or full knowledge. The Divine Sonship of the Lord is one of the chief points of attack of Satan through his human agents. Was Christ the Son of God before His appearance in Bethlehem? Yes! Beyond the least shadow of doubt: “For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him” (Jn 3:17³²), and many other portions express the same fact. Was the Son God? Yes! “The word was God” (Jn 1:1³³). Was He in nature and essence the same as God the Father? Yes! “I and the Father are one” (Jn

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.17>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

10:30³⁴). Was He in attributes and manifestation the same as God the Father? “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (Jn 14:9³⁵). How much there is to be said about the Son of God! “The world itself,” Jn says, “would not contain the books that should be written.” Full growth is to be aimed at, perfect stature, maturity, and that measure is according to the fulness of Christ. We grow from our exalted and glorified Head, according to the measure of fulness that reposes in Him. What possibilities are open to each one of us!

Eph.4:14³⁶

The word “children” (or more correctly “infants”), is in contrast to “a full grown man” in the former verse. “Tossed to and fro” would remind us of a boat which has drifted from the shore and which is tossed about on the waves – “Carried about with every wind of doctrine” – a mere plaything to every wind that blows. “Sleight of men” means their trickery. The word comes from Gk. *kubeuo* = to play dice; hence, to cheat. Men became very clever in their dice playing and cheating and so, alas, men have become clever in spiritual things, and have left the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ (2 Cor.11:3³⁷). “After the wiles of error”: this has been rendered “with a view to the systematizing of error”. How clever and crafty men have been in the production of human systems! and how grave is the danger of such systematized error to the children of God who are

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.30>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.9>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.14>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.11.3>

uninstructed in the word of righteousness! They are liable to fall a prey to one of the many systems of error.

Eph.4:15³⁸

“Speaking truth in love” signifies not merely the speaking of truth, but that what you speak is really what you maintain or hold. It is the speaking words of uprightness which you sincerely believe. Indeed it is the exact opposite of the trickery and craftiness mentioned in the previous verse (verse 14). “In love” is the element in which truth is to be maintained and spoken. By this means you may grow, for spiritual growth is impossible where sincerity and love are lacking. Newberry says – “being truthful in love”. “In all things” shows that every phase of growth is contemplated. Some, alas, are highly developed in one thing, but sadly deficient in others. The scripture here views all-round development. “Into Him” seems to signify into or towards full growth as is seen in Him who is the Head. This is seen in verse 13 where the figure of “a full grown man” is used. “Into Him” no doubt also indicates that state of communion with the Head essential to growth which is absent in Col.2:19³⁹, “not holding fast the Head”.

Eph.4:16⁴⁰

“Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth” (buildeth up RVM) (1 Cor.8:1⁴¹), and the Body in the upbuilding of itself buildeth

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.15>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.19>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.16>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.8.1>

itself up in love. The Body is in vital union with the Head, and from Him it is fitly framed and knit together (note that only of the temple the words “fitly framed together” (Eph.2:21⁴²) are used, for the temple is a building, not a body; a body is not only framed, but it is also knit together). The Body is “fitted together” and “compacted or compounded” “by every joint of the supply”, that is by every point of contact or union with the Living Head through which the vital spiritual nourishment flows. This communication of spiritual food to the Body in its members is said to be “according to the working of each several part”. Each part or member (note the RV marg. reading of 1 Cor.12:27⁴³, “members each in his part”) of the Body has its due function to perform in the work of edification, or building up of the Body.

Certain members are more responsible than others as, for instance, in connection with the gifts of verse 11; but the work of upbuilding will miscarry if there is not the steady and continuous flow according to the energy of the several parts in the fulfilment of their divinely given competence to function in the work of the Body building up of itself. The Body has the necessary power within itself to upbuild itself without the aid of external means being imported. It is like the human body; when in a healthy condition it requires no artificial means to assist it to perform its proper organic action. The functioning of the Body in its members was seen in the apostolic times in the church and churches of God and this is ever the sphere in

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.21>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.27>

which the Body is to be seen in action and wherein it can be built up in love by means of the truth of God.

Eph.4:17⁴⁴

Whilst verses 1-16 outline positively how we should walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called, we have the matter put negatively from this verse onward. He who is the prisoner “in the Lord” testifies “in the Lord” that the walk of the believer is not to be as the walk of the Gentiles. Note the force of “also”, for the Ephesian Christians once walked as the Gentiles walked at that present time. Such a life was one of vanity, of useless unprofitableness; and empty mind, bereft of real wisdom, can lead to nothing but an empty wasteful life. Such conduct is to be eschewed by the believer.

Eph.4:18⁴⁵

Natural light enables men to discern, so does spiritual light. Men are darkened in their understanding through sin; they have no understanding or discernment, hence the folly of their ways. They are also alienated from the life of God. Such became the state of Adam in Eden, when he passed into the darkness of sin, and such becomes the state of all his posterity. Sin entered and death through sin and in consequence men became darkened in their understanding through sin. As they go on the darkness deepens, they are alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them which is native to them. Men know not God and knew not the Son of God. See what

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.17>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.18>

is said in Rom.1:22-27⁴⁶ as to man's folly, though he presumes to be wise. "The hardening of their heart" – we have here the seat of the trouble; continuance in sin increases the callousness of the human heart, firstly in its attitude to God, which was never more truly seen than at the cross of Christ; their callous, cruel treatment of God's holy Servant Jesus indicates a condition of heart which nothing but the love and grace of God can change. Then callousness toward God finds its expression in the callousness of man towards his fellow – the strong oppress the weak and the rich the poor.

Eph.4:19⁴⁷

"Past feeling" describes a desperate state, and alas, this state is rapidly becoming more and more in evidence, and must become so as men get further from God, and the outward effect of the gospel over men who have never known its inward power, becomes less. The result of lack of feeling was that they gave themselves up to licentiousness. In Rom.1⁴⁸ it is thrice repeated that God gave them up, but here they gave themselves up to wantonness to work ("to make a trade of", RVM) every kind of uncleanness greedily, with inordinate lust.

Eph.4:20⁴⁹,21⁵⁰

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.22-27>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.19>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.20>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.21>

How great is the contrast between “the Christ” of verse 20 and the conduct of verses 17-19! The Christ is the foundation of all Christian teaching. Take Christ from Christianity, what have we? Take Christ from the Scriptures, what have we? Take Christ from Christian conduct, what have we? Nothing! nothing is left but what we have read of in verses 17-19: But “ye heard Him”, not about Him, but ye heard His voice by faith, “ye were taught in Him”, not simply as scholars by a teacher, but taught in Him, as those who are in living union in Him, by which means “ye learned the Christ”, learned as disciples, learned to obey, by the living power of life in Christ, the teaching of Christ, as seen in His example and doctrine.

“Ye heard,” “ye were taught,” “ye learned,” – were definite experiences of the Ephesian saints and this was the outcome of what is afterwards stated – “even as truth is in Jesus”. There could be no Gk. *didache* = teaching or doctrine, without the revelation of truth, and the truth is personified in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God. Think of what is written of “Jesus” in the Gospels. Then in the Acts Luke writes – “The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1⁵¹). Again, “Jesus saith unto Him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6⁵²). He who said, “Thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17⁵³), is Himself the incarnate Word, and consequently the Truth in Person.

Eph.4:22⁵⁴

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.1>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.17>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.22>

Here we return again to what is stated in verse 17 as to the former conduct of the Ephesian saints, prior to their conversion. Col.3:9⁵⁵ says, “Ye have put off the old man with his doings”. Here the old man is to be put off as concerning our former manner of life, that is, as concerning the conduct of the old nature prior to the new birth. The old man, which is the corrupt nature still in the flesh, is ever waxing corrupt after the lusts (the inordinate, excessive desires of all kinds) of deceit.

Eph.4:23⁵⁶

With the putting off or away of former conduct is associated the renewing of the spirit of the mind. This is evidently the human spirit as liberated from the darkness and bondage of sin, occupying its rightful place as the means by which the mind is quickened and enlightened. Upon the human spirit the Holy Spirit operates, enlightening the spirit of the regenerated man by the word of God, as indicated in 1 Cor.2:10-16⁵⁷: The process of renewing and transforming the mind (see Rom.12:1⁵⁸,2⁵⁹) is to go on continually, and the result will be that the conduct of the new man will be manifested in the believer’s life.

Eph.4:24⁶⁰

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.9>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.23>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.10-16>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.1>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.2>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.24>

Here we have an undoubted allusion to the restoration of the divine image in each regenerated individual. God's image lost through sin is restored according to that divine image seen in Christ, for we are told that the new man is created in holiness and righteousness of truth, even the truth which is in Jesus (verse 21). The holiness and righteousness of God was truly manifest in the Man of Sorrows and it is that Christ-like conduct which is to be manifested by every one who has been recreated after His image, who is the Image of the Invisible God.

Eph.4:25⁶¹

In Colossians, "Lie not one to another" is associated with "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings," but in Ephesians, truthfulness is enjoined because of the close relationship that exists between believers – "we are members one of another". The neighbour here is bound by closer ties than the common kinship of race as emphasised by the law, in "love thy neighbour as thyself". "Kinship" is here superseded by "membership". Why should we lie? and why should we lie to fellow-members? Yet when we think of the lie perpetrated on members by those who teach what is false doctrine, we see that to speak of truth, in agreement with "the truth", is called for by the close bond of fellow-membership.

Eph.4:26⁶²

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.25>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.26>

See Ps.4:4⁶³ whence the quotation is taken. Anger is not of necessity a wrong emotion, as it is said in certain places that both God and the Lord were angry. But anger which arises from the weakness of the flesh is not justifiable, and it is difficult to be angry and not to sin. Wrath here means “provocation” or “irritation” and is that which ruffles the spirit and makes communion with God impossible, and our peace of mind flees before it. We must not go to sleep, if we would be of a calm and happy frame of mind, in such a state. The sun is not to go down upon our irritation.

Eph.4:27⁶⁴

To continue in a state of having been provoked will lead to the devil stealing quietly in with his bellows to blow the heat of provocation into a furnace of fire. He knows well how to do it, for he has been provoking men to dark deeds of violence, often ostensibly to wipe out supposed stains on their honour, and often hatred and feuds have been created which have gone on from generation to generation. Consider the Lord who, when provoked by men, never allowed His peace to be disturbed, and His peace He has given to us (Jn 14:27⁶⁵).

Eph.4:28⁶⁶

“Thou shalt not steal” were the words of the law, and the words of the moral law are restated and emphasized here, not merely

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.4.4>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.27>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.27>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.28>

negatively – for “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do” – but the hands that were filled with other people’s wealth are now to be useful and fruitful, and be stretched out to the poor and needy to meet their need.

Eph.4:29⁶⁷

The previous exhortation was as to theft and good works, here it is the matter of speech and the matter of speaking to the edification of others. David called his tongue, his glory, and our most useful member, wherewith we bless God and instruct men, may be gravely abused and may be a world of iniquity among our members; and instead of being used to communicate grace to the hearers may speak words which may be destructive to their well being. The more highly instructed the tongue is the greater the blessing or the graver the danger it may be. All should speak according to the need of the hearer. As in the previous verse, there are to be no idle hands, so here in this there is to be no worthless speech.

Eph.4:30⁶⁸

There is to be no stealing, no corrupt speaking, which things are outward; but now we come to what is inward, touching the truest experience of the heart, upon which outward conduct reacts. Who has not known it – the Holy Spirit grieved by the person in whose heart He dwells? we feel inwardly disturbed and convicted by the Holy Spirit’s grief; the conscience is smitten. Let us remember our security and our indebtedness to the

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.29>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.30>

Holy Spirit, for it is in (not by) Him we are sealed by God unto the day of redemption, when redemption for us will be complete – soul and body, in which all believers share. In the light of this we are not to grieve the Spirit, who shall not forsake us all the way even to that great day.

Eph.4:31⁶⁹

We have here a brood of venomous serpents which the old man is ever willing to harbour, and which are ever ready to bite. They are close akin in their character. The saint is never safe himself and never a safe companion so long as these crawling things are about him. He must put them away.

Eph.4:32⁷⁰

How great is the contrast between this verse and the previous one! – kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, all expressive of the character and ways of God. Indeed we are here brought to the cross of Christ through which God has forgiven us in Christ. Here, as never before, we have God's kindness shown.

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.31>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.32>

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 5

Eph.5:1¹

This verse continues the same theme as that contained in the exhortation in the closing words of the previous chapter (Eph.4:32²), “Be ye kind one to another”, and is carried on in the following verse (Eph.5:2³): “and walk in love”. These words are in agreement with the Lord’s command to His disciples in Matt.5:43-48⁴ which closes with the words, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect”, He who in His perfect ways towards men is kind to the unthankful and unholy, and who “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust”. God’s beloved children should copy their Father’s ways and imitate His works of goodness.

Eph.5:2⁵

The new commandment is here enjoined upon the saints by Paul – “that ye love one another; even as I loved you” (Jn 13:34⁶). The “old commandment” (1 Jn 2:7⁷) was, “Thou shalt

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.32>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.2>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.43-48>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.2>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.34>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.7>

love thy neighbour as thyself”, which was truly a high standard, and was only possible to such as sought to fulfil the first and great commandment of the law – “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God”. Heart devotion to the Divine Being alone could lead men to love their neighbours, beings like themselves that their God had made. But when we come to the Lord’s new commandment, which is His command to His own, it can only be fulfilled by and among His disciples – “which thing is true in Him and in you” (1 Jn 2:8⁸) – and it is the outward mark of true discipleship: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn 13:35⁹). Thus the standard of love is “as Christ loved you, and gave Himself up for us”.

Paul seems to have the burnt offering before His mind in the thought of the Lord’s offering of Himself as an odour of a sweet smell. The burnt offering typified Him in the complete devotion of Himself to God. In His love for God His Father He was completely resigned and devoted to His God – a whole burnt offering – and in His perfect love and complete devotion we are accepted. His love in the offering of Himself is the pattern of love – love to God and to one another. Christ’s offering of Himself was a sacrifice – an offering in blood, an offering made through the death of a victim.

Eph.5:3¹⁰

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.8>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.35>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.3>

Saints, holy ones, are to eschew the very name of such sins among them. They are not in keeping with their saintly character. Note the contrast of “not even be named among you” of verse 3, and “which are not befitting” of verse 4: The former verse describes sins of a more serious character, “for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience” (Col.3:6¹¹). These things are begotten of cruelty and lust, and are in their nature the very opposites of “walk in love”. Covetousness was the first sin of Eden. Eve coveted the forbidden fruit and the knowledge of good and evil: she got her desire, but at what a cost! Who can describe the sorrowful reaping from that act? It was cruel to all her posterity. The sin of covetousness and the wrongs that accrue therefrom fill the world with woe today. Fornication and impurity – such sins react on those who are guilty, but oft-times on generations yet to be. Men are regardless of their cruel acts, the consequences of which others may inherit.

Eph.5:4¹²

Filthiness that is obscenity (not merely obscene or shameful language as in Col.3:8¹³), indecency, what is the very opposite of that which is beautiful in Christian conduct. Foolish talking is the talk of fools, mere babble which is sinful. Note what the Lord says about the “idle word” (Matt.12:36¹⁴), which is in contrast to the good man who out of his good treasure brings forth good things; also what is said in Eph.4:29¹⁵ about “cor-

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.4>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.12.36>

rupt speech”. As for jesting, this Greek word *eutrapelia* has first a good meaning – that which is polite and pleasant, but here it is used of buffoonery or jesting. Such talking and jesting are not fitting for a Christian who has more serious matters to engage his mind and tongue, so the apostle adds “but rather giving of thanks”, which shall lift the mind to the higher realm of true spiritual joy, which the pleasantries of witticisms can never accomplish. Thanksgiving is to be the pastime of saints, leaving jesting as the pastime of the worldling, who seeks in buffoonery to efface the hard facts of the serious side of life.

Eph. 5:5¹⁶

Here we have Paul appealing to the knowledge of the Ephesian saints, rather than informing them of the fact that such persons indicated have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Note the association between the sins of verse 3 and the persons who may be guilty of such sins in verse 5: The kingdom of Christ and God is the kingdom of God; Christ having authority to rule as Lord over God’s gathered people (see Matt. 28:18-20¹⁷). Note how the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God and that flesh and blood (indicative of the natural man) cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6: 9-11¹⁸, 1 Cor. 15:50¹⁹).

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.29>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.5>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.18-20>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.%209-11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.50>

The kingdom of God and the things therein (Acts 1:3²⁰) are an inheritance, not a gift as salvation or eternal life – an inheritance which is not based upon an act of God, as that of Col.1:12²¹, but one which is based upon the subjection and obedience of the believer to the word of God; consequently a saint who may be in the kingdom of God, who can never lose the gifts of salvation and eternal life, may disinherit himself of his place and portion in the kingdom of God by his misconduct, in regard to the sins indicated in the scriptures cited.

Eph.5:6²²

Sin has its recompense, “for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4²³). Sin is lawlessness (1 Jn 3:4²⁴), the violation of what is right, and it ever brings its reward. Under the law “every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward” (Heb.2:2²⁵), and in God’s dealings with men in general He will punish sin not only in the life to come, but even in this present life, though the wrath of God has reference to future punishment. The words of Eph.5:6²⁶ are almost similar to Col.3:6²⁷: Note how Paul speaks in Col.3:5²⁸ of certain sins as our immoral members. “Mortify therefore your

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.3>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.12>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.6>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.4>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.4>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.2>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.6>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.6>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.5>

members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, the which is idolatry”, five immoral members, in number like the fingers of the human hand. The number five is said to be the number which bespeaks weakness, and these sins have brought man to a state of unspeakable weakness, – “without strength” (Rom.5:6²⁹, AV/KJV).

Eph.5:7³⁰

That is partakers with the sons of disobedience in their evil practices.

Eph.5:8³¹

They were once in darkness truly, but this is much stronger language, they once were darkness itself. There can be no inward light in the unregenerate prior to the new birth. By the power of God in the gospel sinners are translated from darkness to light. Those who were in darkness are now children of light, but note how “in the Lord” qualifies their being light, that is light in its active radiating, illuminating power. Many who were truly translated from darkness to light by the gospel’s glorious power are no longer “light in the Lord”. Though eternally “in Christ” they are not “in the Lord” as subject to His will, and shining for Him in the darkness. If the light that is in the believer becomes darkness, how great is the darkness! By their conduct such become like those that go down to the pit.

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.6>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.7>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.8>

Eph.5:9³²

The fruit of light is in contrast to the unfruitful works of darkness (verse 11). Fungus may grow in darkness, but it takes light to produce fruit. Light is the true element in which the children of light live and move and have their being; and the fruit of the light is indicated as “in all goodness and righteousness and truth”, the opposite of which is that which is evil, unrighteous and false, the elements of the present darkness of the world.

Eph.5:10³³

The Christian who would please his Lord must ever be putting himself and things to the test. His whole life is one of testing. Where there is no exercised mind as to what pleases the Lord the believer is on the highway to a state of profanity, in which there is no distinguishing between the holy and the common, between what pleases the Lord and what grieves Him. Generally speaking, everything is good to such a person, and the Scriptural view of the world as an evil thing (which if a child of God loves, the love of the Father is not in him) is contrary to his outlook and conduct. The world and its pleasures are eating into the life of many young believers today, because there is little exercise as to what is pleasing to the Lord.

Eph.5:11³⁴

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.9>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.10>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.11>

The loudest voice of reproof will be heard in the godly life of the separated believer, without which his speaking will have no effect. The believer who has no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness can back his attitude with the words, which will result in what Paul wrote to Timothy when he said that they “that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12³⁵). But this is the only true course open to him; he cannot, if he would please the Lord, temporize. Jn the Baptist was one who for his faithfulness in reproofing the sin of Herod regarding his brother’s wife lost his life. He illustrates the verse under consideration.

Eph.5:12³⁶

Not only is fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness to be eschewed, but such works are not to come into Christian conversation, because of their defiling effect; it is shameful to converse on such themes. Only as is necessary in reproof is the Christian allowed to speak of such matters.

Eph.5:13³⁷

We have here the change effected by the detecting and manifesting power of light. The Christian by his life and reproof detects and condemns the evil, the light of his life shines in the darkness, with the result that wrongdoing is brought to light. Thus wrong will be seen as wrong. It is not that by being manifested the works of darkness change their nature and charac-

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.12>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.12>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.13>

ter, and become light; but by being manifested through reproof evil is seen to be evil; it is revealed and shown to be sin. It is light to such as would refuse the evil and choose the good.

Eph.5:14³⁸

This seems to be a quotation, taken from Isa.60:1³⁹,2⁴⁰, which speaks of Israel's experience in a coming day when, illuminated by the glory of the LORD, they shall arise to shine midst the darkness of Gentile idolatry and depravity. It is quoted here as having the same bearing morally upon the Christian who rises from among the dead (dead in sins) to shed light by reflection as Christ shines upon him. Spurgeon's rhyme – Down among the dead men, no sir, not I: Down among the dead I will not lie! aptly illustrates the point here. The Christian who is actually alive, though sleeping amongst the dead, must arise and show himself living and then he will be light-giving, a light-giver amongst the darkness; and what is true of the individual should be true of the church of God and the churches of God – they should be the light of the world. Of course we do not forget that we live in remnant times, yet such should be the character of collective testimony.

Eph.5:15⁴¹

Walk is like a keynote to Ephesians, chapters 4 and 5, see Eph.4:1⁴²,17⁴³; Eph.5:2⁴⁴,15⁴⁵. Carefully means strictly, accu-

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.14>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.60.1>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2060.2>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.15>

rately; slips in conduct will have a damaging effect on the light-bearer. The parallel word in Col.4:5⁴⁶ is – “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without”. Of David in his early days, it is said that he “behaved himself wisely”; he “behaved himself wisely in all his ways”; “he behaved himself very wisely”; and that “he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul” (1 Sam.18:5⁴⁷,14⁴⁸,15⁴⁹,30⁵⁰). Satan lays many snares and prepares many pitfalls for the child of God, hence the need of a strict walk. Laxity in walk is characteristic of our times and it has its saddening and deadening effect.

Eph.5:16⁵¹

The marginal reading of RV gives – “Buying up the opportunity”. The buyer who sees a good bargain lays hold of his chance which may not be his tomorrow, he strikes the bargain and makes his gain. So must the believer enrich himself. His opportunity for testimony or reproof may not be his again and lost opportunities may all be counts against him in the day of reward of eternal riches. The reason for buying up the opportunity is – “because the days are evil”. This is the character of the

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.1>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.17>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.2>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%205.15>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.5>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.18.5>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.14>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.15>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.30>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.16>

days in which we live. We must seek to make eternal profit even in such evil days, for when we reach the good days of eternity our prospect of ever buying more than we shall have then bought will have gone.

Eph.5:17⁵²

Rom.12:2⁵³ tells us that the will of God is “good and acceptable and perfect”. It is our highest wisdom to know and do it; it suits every phase and circumstance of life. By it the foolish may confound the wise, and be himself saved from endless sorrows, and by the doing of it alone he may please God, for it is only God’s will that is acceptable or well pleasing to God. Epaphras, one of the Colossian assembly, who visited Paul in prison, always strove in his prayers that these saints might “stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God” (Col.4:12⁵⁴), and by his ministry in Colossae he had taught (or we might say “disciplined”) them.

Eph.5:18⁵⁵

The contrast in this verse is plain. There is but one spirit with which saints may be filled and that is the Holy Spirit. All believers have the Holy Spirit, but not all are filled with the Spirit, which carries with it the thought of being under the Spirit’s control. As the spirit of alcohol causes the drunkard to rave, so the Spirit-filled believers are to be found –

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.17>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.2>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.12>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.18>

Eph. 5:19⁵⁶

“Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” The question has been asked – how may we know that we are filled with the Spirit? When do we know that a man is drunken? You cannot look inside to see how well he has regaled himself of his beverage; it is by his fruits that you know him. Even so there is the manifestation of the Spirit (see 1 Cor.12:7⁵⁷). How can we identify Spirit-filled saints? When you hear them speaking one to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with their heart to the Lord. This should be the normal attitude of the heart to the Lord – a saint with a praising, melodious heart.

‘Have you no words? Ah! think again.

Words flow apace when you complain,

And fill your fellow-creature’s ear
With the sad tales of all your care!

Were half the breath thus vainly spent

To heaven in supplication sent,

Your cheerful song would oftener be,

“Hear what the Lord has done for me”.

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.19>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.7>

How true are these verses! But saints are apt to get into a carnal, cross-grained condition, to become murmurers and complainers. The song has died away, the goodness of the Lord has vanished from their eyes, and now they are taken up with the wrongs, real or imaginary, of other saints, and just as one once described the words of another, it was nothing but “rasp, rasp, rasp, gnarl, gnarl, gnarl, just like a rat at a skirting board, till you were worried out of your five senses”. Have saints any complaints? Then let them take them to God as Habakkuk did, and if they are worth listening to He will give them audience and His reply, as the prophet heard God’s voice, and he left the presence of God rejoicing – “I will rejoice in the LORD. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength” (Hab.3:18⁵⁸,19⁵⁹). He was then in a fit state to meet his fellow-Israelite and to speak to him in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Eph.5:20⁶⁰

Of old the Levites in the temple “were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD ... and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever” (2 Chron.5:13⁶¹). This song of praise went on continually for: “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House: They will be still praising Thee. Selah.” (Ps.84:4⁶²). Yes, Selah. Pause and consider such words. Think on what has gone before

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hab.3.18>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hab%203.19>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.20>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron.5.13>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.84.4>

and what follows after. Be engaged in giving thanks always for all things, and thus a continuous stream of praise will rise to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. A thankful heart can never be a grumbling one at the same time.

Eph. 5:21⁶³

This will not be difficult where the mind of Christ is (Phil. 2:3-5⁶⁴) and where the fear of Christ is, that is the like fear as was manifest in Christ, where there is that “lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself”. But where pride and loftiness of spirit prevail there will be no mutual subjection each one to the other. Let us each remember the sure words that “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”, which are amongst the words which shall never pass away.

Eph. 5:22⁶⁵

Though the RV has put the words “be in subjection” in italics, yet the passage requires the words to complete the sense. The AV/KJV translators believed that there was an equivalent Greek word for these in the original. Wives in the divine arrangement are in a position of subjection to their own husbands, and where there is insubjection on the part of the wife, the Lord’s will as to the subject place of the wife is set aside; He it was who ordained in the beginning the relative positions of husband and wife. By being in subjection to the husband

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.21>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%202.3-5>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22>

they manifest subjection to the Lord; this subjection must not be viewed that they render subjection because of their inferior nature or state. Subjection does not mean personal inferiority, otherwise the subjection of the Son of God to the Father (1 Cor.15:28⁶⁶) would indicate that He is an inferior Being. Subjection and inferiority are two entirely different things. Sometimes it happens that persons are subject to others though they are their superiors in almost every way. Thus, because it is the Lord's will, the wife is to be subject to the husband and such subjection is as unto the Lord.

Eph.5:23⁶⁷

Here we are let into the reason for the words of the previous verse "as unto the Lord", namely, because Christ is Head of the Church. The mutual relationship of wife to husband and husband to wife are shown to be according to the pattern of Christ and the Church. Husbands and wives in their behaviour are to be living exponents of Christ and the Church. The Lord's Headship and Saviour characters are here united. (The word Saviour here may be better understood if Preserver is used. Christ is the Preserver of the Body, which is comprised of those whom He has saved.) He is not the Head of the Church because He is the Church's Saviour or Preserver, though it may be correct to view His headship as strengthened by the fact of His being the Saviour of the Body. The husband is to be the saviour of his wife in the sense that Christ is the Saviour of the Body; he is to be the saviour in the sense of the preserver of his wife.

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.28>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.23>

The word saviour (Gk. *soter*) means saviour, preserver, deliverer.

Eph.5:24⁶⁸

The Church is subject or subjected to Christ. The question here is not one that the Church renders obedience to Christ in following His commandments. Christ has delivered no code of laws to the Church the Body as such. Commandments were delivered by the Lord to His disciples. Disciples may be insubordinate to their Lord, may be wilful and disobedient, but never the Church to her Head. It is an eternal fact that the Church is subjected to Christ and the question of moral obedience rendered by the keeping of commandments does not arise.

Of old, Adam delivered the divine command to Eve his wife relative to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it was by means of the commandment that Satan slew both the woman and her husband. The same was true of the commandments of the laws of Moses. "Sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me" (Rom.7:11⁶⁹). Flowing out of the abiding position of the Church's subjection to Christ come the deductions, "so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything". "The husband is the head of the wife" is a statement of divine truth which has as its corollary the fact that the wife is subjected (not a matter of her choice) by the same divine will as made the husband head. So also is it with Christ and the Church.

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.24>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.11>

Eph.5:25⁷⁰

He gave Himself up for her is better, as the Church is here viewed as the wife of a husband. The pattern of affection for a husband in regard to his wife is Christ's love for the Church, and the pattern of the wife's subjection is the Church's subjection to Christ. What an exalted view we have here of conjugal relationships! There can be no higher pattern than this. Pet. refers in his epistle (1 Pet.3:1-7⁷¹) to the pattern behaviour of holy women of old, amongst whom Sarah is a shining example; but Paul deals with a type on a much higher plane. Christ's love for the Church resulted in Him giving Himself up for her. No mind can measure the depth and steadfastness of this love. Though He beheld His bride-to-be sunk in ruin and misery, and though it cost Him His life to save her, He shrank not from the dread ordeal of Calvary. Let husbands look well at the pattern, then at the privilege they have of imitating Him.

Eph.5:26⁷²

Christ's giving Himself for the Church had the object in view that He might sanctify her or set her apart, that she might be to Him what she can never be to any other – even as every husband sets apart his wife from all other women that she can be to him what no other can. Even where the one party may be saved and the other not it still remains that “the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother” (1 Cor.7:14⁷³). By marriage the hus-

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.25>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.3.1-7>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.26>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.7.14>

band sanctifies the wife and the wife her husband. These are separated from the rest of mankind and must not be joined to any other while they both live. Christ by giving Himself on the cross has eternally sanctified the Church, and simultaneously He cleansed her by the laver of water with or in the word.

“The word” here is Gk. *rhema* which means that which is spoken, a declaration, or saying. In Tit.3:5⁷⁴ we have the description of how each member of the Church the Body is saved – “according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing (or laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”. The cleansing or purifying of the individual or the entire Church is effected by the regenerating power of the divine declaration or message. The saying of Christ (Rom.10:17⁷⁵) is the means by which the work of cleansing is wrought. In these verses (25-26) we have the truth of the altar in that Christ gave Himself up for the Church on the cross, that by His giving Himself He might set the Church apart. Here we have His sacrificing of Himself as the altar sacrifice, and then we have the cleansing of the laver in the regenerating power of the word of the gospel. Paul quite evidently has the Tabernacle in type before his mind as he writes, in the altar and the laver and what was effected at each.

Eph.5:27⁷⁶

Here we have the grand end and consummation of all Christ’s work in regard to the Church. She will be presented to Him by Himself the Church glorious. He is her Head, her Creator,

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.5>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.17>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.27>

her Builder, her Saviour, her Sanctifier, her Cleanser, and when she is completed He will present her to Himself. He is her Husband and she His Bride. Some have thought that Israel will be the Bride and some that the 144,000 sealed of Israel will be the Bride; some others have thought that Israel will be incorporated with the Church the Body and that the Bride will be a composite of both. But to such as believe in a pre-tribulation coming of Christ – a coming for those who are “in Christ” – it should present no difficulty. Israel, the woman who brought forth the man-child, the Christ, will be in the wilderness in the place prepared for her (Rev.12⁷⁷) during the great tribulation, whilst in heaven the marriage of the Lamb will take place (Rev.19:7-9⁷⁸), which is prior to the Lamb’s return to the earth (Rev.19:11-16⁷⁹). Israel as such can form no part of the Bride. When the Lord presents the Church to Himself she will be complete; there can be no additions to her afterwards. Moreover the presentation of the Church to Himself must be pre-millennial, presumably subsequent to the time of the Lord’s coming to the air, and the marriage is during the time of the great tribulation – also it must be remembered that thousands and thousands of Israel will be born during the Millennium, for Jerusalem is to be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof (Zech.8:5⁸⁰), so that if the marriage is pre-millennial then thousands, perhaps millions of Israel must be outside the Bride, should it be contended that Israel will be in the Bride.

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.7-9>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.11-16>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.8.5>

The reasoning that Israel forms part of the Bride in consequence cannot be sustained. Christ has not got two Brides – one the Church and the other Israel. When the Church is presented by the Lord to Himself it will have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. No spot or stain which would indicate sin or vice; no wrinkle which would indicate a fault, defect or blemish, nor any such like things, will be found to damage the unsullied holiness and blamelessness of the Church on the day of her presentation to her heavenly and Divine Bridegroom. All this is the work of Christ for the Church and springs out of the fact that Christ loved the Church; hence we have the following exhortation in verse 28.

Eph. 5:28⁸¹

Even as Christ loved His Body (the Church) as is indicated in what He has done for it and will do for it out of love, so ought husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies. This finds in the next sentence an added reason why husbands should love their wives – “He that loveth his own wife loveth himself”. No man ever hated himself, therefore because of the closeness of marital relationship in which the wife is viewed as one flesh with the husband, the husband in loving his wife is viewed as loving himself.

Eph. 5:29⁸²

This is a universal fact – “no man ever hated his own flesh” – but rather he nourisheth (Gk. *ektrepho* = nourishes, feeds

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.28>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.29>

and promotes the health and strength of) and cherisheth (Gk. *thalpo* = imparts warmth, nurses, takes care of) his flesh. And as a man does with his own flesh, so is to be his treatment of his wife, and so also Christ acts towards the Church, and that for the following reason.

Eph.5:30⁸³

The AV/KJV adds “of His flesh and of His bones”, which casts us back on Adam’s declaration – “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”. Eve was builded from a part of Adam’s self, from a rib taken from his side. Eve was made of Adam and for Adam and this which happened to the original pair is the foundation of all marriage, and is the apt figure which reveals more clearly than words can describe the union of Christ and the Church. Severally we are members of His Body. The closeness of the relationship of sinners saved by grace to Christ should fill our hearts with awe and adoration.

Eph.5:31⁸⁴

“For this cause” seems to require the words, “of His flesh and of His bones” in the previous verse, as well as the fact that we are members of His Body. Whilst “For this cause” has definite reference to a man who, entering upon the married state, leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife because of what was done in the beginning when God from Adam’s rib builded a woman and she was of his bones and flesh, yet beneath this there may be seen the shadow of that great reality of Christ’s

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.30>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.31>

leaving His Father's side, giving Himself on Golgotha, creating and building His Bride and then presenting her to Himself.

Eph.5:32⁸⁵

The mystery of human marriage is great (even as all the works of God are), but the mystery of Christ and the Church is greater. Marriage is more than bodily union, whereby two become one flesh; the mental and spiritual side of human beings are also brought into contact with each other. A true wife is a help meet to her husband physically and spiritually. The first man was of the earth, earthy, and so also was the woman who was made from his side; but "the second Man is of heaven" and we who have borne the image of the earthy shall bear the image of the heavenly, we who are already members of His Body. The last Adam is our husband and Bridegroom and we are His bride.

Eph.5:33⁸⁶

Though the apostle has spoken specially of the Church and of Christ's attitude to it, nevertheless and without dealing further with this sublime subject each husband is to love his own wife even as he loves himself, and the wife on her part is to see that she fears her husband. Let not the Christian wife follow the ways of the pert, gad-about (not to mention the cigarette-smoking) modern wife, who treats her husband as a kind of effeminate slave, as though he were a being formed merely for her pleasure. Let such learn their God-appointed place, and let the

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.32>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.33>

husband learn to nourish and cherish his wife even as he treats his own flesh.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 6

Eph.6:1¹

This exhortation views children within the sphere of divine rule in the assembly of God; just as in the previous chapter husbands and wives in the assembly of God are exhorted as to what their behaviour toward one another is to be. Though children have been saved, baptized and added to God's together people and brought under the rule of God amongst the people of God, this does not abolish their responsibility to the rule of parents in the home; but their obedience is qualified by the words "in the Lord". Parents might require their children to do what clearly is not the will of God, then the higher consideration of obedience to God's will would have to be taken into account. But obedience to parents is one of the foundational things in God's will for mankind. First we have husbands and wives, then parents and children. If the relationships of husbands and wives are wrong, lack of unity in the home arising from either insubjection on the wife's part or lack of love on the husband's, then the first part of the will of God relative to parents and children must also be wrong. We live in the perilous times of 2 Tim.3:1², and disobedience to parents is one of the characteristic features of such times.

Eph.6:2³

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.2>

How fitting is the commandment of the Lord, and how suitably it fits the love that is associated with birth, the natural affection which God has implanted in the hearts of human beings! Dishonour shown to parents is the violation of all that is right both in the hearts of human beings according to nature, and in the commandment of God for men. We are told that this is the first commandment with promise. We do not honour father and mother so that we may live long, but a long life is promised in association with obedience to parents, showing how pleasing this is to the Lord. Honour to parents carries with it, as the Lord's word shows (Matt.15:3-6⁴), the caring for them in material things.

Eph.6:3⁵

David in Ps.68:6⁶ truly visualized the state of the rebellious when he said, "The rebellious dwell in a parched land". But to the obedient the promise of Isa.1:19⁷ remains: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land". Let children begin their life well by obedience in the first sphere of divine rule – the home, and they shall have made a good start to well-being in after life. But an Ishmaelitish beginning can but result in the hand lifted against every man and every man's hand against such. See 1 Pet.3:10⁸ for further conditions to life and good days. Note how in Eph.6:3⁹ "earth" is in the place of "the

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.15.3-6>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.68.6>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.1.19>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.3.10>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.3>

land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (Ex.20:12¹⁰). God has given to His New Testament people no land on the earth as He gave to Israel in the past; ours is a heavenly country.

Eph.6:4¹¹

Fathers are here specially addressed as chief in the rule of the home (though the joint rule of parents is in view in verse 1), and consequently need to exercise the greater care. The mother’s rule by loving constraint oftentimes needs the firmer and stronger hand of the father, who must be careful not to go beyond the bounds that wisdom would indicate. Fathers need much grace from God to control their temper in cases where children act foolishly and also not to make unreasonable demands on their children or to apportion unjust blame wherein they are not blameworthy. They must be careful not to provoke or irritate and cause their children to despise their God-given place and the divinely appointed rule of the household.

They are rather to bring up their children and “nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord”. Children, where God has graciously given such, are a sacred charge, and are to be brought up as God would have them with the end in view that they may become useful in the Lord’s service. Many lives are wasted in youth, as a tree may be spoiled in the early years of its growth. As truly as the body of the child needs great care when young, so truly does the mind. A spoiled child when grown up becomes wilful, selfish and proud. But where the discipline and admonitions of the Lord have been administered and the child

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.20.12>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.4>

in early years has been reprov'd and check'd from going in the ways of folly and encouraged to tread the path of virtue, then we may expect plants and corner stones which go to the making of a happy people (Ps.144:12-15¹²). Parents who smile at the folly of their children, and are pliable when they should be firm, are “making a stick to beat themselves with”, and are doing their children irreparable damage. “Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; and set not thy heart on his destruction” (Prov.19:18¹³, also see Prov.22:6¹⁴).

Eph.6:5¹⁵

In this verse we are still within the sphere of the home – firstly, husbands and wives; secondly, parents and children; thirdly, household slaves and their masters. But what is true here of the household slave may be used to regulate the conduct of servants in whatever sphere today. The servant is to obey his master with fear and trembling, not because of what might ensue if he disobeyed, but with fearfulness lest he should fail to please him; indeed servants are to serve their masters in the same spirit as they serve Christ. We do not serve the Lord in a spirit of dread of punishment through failure, but with that fear lest we should not have merited His well-done at the end. So were servants to serve their earthly masters, with that singleness of heart and simplicity of purpose, knowing that even in

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.144.12-15>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.19.18>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.22.6>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.5>

their earthly service, as Col.3:24¹⁶ shows, they served the Lord Christ.

Eph.6:6¹⁷

Servants were to serve, remembering that though the eye of their earthly master was not always upon them the eye of their Divine Master, Christ, saw their every act, and also the motive that prompted their service. It was not to be mere mechanical service, their soul was to be put into their work; they were to do the will of God (whose will was that they should be obedient to their earthly masters) from the heart, or as RVM shows, the Greek word here is “soul” not “heart” – a lifeless, soulless, lethargic servant will usually be in the spiritual work of Christ what he is in the service of his earthly master. Such need to be quickened according to God’s word (Ps.119:25¹⁸), to hear and heed the divine exhortation of this passage.

Eph.6:7¹⁹

This puts, with the previous exhortations, human service to an earthly master on a high plane. It is to be rendered with good will and as done unto the Lord and not to men. Both earthly masters and servants are but actors on the stage of life, each playing his part. The Christian servant must see beyond his earthly master and with good will, with ungrudging fidelity, render service as he would were it immediately rendered to the

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.24>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.6>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.25>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.7>

Lord, without any earthly master coming in between. If this be lost sight of, then the Christian will lapse back to the level of the worldling and instead of being the most faithful and willing of servants, he may practise all kinds of evasion in the doing of his master's will and be a stumbling block to his fellow servants.

Eph.6:8²⁰

It is clear from this passage, and also Col.3:24²¹, that though the Christian servant receives wages from his master, yet for the good work he does (not simply what may be just for him to do), for which his master never pays him, the Lord will reward him in the day of recompense. How much servants may lose in failing to put their whole heart into their work, that day will reveal. Joseph is one of the most beautiful examples of a faithful servant, who in the house of Potiphar was found so faithful that his master left everything to his care. The same was true whilst he was in prison; the jailor left everything in his hand. Then when he was exalted by Pharaoh he was given the whole land of Egypt to rule on Pharaoh's behalf. He that is faithful in a few things is faithful also in much, was exemplified in Joseph. The same principles which governed the bondman governed the freeman, so that these words relative to the conduct of servants have their application to servants today who are not slaves in the scriptural sense, but serve as freemen did of old.

Eph.6:9²²

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.8>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.24>

If the Christian servant is to be the best of servants, then the Christian master must be the best of masters. He is to render to his servants “that which is just and equal” (Col.4:1²³). He is not to extort service from his servant under the dread of threats. Such a state of things enslaves the mind of a servant, and instead of ennobling service by goodwill as unto the Lord the servant dreads the eye of the master; there is no goodwill, but there is a state of serfdom contrary to the spirit of the Lord’s freedman. The master is to remember that he also has a Master and his Master is the servant’s Master also, and that Divine Master has no respect to the person of the master above his servant. (It is contemplated here that the Christian servant has a Christian master.) This should have a sobering effect on the mind of the master, and also must not be allowed to outweigh previous exhortations to the servant, who, though he has the same heavenly Master as his earthly master, must show that obedience and fidelity to his master that the will of God requires.

Eph.6:10²⁴

Finally, for the rest, or from henceforth, be empowered in the Lord or be strengthened. David’s actions at Ziklag aptly illustrates the point here; it says in 1 Sam.30:6²⁵ that “David strengthened himself in the LORD his God”. There is but one way to be strong, and that is by faith in the living God through the revelation He has made of Himself in His word to us. Of

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.9>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.1>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.10>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.30.6>

Abraham it is said, that “he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith” (Rom.4:20²⁶). A doubter is a weak man; James says that he is like the surge of the sea driven and tossed by the wind (Jas.1:6²⁷). Living faith in the living God through His living word is ever the thing that counts in the warfare with the unseen powers of darkness. In the soul of such an one is to be found the strength of the Lord’s might, and he may be in the Lord’s hand as a threshing instrument having teeth, or as Gideon with whom the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Himself. See Jdgs.6:34²⁸ RVM.

Eph.6:11²⁹

The word is very emphatic – Put on the entire, complete, armour of God. Paul no doubt has the mental pattern of the Roman soldier in view as he writes, or it may be that one is seated by him as he indites the letter, and the equipment of the warriors of the iron kingdom of Rome is used to illustrate God’s armour for the Christian soldier. The saints, who may be husbands, or wives, parents or children, servants or masters, all of them members of Christ, are deemed to be soldiers in the army of the King of kings, but alas, not all are good soldiers, some may be deserters and some may have been court-martialled. But such as heed the exhortation to be strong in the Lord, are to heed the further word, to put on the complete panoply, the soldier’s equipment for war, for only such as are equipped can hope to stand against the wiles or methods or ar-

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.20>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.6>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Judg.6.34>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.11>

tifices of the devil. How clever are the devil's methods in bringing down God's saints and what care we must exercise when we enter upon a contest with so redoubtable a foe!

Eph.6:12³⁰

How close is the encounter indicated by the word wrestling! It is a hand to hand encounter, speaking figuratively. The combat is spiritual, not carnal; mental and not physical. In the arena of the mind, in the inner consciousness of a human being, where the shock of the outward attacks of the enemy is felt, protection must be secured by the heavenly armour. There are principalities and powers which are faithful to God, and principalities and powers antagonistic to God and which are within the domain of the prince of darkness. These wage an incessant and malignant warfare against the Christian soldier. They are alive and alert to use all means to overcome the good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Sometimes they use friend, sometimes foe, saints and sinners, prosperity and adversity, praise and infamy, a single incident or a chain of circumstances, anything and everything may be used as tools, by the world-rulers of this darkness to overcome the army of the Prince of life. They are arraigned against the follower of the Lord, as the armies of the Canaanites were against Joshua and the army of Israel. These withstood Israel and opposed their entrance to the land of their blessings, the place of their inheritance. Even so the spiritual armies or hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places withstand the Christian taking possession of what is his and enjoying his blessings

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.12>

(Eph.1:3³¹). It seems evident that there are the heavenly places for such as are in Christ, and heavenly places which are the present abode of unclean spirits, beings that are fallen and depraved, who are described as the spiritual hosts of wickedness, wickedness being characteristic of such beings. These are described as “the world-rulers of this darkness”.

God is the Ruler of the world, but these satanic world-rulers rule in opposition to God, to keep the world in its present condition of darkness and enmity to God. It may be that in Dan.10³² we see certain of these principalities or world-rulers, who are described as “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” and “the prince of Greece” (Dan.10:13³³,20³⁴,21³⁵). Of those that held against these we read of “Michael your prince” (verse 21), “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (Israel)” (Dan.12:1³⁶), “the archangel” (Jude 1:9³⁷). In the darkness of idolatry these beings of the kingdom of darkness are again revealed in the words of Paul – “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils (demons) and not to God”. Demons to the Greek mind were petty or small gods, but in the Scriptures they are evil spirits, and the work of such evil spirits was to keep the nations in the darkness.

Eph.6:13³⁸

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.3>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.10.13>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2010.20>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2010.21>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.1>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.9>

“Take up” and “put on” are exhortations which show that the Christian soldier is not clad in armour once for all, but that it is his responsibility to put on the entire armour that he may be able to withstand in what is called “the evil day”. The evil day is, no doubt, the day of temptation, when the Christian is subjected to satanic temptation. Such a day the Lord knew when He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. These temptations were foiled by His faith in the word of God. He used, as no man ever did so perfectly, “the shield of faith” and “the sword of the Spirit”. The Christian warrior must stand till the foe is put to flight. He must neither sit down nor turn his back to the foe, and having done all that is possible for him to do in the combat, he is still to stand. “Defeat” must be expunged from his vocabulary.

Eph.6:14³⁹

“Stand therefore,” to withstand the shock of attack, having girded your loins with truth. There must be no looseness, nor slackness as to truth. The Christian soldier must be truthful, truthful in ordinary secular affairs, and truthful in the truth of God wherein he has been instructed. If the believer is untruthful he will fall an easy prey to the father of lies. Some think themselves clever, and that it is profitable to get the better of an opponent by leaving for the moment the path of truth, by allowing themselves a little looseness (not liberty) in regard to sticking to the truth, but alas, it will be ruinous in the end. Truthfulness is the first thing in the armour of God. Then comes righteousness – right doing. First speaking what is right

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.13>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.14>

– truth, then doing what is right – righteousness. This is not imputed righteousness, though no one can work righteousness who has not first of all been declared righteous by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The breastplate of righteousness is the righteousness of God wrought out by the believer. “Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matt.6:33⁴⁰). “He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous” (1 Jn 3:7⁴¹). Balaam of old “loved the hire of wrong-doing”. Doing wrong may at the moment seem to be the more profitable thing, but it has a sad end. Misunderstood by all, I dare to do what Thine own heart will prize: This should be the attitude of those who would fight the good fight of the faith, and against such a breastplate the devil may in vain hurl his javelins.

Eph.6:15⁴²

The Christian soldier must not be bare-footed; he must be shod with the preparation or readiness or preparedness of the gospel of peace, even as the Roman soldier was not equipped to march against the foe without being shod with his sandals. The good soldier must be ever ready to march with the all-conquering gospel of peace. It seems a contradiction in terms to associate the gospel of peace with warfare, yet it is this gospel of peace that overcomes those who may be used as tools by the world-rulers of this darkness, and how frequently men who have been Satan’s best servants have had to acknowledge defeat, and have

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.6.33>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.7>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.15>

become followers of the Lord and valiant fellow-soldiers! Paul the writer of this epistle was one of these.

Eph.6:16⁴³

Withal, besides those things mentioned, taking up the shield, the large shield (which is illustrated by the large shield which was carried by the Roman soldier on his left arm. The lighter piece of armour – the breastplate, was buckled on the breast) of faith; “the faith” is in the original, but this is called by scholars a genitive of apposition, which is also true in other cases in this passage where the original has “the breastplate of the righteousness”, “the gospel of the peace”, “the helmet of the salvation”, and in this verse “the shield of the faith”. It is not “the Faith” as an objective thing, but faith, the personal faith of the Christian soldier in the word of God, which is impervious to all the fiery darts of the devil. Not only are the evil one’s darts sharp and piercing, they are fiery or burning, and where they enter they kindle an unhallowed burning, but faith in God and His word will quench such darts; they will fall as harmless upon the large shield of faith.

Eph.6:17⁴⁴

Take, receive or accept the helmet of salvation. In 1 Thess.5:8⁴⁵ Paul speaks of the helmet as “the hope of salvation”, which indicates that in every conflict divine deliverance is ever to be counted on, and the hope of salvation shall be fully realized

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.16>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.17>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.8>

in the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we must count on God's salvation in every battle, and, as Jonah truly said, with the seaweed wrapped about his head, "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jon.2:9⁴⁶). David also said, when he fled from Absalom, "But Thou, O LORD, art a shield about me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head" (Ps.3:3⁴⁷). The sword of the Spirit is a saying of God, a divine utterance, and that divine word exactly suits the occasion and circumstances. It is as the flaming sword of Eden which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. It was never more powerfully and fitly used than when the Lord, during the temptation, said, "It is written" three times (Matt.4:1-11⁴⁸). "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (Gk. *rhemati* = saying) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God".

A "saying" of God feeds the man of God: a "saying" results in the hearing of faith on the part of the sinner (Rom.10:17⁴⁹). It is the word (saying) of faith which is nigh to those who have been brought up to know the Scriptures, such as the Israelites were in the past (Rom.10:8⁵⁰). It is the word (saying) with which all believers are washed (Eph.5:26⁵¹). Against a saying of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, the enemy cannot stand. May we ever be ready to say, "It is written", for such a word or saying abides for ever (1 Pet.1:25⁵²).

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jonah.2.9>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.3.3>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.4.1-11>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.17>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.8>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.26>

Eph.6:18⁵³

The Christian soldier must be a man of prayer. His weapons and armour will be unavailing unless he takes up and dons his armour with all prayer at all seasons for all saints. No soldier ever fights merely for his own protection. He fights for others – for the honour of his king and the protection of his country, as the soldiers of this country do. The Christian soldier fights for the honour of the King of kings, as a defender of the gospel, and for all saints, that the truth may remain with them, for their blessing, their freedom and well being. If he yields to the foe, he himself must suffer, but others will also suffer, to a greater or smaller extent, according to his position and responsibility in the King's army. Think of Caleb in Israel's army of old, who wholly followed the LORD and fought a good fight. Those who would be good warriors must be valiant in battle and persevering in prayer.

Eph.6:19⁵⁴

Paul, a great warrior and eminently a praying man, seeks the prayers of others that God might grant to him utterance in the gospel. If he, so fully qualified by natural gifts sanctified by the Spirit's power, needed the prayers of his fellow saints in his day, how much more we, so much less fitted than he was, need the prayers of the saints on our behalf that utterance and boldness may be given in making known the gospel! Let all saints who hear the gospel preached (and those who do not) uphold the

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.25>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.18>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.19>

preacher by prayer that he may be in his preaching an instrument in God's hand for the spreading of the gospel of God.

Eph.6:20⁵⁵

His imprisonment had not silenced him; his chain had not bound the fluency of his tongue, nor had his experience damped the fervour of his spirit. He would speak and speak boldly. But he was human and liable to depression and discouragement. He was a man of like passions with us. He needed to pray and be prayed for. He was Christ's ambassador whom the Lord had allowed to be bound, and though His servant and representative was bound He had not broken off negotiations with His enemies. Paul the servant and ambassador knew well His Master's mind and would yet plead with his enemies boldly to accept the terms of peace which were offered in the gospel. He would wax more bold as grace was given him through the supplication of the saints, and he would boldly press the claims of his Divine Master on men.

To settle down, to relax into quietness, would be fatal to the cause into which he had thrown himself heart and soul and for which he was a prisoner of Rome. Rome had a mission, but he had a message. Theirs was to subdue nations and to rule the world with iron rule, but his was to give liberty, that men might come under the golden rule of his Divine Sovereign. So he wished to speak boldly as he ought to speak, and we also should speak, with neither halting phrase nor apologetic manner.

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.20>

Eph.6:21⁵⁶

His message – the gospel – comes first, now he speaks of “my affairs, how I do”. The saints were undoubtedly anxious to know how Paul the prisoner in the Lord fared. Was he being fed and clothed? Could he pay his way in his own hired dwelling in which he was guarded by Roman soldiers? How did matters stand with him? So to relieve their minds he sent Tychicus, who was of Asia, perhaps an Ephesian as Trophimus was, with whom he is associated in Acts 20:4⁵⁷: Tychicus was sent by Paul to Ephesus a second time; see 2 Tim.4:12⁵⁸: He is said to have been “the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”; truly a description of a beautiful character!

Eph.6:22⁵⁹

What self-sacrifice and consideration for others we see here! The saints were evidently deeply concerned and distressed about the apostle, and, to the end that they might be relieved of their distress and comforted, Tychicus is sent by Paul, that he might convey to them tidings of his state and affairs. He was like a loving parent, for whom his children entertained grave fears as to his well being, sending tidings to them of how he fared, not by letter merely (such as Tychicus carried, for he carried the Epistle to the Ephesians), but by a message. You can think of the tears of the apostle in parting with this beloved brother on the one hand, and on the other, of Tychicus arriv-

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.21>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.4>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.12>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.22>

ing in Ephesus amongst the saints he knew so well, bringing the news of the apostle's imprisonment and of his bodily health and how he fared – indeed he was to make known all things concerning the apostle.

Eph.6:23⁶⁰

Peace, the common salutation of the Hebrew, is used by the apostle in closing. Peter uses a like salutation at the close of his first epistle. It was the angel's salutation to the shepherds at the Lord's birth – Glory to God, peace to men. Whence does it come! – from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not peace alone; it is joined with “love with faith”. Faith and love are joined in 1 Thess.3:6⁶¹, also see 1 Thess.1:3⁶²; 1 Cor.13:13⁶³, etc. Love finds a companion in faith, and if there is an increase in love there is ever a growth in faith. So here, the apostle in sending peace to the brethren, sends love with faith, a pair that God has wedded together, and what God has joined man must not sunder.

Eph.6:24⁶⁴

Grace is ever the token in the Pauline epistles of his hand. The A.V. translate “in uncorruptness” (“in incorruption”) by “in sincerity”. Whatever word is used the genuineness of the love of the believer for the Lord is the matter in question. Is such

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.23>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.6>

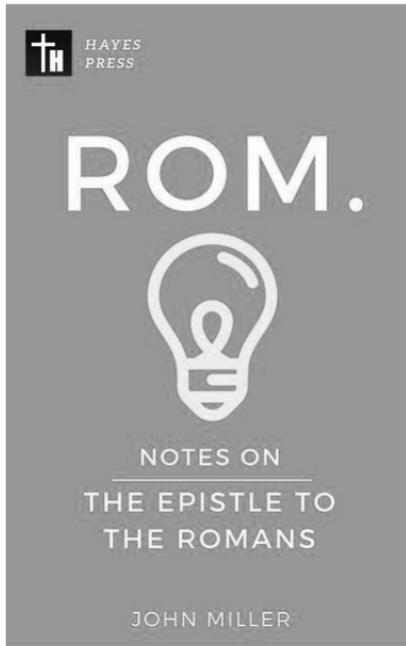
62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.3>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.13.13>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.24>

love pure? or is it fouled by corruption? What is the motive in love? Is the Lord loved for who He is and what he has done? or is there some ulterior motive in the profession of love for Him – Judas professed to love the Lord and kissed Him much in the betrayal, but was there ever love so corrupt, so foul, so poisonous! His grace is with those, and ever will be, that love Him in uncorruptness.

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Notes on the Epistle to the Colossians

Notes on the First Epistle to Timothy

Notes on the Second Epistle to Timothy

Notes on the Second Letter to the Corinthians

Notes on the Epistle by James

Notes on the Epistles by Peter

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Notes on the Epistles by John

Standalone

The Way of God



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