

## Ephesians — Chapter One

**Eph. 1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of GOD, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:”**

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of GOD, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.” (ASV)

SAINTS — ἅγιος — *“Reverend, worthy of veneration...set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his...prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean...in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy”* (Thayer, p. 7); *“Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint...Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God’s purity and abstaining from earth’s defilement”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom).

In ancient times, the person who wrote a letter signed it at the beginning, unlike the practice today of signing at the end of the letter. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, i.e., the one chosen by GOD’s will through Jesus (the Savior) Christ (anointed one, Messiah) to take the Gospel (good news) to those outside the Jewish family (Acts 9:15). The statement here is used to establish Paul’s authority for the things he will teach in this letter.

Regarding the word **“apostle,”** it should be remembered that, since the word basically means “one sent on a mission with authority from the one sending him,” this word can be used about a variety of different people. The most common understanding of this word is with reference to the men Jesus specifically called, i.e., the original twelve, to transmit His Father’s will to mankind. Other men in the Bible are also referred to as apostles, but such designation is used in a secondary sense. This sense of the word is used when a human being sends another human being on a mission. Note some examples of this below:

**“Which when the apostles,**

**Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out”** (Acts 14:14, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers (•πόστολος) of the churches, and the glory of Christ”** (2 Corinthians 8:23, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger (•πόστολος), and he that ministered to my wants”** (Philippians 2:25, emphasis mine, RK).

It should also be noted that the same word is used of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house”** (Hebrews 3:1-2).

To whom is this letter addressed? There seem to be two groups in mind, yet the two groups are one. The letter is written to Christians, as the word “saints” implies. Regarding the word **“saints,”** Ayers offers these thoughts.

*“Saint means ‘separated from sin’ and ‘consecrated to God.’ The Greeks used the word to speak of those dedicated to their gods. Paul used the term to refer to all Christians. This word is used of baptized believers more than any other in the New Testament, and it emphasizes the holiness that is to be characteristic of the life of every Christian (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Heb. 12:14)”* (Ayers, p. 51).

Since the letter is written to Christians, why state that it is to Ephesus and then to the faithful? It was written first to the Ephesians but intended to be circulated among the baptized believers wherever they may be and in whatever time they might live. Thus, like all of the New Testament, it was first written and delivered to specific saints, yet meant for all who obey Him.

Notice the phrase **“in Christ.”** Who are in Christ? The faithful (suggesting loyalty to Christ) and the saints (those separated from sin for GOD’s use).

**Eph. 1:2 “Grace be to you, and peace, from GOD our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

“Grace to you and peace from GOD our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (ASV)

GRACE — χάρις — *“Properly that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness...good-will, lovingkindness, favor”* (Thayer, p. 665); *“Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom).

PEACE — εἰρῆ — *“Particularly in a single sense, the opposite of war and dissension...By implication, a state of peace, tranquility...Peace, meaning health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom).

Two blessings are wished by Paul upon his brethren — **“grace”** and **“peace.”** Grace refers to a gift given by one to another, not because the one receiving it has done anything to deserve it. Rather, even though he does not deserve the gift, he receives it. What gift have GOD and Christ given which Christians do not deserve? Some would say everything, and that is correct. Probably the gift spoken of here is the redemption afforded to man through the particular act of Christ’s death on the cross.

Another point which needs to be emphasized is that, though GOD gives (really

to all of mankind) His grace in providing the opportunity for salvation, it is not an unconditional gift. In order for GOD’s grace to have true meaning for any man, that man must meet certain conditions to have GOD’s gift of salvation. If it were the case that GOD’s grace is unconditional, then all men must be eternally saved, which thought is totally contrary to GOD’s Word (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23).

The desire that Christians might have peace would have been particularly thought of in that time, since they were under constant threat of persecution, imprisonment, or even death. But it would also refer to the tranquility that one’s mind would experience because of a right relationship to GOD. One who has had his sins washed away and who remains faithful to GOD has no fear of destruction by making GOD his enemy. Often man makes the One who can destroy both body and soul in Hell his enemy.

**“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:28).

When GOD is one’s enemy, there can be no peace.

Lipscomb rightly observed that there can be no peace without grace (Lipscomb, p. 16). This points out the general observation that all blessings worth having come from Deity (Father, Son, and Spirit).

*“Peace is not merely the tranquility and equilibrium of a soul in harmony with the Creator, but the word also anchors and symbolizes one of the great value-judgments of Christianity, namely, that peace is better than war”* (Coffman, p. 127).

Though the world around him can be in utter chaos, a Christian can have an inner peace which can see him through it. Paul described such as **“the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding”** and went on to

describe that peace as being able to **“keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:7). Paul said that he was **“persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8:38-39).

GOD desires that all men might receive His blessings, but only those who obediently serve Him benefit from those blessings spiritually now and in eternally.

**Eph. 1:3 “Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”**

“Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ:” (ASV)

The English word **“blessed”** is found twice in this verse but refers to two different things. When speaking of GOD, it refers to His being worthy of praise. This worthiness is found in the fact that He has provided everything man needs in the physical realm, but more importantly, that which is spiritual. Man is a dual creature, both physical and spiritual; therefore he has needs in both areas. GOD supplies all. The text under consideration here refers to the spiritual blessings which have been so graciously given to man through GOD’s Son.

GOD is the **“Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** How is it that GOD is called Jesus’ Father? Are they not both Deity and have always been in existence? This must deal with the authority of the Father.

**“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all**

**authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all”** (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

One should also notice the term **“Lord”** in this passage. Jesus (Savior) Christ (Messiah) is **“Lord.”** A Lord is one who has authority and is the owner, or master, of property. As such, he has the right to command and to expect to be obeyed. Those who obey him will be honored, whereas those who disobey him will be punished. Be it understood — Christians are the property of Jesus Christ, for He has paid their redemption price with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Speaking of Christ, the Revelation says, **“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”** (Revelation 5:9).

GOD, through His Son, **“hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”** The emphasis is again upon spiritual matters — ALL spiritual blessings, i.e., there are no spiritual blessings which have not been given to those who are in Christ.

The term **“places”** is not found in the original text. Instead of **“heavenly places,”** the text literally reads “heavenlies.” A few of the scholars believe this refers to Heaven and thus make it the blessings which come from Heaven. Most believe it refers to the church, wherein the blessings of salvation are found in Christ.

One should further notice that **“all**

**spiritual blessings**” are found **“in Christ.”** There are no spiritual blessings had by anyone outside of Christ. There are physical blessings which come from GOD for all men (rain, sunshine, et cetera). But there are NO spiritual blessings for anyone who is outside of Christ. This raises the important question, *“Since there are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ, how does one get ‘in Christ?’”* The Bible does not leave us without instruction in this vital area. Baptism is what puts one into Christ.

**“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (Galatians 3:27; emphasis mine, R.K.).

Once one is “in Christ” he is not to live as he previously had, i.e., in rebellion to GOD. He is to put off the old rebellious man and put on the new obedient man.

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3-4; emphasis mine, R.K.).

Not only does baptism for the remission of one’s sins (Acts 2:38) put one in Christ, it also puts him in the church.

**“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”** (1 Corinthians 12:13).

What is the one body? It is the church, as the great apostle Paul clearly and precisely stated as he spoke by inspiration.

**“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that**

**fillet all in all”** (Ephesians 1:22-23).

**Eph. 1:4 “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:”**

“even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love:” (ASV)

Before the foundation of the world was ever set, did GOD look ahead into the future and decide each person’s fate who ever lived? No! That idea is Calvinistic predestination, not Biblical predestination. GOD gives every man who lives the choice of what he will do with his life. Even the Jews who were born into the chosen family had a choice as to whether they would remain faithful to GOD and be saved or reject Him and be lost. This is evidenced in all of the prophets and can be summed up in Joshua’s plea to the Israelites shortly before he died.

**“If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”** (Joshua 24:15).

Yet, GOD has made a choice as to who will be saved and thus blessed; but upon what basis is that choice made? It involves the will of man. GOD has set the standard of right and wrong and determined that all who choose to follow His laws will be His chosen people. All who refuse to obey Him will not be His children. These rules for being the chosen of GOD in order to receive His blessings were set before the foundation of the world. Thus, under the Christian dispensation, all who through obedience are **“in Him”** (Christ) are the chosen ones.

*“Was God’s selection conditional or*

*unconditional?’ The answer is provided in the text: God hath chosen us ‘in him,’ that is, in Christ. The question then becomes: ‘Is coming into Christ conditional or unconditional?’ Once more, the answer is provided in Scripture. Paul said, ‘For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ’ (Gal. 3:26-27, NKJV). Obviously, entrance to Christ is conditioned upon the faith and baptism of a believer. Jesus said, ‘He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’ (Mark 16:16, NKJV). If God has chosen Christ and then those who are in Christ (and he has), and if being in Christ is conditional (and it is), then it necessarily follows that the choosing is based on the same conditions that are required for coming into Christ” (Caldwell, p. 17).*

Christians are not chosen to be the chosen people because they are **“holy and without blame.”** Rather, once they have determined to obey the Christ, and actually do obey Him, then they are made holy and without blame before GOD by Christ’s sacrifice. The obedient disciples’ sins were washed away in the precious blood of Christ.

**“From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”** (Revelation 1:5, emphasis mine, RK).

Where does one come into contact with that washing of the blood which takes away his sins? The Bible always gives the answer to important questions such as this. Does the Bible say sins are washed away at the moment one believes? **No!** Does the Bible say that one’s sins are washed away the

moment he confesses Christ as the Son of GOD, or at the moment he repents of his sins? **No!** Not one verse can be found which states any of these propositions. The following is the only place other than Revelation 1:5 which talks about this washing away of sins.

**“Now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16, emphasis mine, RK).

What is the motivation behind GOD’s blessings? What is the motivation behind a Christian’s acceptance of these blessings through obedience? LOVE! In the first place, it was GOD’s love which provided a way of escape from sin and its punishment.

**“GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16).

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of GOD: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not”** (1 John 3:1).

Second, it is man’s love for what GOD has done for him that prompts a reciprocal love for Him.

**“We have known and believed the love that GOD hath to us....We love Him, because He first loved us”** (1 John 4:16, 19).

It is believed by this writer that Paul intends for the reader to consider both sides of this love — GOD’s side and man’s side. If this be the case, it illustrates how one must often ignore the man-made breaks between verses, and — yes — even chapters of the Bible.

Eph. 1:5 **“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to**

## **Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,”**

“having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,” (ASV)

PREDESTINATED — προορίζω — *“To predetermine, decide beforehand...to foreordain, appoint beforehand”* (Thayer, p. 541); *“To determine or decree beforehand”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Decide upon beforehand, predestine”* (Bauer, p. 709); *“To set bounds before; and then to predetermine”* (Barnes, p. 21); *“This word means ‘to mark out beforehand, to define a boundary’* (Ayers, p. 55).

Calvinism teaches that GOD made His individual choices as to who would and would not be saved before the foundation of the world was ever set. It further teaches that if GOD determined one to be either saved or lost before the foundation of the world, then one could not change his eternal destiny no matter what he did. If that doctrine were true, what does it do to faith? The doctrine of Calvinism *“teaches that people are not saved because they believe in Christ, but rather they believe in Christ because they are saved”* (Ayers, p. 56).

GOD did not “predestinate” individuals to be eternally saved or lost. GOD did predestinate certain classes of people to be either saved or lost depending, upon their decision to obey Him or their refusal to obey Him. If a person refuses to obey the commands of GOD, then he is placed by GOD in the class of those who are eternally lost. On the other hand, if one chooses to strive honestly to obey GOD to the best of his/her ability, then that person is placed by GOD into the group which is saved. If man has no choice as to his eternal destiny, then why are there so many passages in the Scriptures which call for man to make a choice (cf. Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 30:19; Hebrews 11:25)?

GOD (before time began), set the boundaries and marked out the boundaries,

which would determine whether one is eternally saved or lost.

One should carefully consider the great gift that GOD has given to those who choose to be obedient to Him — ADOPTION. The adoption of this passage seems to be taken from the Roman practice of adoption, *“since adoption was unknown to the Hebrew culture”* (Sheerer, p. 818). Caldwell helps us understand Roman adoption: *“Adoption was a powerful figure to the ancient Mediterranean people and it is to us. It is an even stronger figure when both parent and child are sufficiently mature to consent to the adoption. The Roman domestic authority of the father was complete. Under law, a noted Roman could adopt a grown son for the purposes of perpetuating his name or providing a suitable receiver of his estate. For so long as he lived, the father had absolute legal control over the life of the adopted son. The son, in turn, totally surrendered himself to the new father in order to receive his name and inheritance. The father gave great gifts to the son. The son responded with respect for the father. Love was given and love was returned”* (p. 22). Considering Roman practices of adoption as outlined above, one should then carefully consider Galatians 3: 26 - 4:7. One is baptized into Christ, thus becoming GOD’s son, receiving the adoption of a son, becoming an heir through Christ.

Also consider Romans 8:14-17: **“As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD....ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD: And if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD.”**

**“According to the good pleasure of His will.”** One of the concepts of the Greek word for **“good pleasure”** is purpose. It was according to the purpose of GOD’s will that adoption was offered to man through man’s obedience to that will. This fits the word

“**predestinated**” found earlier in this passage. It is and always has been the purpose of GOD for man to have salvation. “**Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth**” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Eph. 1:6 “**To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.**”

“to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved:” (ASV)

MADE US ACCEPTED — χαριτόω — “*To make graceful, i.e., charming, lovely, agreeable...to pursue with grace, compass with favor; to honor with blessings*” (Thayer, p. 667); “*To grace, highly honor or greatly favor*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Bestow favor upon, favor highly, bless*” (Bauer, p. 879).

The bestowal of adoption through GOD’s grace will cause those who accept it to praise GOD, i.e., commend and honor GOD for such a blessing. This grace which caused GOD to adopt those who willingly come to Him is an unearned and unmerited favor. Man can do nothing to earn GOD’s favor, nor is GOD’s favor owed to man, not even to men like Moses, Elijah or Paul.

When one becomes GOD’s adopted son, it makes him “**accepted.**” In the study of this word (see above), we learn that GOD honors and highly favors the adopted child. But notice that a condition is placed on one who is being honored by GOD. To receive this honor, one must be “**in the beloved.**” The Beloved One is of course Christ, through Whom all blessings flow. “**Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ**” (Ephesians 1:3).

How can any man refuse the blessings of GOD through His Son? Imagine a destitute child wandering in the streets. He is filthy, his clothes are nothing more than rags, and he is

starving. Can one imagine some rich person coming along and offering to adopt this child, with the promise of meeting all his needs, and the child refusing him? Why would he not say no? Because he realizes his great need. Without this person’s help, he would die a senseless death. Therein lies the reason so many refuse to accept the grace which GOD offers to mankind — they do not understand the great poverty of their souls, and thus feel no need of a Savior. Until man understands his great spiritual needs, he will not seek the Savior and the blessings He offers.

Christians, unless they become like the dog which returns to his own vomit (2 Peter 2:22), understand the great blessings GOD has given them. They will thus highly exalt GOD for the marvelously, merciful and unmerited favor He has bestowed upon them.

Eph. 1:7 “**In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;**”

“in Whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,” (ASV)

REDEMPTION — • πολύτρωσις — “*A releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom*” (Thayer, p. 65); “*The recalling of captives (sinners) from captivity (sin) through the payment of a ransom for them, i.e., Christ’s death. Sin is presented as slavery and sinners as slaves. Deliverance from sin is freedom*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Buying back a slave or captive, making him free by payment of a ransom*” (Bauer, p. 96).

Where is redemption found, i.e., who paid the price for man’s freedom? The “**Beloved!**”

Man could not pay the price for his redemption. Under the Old Law a man who could not redeem himself could be redeemed by a relative.

“*If a man were unable to redeem himself from bond-service, his kinsman might redeem him (Lev. 25:48). Antypically the Son of God became*

*the Son of man, that, as our kinsman,  
He might redeem us (Matt. 20:28)”*  
(JFB, p. 399).

What was the redemption price? The beloved's blood, the blood of THE Son of GOD. Notice that no other price could accomplish this release from bondage. The sacrifices of the Jews on the altar did not accomplish redemption. **“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”** (Hebrews 10:4) The man-made religions of idolatry (and modern equivalents of such) could/cannot accomplish this redemption. Only the blood of Christ was sufficient to accomplish this great feat. Jesus loves man **“and washed us from our sins in His own blood”** (Revelation 1:5). But He does not force His blood upon man as Calvinism teaches. Man has to appropriate that blood by a voluntary action. Where does man come in contact with the precious blood of Christ?

**“Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”**  
(Acts 22:16).

Baptism is the only place a man can come in contact with the blood of Christ. A person who has not been baptized has not been cleansed — he is therefore lost!

From what did this precious blood redeem man? From his sins and from the punishment such sins deserve. Jesus said His mission was to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10), and His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; 20:28).

Why did GOD offer a redemption price for man? *“God paid the ransom solely because of His deep and abiding love for us. He owed us nothing. He offered grace when we deserved to die”* (Caldwell, p. 29).

**“GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from**

**wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”** (Romans 5:8-10).

**“Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you”** (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Eph. 1:8 **“Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;”**

*“which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,”* (ASV)

ABOUNDED — περισσεύω — *“To exceed a certain number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure”* (Thayer, p. 505); *“To be in excess, exceed in number or measure. In the NT, to be or have more than enough”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Exceedingly, beyond measure”* (Bauer, p. 651).

WISDOM — σοφία — *“Wisdom, broad and full intelligence”* (Thayer, p. 581); *“In the NT, it refers to wisdom: (I) Skill in the affairs of life, practical wisdom, wise management as shown in forming the best plans and selecting the best means, including the idea of sound judgment and good sense. (II) In a higher sense, wisdom, deep knowledge, natural and moral insight, learning, science, implying cultivation of mind and enlightened understanding”* (Zodhiates, CD).

PRUDENCE — φρόνησις — *“Understanding”* (Thayer, p. 658); *“To think, have a mind set. Prudence, good judgment, wisdom. The ability to govern one's own life wisely; a skill and carefulness in dealing with one's own resources”*

(Zodhiates, CD); “Way of thinking, (frame of) mind...understanding, insight, intelligence” (Bauer, p. 866).

“**Wherein**” refers back to the grace of the past verse. One of the things GOD’s grace does is teach. “**The grace of GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**” (Titus 2:11-12). In the context of this present verse, it seems important to understand that aspect of GOD’s grace. This grace (teaching) which saves comes through the Word of GOD. “**I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith**” (Romans 1:16-17). Acceptance of GOD’s instructions gives wisdom and prudence to man

This grace which GOD supplies is in “super abundance,” (abound), i.e., more than is necessary. Why was it necessary for GOD’s grace to abundantly provide “**wisdom and prudence?**” Because “**it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps**” (Jeremiah 10:23). Thus, GOD made sure that man has everything he needs to serve Him faithfully and gain the eternal reward of Heaven.

What did GOD abundantly supply? “**Wisdom and prudence.**” After observing the word definitions above, “**wisdom**” is seen to refer to deep knowledge, “*knowledge that sees into the heart of things, which knows them as they really are*” (Robinson, p. 30). “**Prudence**” refers to the understanding that one has, dealing particularly with the way one thinks. It is a way of thinking which leads to correct thought and correct thought leads to correct action.

The word “**us**” should be carefully

noticed. Its primary application would seem to be directed to the apostles and other inspired writers chosen to reveal GOD’s “**wisdom and prudence**” to mankind. The secondary application would be to all who will listen to the writings of these men. Man in any age after the Scriptures were completed has all that he needs to understand GOD’s Will and to obey it.

Eph. 1:9 “**Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:**”

“making known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him” (ASV)

PURPOSED — προτίθημι — “*To place before, to set forth, to set forth to be looked at, expose to view*” (Thayer, p. 552); “*To set before someone....To propose, set forth or before the eyes, publicly*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Set before someone as a task or duty...display publicly*” (Bauer, p. 722).

The word “mystery” is used in modern language to signify something which is not understood or cannot be understood. But that is not the meaning of the word “**mystery**” in the Bible. In the Bible, this word refers to something hidden by GOD for a time. Thus, that which had been a mystery could only be known by man through a revelation from GOD. Man could never figure this “**mystery**” out through his own reasoning. In the present text, it speaks about knowledge regarding His ultimate plans for man’s salvation through His Son. But notice that the text shows that He has now made known these things which were previously hidden. According to Peter, even the angels did not know GOD’s eventual plans for man’s salvation (1 Pet. 1:12).

How has GOD revealed these things to man? “**GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD. For**

what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the Spirit of GOD. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of GOD; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). It is through the "foolishness of preaching" (1 Corinthians 1:21) that the Gospel of Christ (which GOD had planned before the foundation of the world) is now revealed to mankind. The secret of GOD's plans for man's salvation now been made known through the Gospel. Why was it kept a secret for all of those thousands of years?

**"We speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which GOD ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"**  
(1 Corinthians 2:6-7).

If GOD's plan had been revealed from the very beginning, the Lord would not have been crucified. Without His crucifixion, without shedding His blood for man, man COULD NOT have forgiveness of his sins.

The mystery which Paul speaks about is no longer a secret and is not to be kept as a secret! Christians are commanded to take this revealed knowledge to all of the world. **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"** (Matthew 28:19-20). **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15).

Notice how this "mystery" was made

known to man. It was "purposed in Himself." The word "purposed" means that something was placed before man, set before him publicly so that he could look at it (see above definitions). In the New Testament, GOD set before man's eyes the final chapter, so to speak, which gave understanding to all He had previously revealed. It is similar to the reading of a mystery novel. Clues were given by GOD all through the Old Testament, but the end plan and result were not fully understood until the final revelation was made known by GOD. NOW ALL MEN CAN UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN FOR THEIR SALVATION. **"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"** (Ephesians 3:4). Let man take heed before he claims that it cannot be understood or that all cannot understand GOD's revealed mystery alike! To say such things is to contradict the Spirit of GOD.

Eph. 1:10 **"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:"**

"unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the Heavens, and the things upon the earth; in Him, I say," (ASV)

DISPENSATION — οἰκονομία — *"The management, oversight, administration, of other's property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship"* (Thayer, p. 440); *"The position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or of property, either one's own or another's"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Management of a household, direction, office"* (Bauer, p. 559); *"Management of a household, a city, or the world"* (Spicq, p. 568).

Since the word "dispensation" (commonly translated as "steward") means one who oversees a household, and does so on a personal, hands-on level, it is evident that GOD oversaw every part of the plan for bringing His Son into the world and putting all

things under Him. Nothing happened by chance. Everything was accomplished exactly at the right time.

The “**fulness of times**” (when the time was right) causes one to remember the prophecy given to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream of the statue (Daniel 2). Four world empires, beginning with Babylon, were to unfold themselves in history. Each contributed to preparing the people for a time within that fourth kingdom (Roman empire) when the Messiah would appear and establish a kingdom which could not be destroyed by man (Study this author’s notes in Galatians 4:4-5 on the fullness of time).

**“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of GOD is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel”** (Mark 1:15).

**“When the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

This plan of GOD was to result in all things being placed under the authority of Christ, both in Heaven and on earth. **“Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of GOD; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him”** (1 Peter 3:22). Thus, GOD’s plan was put into final effect at the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son.

One of the key phrases found in this passage is **“in Him.”** Some have tried to manufacture universalism out of this passage, i.e., everyone will go to Heaven. But the phrase **“in Him”** negates that claim. For the only way to get **“in Him”** is through obedience to His commands.

**“He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know**

**that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us”** (1 John 3:24).

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death”** (Romans 6:3)?

Therefore not all will be saved in the end (cf. Matthew 7:13-14).

*“The obvious importance of all this is summed up in the fact that God’s mystery of redemption was kept secret until the time was right for God to usher in the gospel age”* (Caldwell, p. 34).

Eph. 1:11 **“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will:”**

*“in Whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will;”* (ASV)

OBTAIN AN INHERITANCE — κληρώ — *“To cast lots, determine by lot. To choose by lot. To allot, assign by lot”* (Thayer, p. 349); *“To cast lots, determine by lot, i.e., to determine something, choose someone”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Appoint by lot...obtain by lot, also simply receive, have something”* (Bauer, p. 435).

PURPOSE — πρόθεσις — *“The setting forth of a thing, placing of it in view...a purpose”* (Thayer, p. 539); *“A setting forth, presentation, an exposition, determination, plan, or will. It involves purpose, resolve, and design. A placing in view or openly displaying something. A thought or purpose”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Setting forth, putting out, presentation...plan, purpose, resolve, will”* (Bauer, p. 706).

It is **“in Christ”** that we have obtained the inheritance. This phrase, **“obtained an inheritance”** is one word in the original and refers to a choosing by lot. Since the lot was

determined and cast by GOD, this indicates that those who receive the inheritance were purposely chosen.

**“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD”** (Proverbs 16:33).

GOD purposed that all who would obey His instructions (and thus accept the privilege of being in His Son) would be saved.

GOD set the boundaries for being in Christ before time ever began. It was not a haphazard arrangement which determined this; it was by deliberate thought and consideration for what was best for mankind. Further, the terms set forth for the redeemed possessors of the inheritance were not determined by a community, nor in council with His creation — He determined the boundaries of His inheritance — the saved. GOD determined to save man **“in Christ.”**

**Eph. 1:12 “That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.”**

“to the end that we should be unto the praise of His glory, we who had before hoped in Christ:” (ASV)

WHO FIRST TRUSTED — προελπίζω — *“To hope before”* (Thayer, p. 538); *“To hope in advance or before”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Hope before, be the first to hope”* (Bauer, p. 705).

**“That we should be to the praise of His glory.”** *“The Christian is to live a life of praise to God because it was to that end that we were first created and then redeemed”* (Caldwell, p. 37).

**“Every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him”** (Isaiah 43:7).

**“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created”** (Revelation 4:11).

*“Man must look beyond his own selfish view of his life and try to understand that he was created by God and for God, not primarily for himself”* (IBID)!

**“Who first trusted in Christ.”** There are two primary thoughts as to whom this phrase refers. Some believe that this is speaking about the Jews who had had this hope of a Messiah long before the Gentiles. It is they who had received the promises and had looked throughout the centuries for Him and for the salvation He offered. It is they who were to be a “called people,” His chosen people, during those early ages. The second view is that this refers to those who first became Christians and possibly especially those who were chosen to teach the Gospel to the world (apostles). It should be remembered that the words **“who first trusted”** mean “hope before.” They had hope before the present time of this letter. Those Jews who had obeyed the call of GOD through Christ were the first to become GOD’s inheritance, the first to be the redeemed, the first which glorified His name **“in Christ.”**

**Eph. 1:13 “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,”**

“in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation,— in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” (ASV)

SEALED — σφραγίζω — *“To set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal”* (Thayer, p. 609); *“(I) To seal, close up and make fast with a seal signet such as letters or books so that they may not be read...(II) Generally, to set a seal or mark upon a thing as a token of its authenticity or approvedness”* (Zodhiates, CD).

The first thing that one might notice is the difference between this verse and the last one. In verse twelve, it was **“we,”** which

seems to indicate the apostles and/or Jews which first heard the message of salvation and obeyed it. In the present verse, the word “**ye**” is used apparently to signify those to whom this letter was addressed — Gentiles.

These Gentiles had “**heard the word of truth,**” which is “**the Gospel of your salvation.**” Who provided man with the word of truth, the Gospel? It came from the Father through His Son and in final form was delivered to the inspired writers by the Spirit of GOD, who then passed it on to all of mankind. What had these Gentiles done with the word of truth, the Gospel? They believed it. After believing the word of truth, the Gospel, did they receive any benefit from such? They were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It should be noted that “**believed**” is inclusive of obedience.

What does it mean to be “**sealed?**” In addition to the definitions given above, Sheerer makes these observations: “*In the Bible times a seal was used: (1) to guarantee the genuine character of a document or, figuratively, the genuine character of a person; (2) to mark ownership; and (3) to protect against tampering or harm*” (Sheerer, p. 819). Caldwell gives this helpful definition of the word: “*The be **sealed** is to be branded or marked by an impression which has been stamped on in order to distinguish one person or thing from another*” (Caldwell, p. 41). Caldwell then goes on to make these observations: “*(a) Scripturally, being sealed is being marked as belonging to God (2 Tim. 2:19). (b) Scripturally, being sealed does not entail supernatural intervention by the Holy Spirit. We are marked or certified by the Spirit as children of God when our character and attitudes are changed by our response to the Word delivered through the Spirit (Eph. 4:30-32)...(c) Scripturally, being sealed involves verification that God is true (John 3:33-34)...Scripturally, being sealed involves absolute faith in the promises of God...(2 Cor. 1:20-22)*” (Caldwell, p. 43-44).

Some believe that the phrase “**sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**” deals with the miraculous manifestations which were granted unto the Ephesians. But what about man today? Are those who become Christians today “**sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise?**” Yes!

**“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of GOD, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's”** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Today one receives the seal of the Holy Spirit in his heart when he receives GOD's Word into his heart and then subjects his will to the will of GOD as expressed through the Word by the Spirit. When His Word becomes the controlling factor of one's heart, it will be manifested through his life that he belongs to GOD. Christians do not need to wear a cross or a sign around their neck to show to whom they belong. That is not how GOD seals (identifies) His own. Today, one is identified as belonging to GOD by the life he lives. “**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven**” (Matthew 5:16).

Eph. 1:14 “**Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.**”

“which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of GOD's own possession, unto the praise of His glory.” (ASV)

EARNEST — •πράβων — “An earnest, i.e., money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid” (Thayer, p. 75); “Earnest money, a pledge, something which stands for part of the price and paid beforehand to confirm the transaction” (Zodhiates, CD); “First installment, deposit, down payment, pledge, that pays a part of the purchase

*price in advance, and so secures a legal claim to the article in question, or makes a contract valid”* (Bauer, p. 109).

An “**earnest**” is a down payment which guarantees full payment at some future date for something purchased. Thus, GOD has guaranteed final redemption of His purchased possession. The word “**until**” should be noticed in the text because it speaks of something yet future. It is true that man has salvation while upon this earth when he has obeyed the commands of GOD for salvation (Hearing, Belief, Repentance, Confession, Baptism, and Remaining Faithful). Christ provided the blood which purchased His church, which made the church His own possession (Acts 20:28). The possession has been purchased by a down payment until the full realization of eternity in Heaven becomes a reality. As long as one lives on the earth, the inheritance is yet future, though he be a son in line to inherit all. Why? Because at any time in his life he may, by his choice, become an unfaithful child of GOD which will not receive the final inheritance.

What is this “**earnest**” of which the text speaks? What guarantee does one have that the inheritance will be given? When one purchases a home, does he not sign written documents which state that he will fulfill his promise to pay for the house? *“The Holy Spirit articulates the promises of God and thus becomes the assurance of salvation to the believer until the time he actually receives all rewards from God”* (Caldwell, p. 45). This guarantee has been given to man in a document — THE BIBLE. The idea of GOD’s promises being sure through His Word is expressed in Hebrews 6:14-18: **“Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein GOD,**

**willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”** When GOD speaks, that is the end of the matter, and He has spoken through the Spirit the promises of eternal Heaven for the faithful. One thing which should be remembered, is that this guarantee is not unconditional, as Calvinists teach; it is conditional upon continued obedience to GOD’s will (cf. Galatians 5:21).

What does all of this produce? Praise by the redeemed for all that GOD has done for them. *“God the Father planned spiritual blessings for all who through faith come among the ‘elect’ (Eph. 1:3-6). God the Son purchased our salvation with his blood (Eph. 1:7-12). God the Holy Spirit guaranteed it through written revelation of conditions and promises (Eph. 1:13-14)”* (Caldwell, p. 47). Our praise should be lifted to GOD, not only for what He has done, but for all that He is, and all that He will do!

Eph. 1:15 **“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,”**

“For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which ye show toward all the saints,” (ASV)

Verse fifteen begins a prayer for the Ephesian brethren which ends at the last verse in this chapter.

Some have taken the phrase **“After I heard of your faith”** and supposed that Paul did not know the brethren at Ephesus. From Acts this can be seen to be false. In Acts 18-20, it can be seen that Paul was instrumental in establishing the church at Ephesus and had spent approximately three years there. Now,

approximately five years later, he gets word of their continued faith and growth. How joyful this made Paul, as seen in this prayer, to hear that those among whom he had worked had continued in the faith (cf. Jude 3). Unfortunately, their faithfulness did not last (Revelation 2:4-5).

The coupling of “**faith**” and “**love**” should be observed. It is not enough to have faith. In fact, true, maturing faith, will produce love, especially for one’s brethren in Christ. *“This saving love about which so much is said in Christ’s New Testament is a selfless concern for ultimate good (Matt. 22:37-39; John 3:16; 1 John 5:3). Such ultimate good may be variously expressed as obeying God (Matt. 22:37; 1 John 5:3), accepting and advancing Truth (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 13:6; 2 Thess. 2:10-11), and saving souls (Matt. 16:26; 22:39)”* (Berard, p. 76). Proper New Testament love will express itself toward ALL brethren (“saints”), not just a “clique” of close associates. **“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John 13:35). **“If a man say, I love GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth GOD love his brother also”** (1 John 4:20-21). Love will seek the very best for his brother in Christ. Love does not seek to hurt his brother in any way, but rather to enhance his life. That means that brethren will not gossip about their brethren; they will not attack them behind their backs. Such is not a mark of godliness but rather of cowardliness and ungodliness. *“The church at Ephesus was unusual in that it had both Jews and Gentiles in it, and they really loved one another”* (Fields, p. 44).

It should also be observed that the term “**saints**” is clearly a reference to the brethren who were in Christ at Ephesus. This refutes the false doctrine that saints are only those

Christians who have reached some imagined glorified state. Saints are all those who are faithful in Christ.

Eph. 1:16 **“Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;”**

“cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;” (ASV)

Careful notice should be given to the constant attitude of Paul toward brethren in his prayers. He always wished the very best for them. The Ephesians were not the only ones he often mentioned in his prayers, as indicated by the following passages: Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3, 9; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 4. Further, he was specific in his prayers. He prayed for their needs, and he prayed for the brethren by name.

One of the things which should be noticed in Paul’s prayers is the unselfishness he exhibited. When studying the Scriptures, it becomes apparent that when he prayed, his prayer life revolved around others and not as much for himself.

When studying the epistles, it is obvious that Paul felt privileged to write that he knew there was power in prayer, and thus he exercised it often toward his brethren. Further, he knew he needed their prayers: **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”** (Ephesians 6:18-20).

Eph. 1:17 **“That the GOD of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto**

**you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:”**

“that the GOD of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him;” (ASV)

WISDOM — σοφία — “*Wisdom, broad and full intelligence*” (Thayer, p. 581); “*Wisdom, skill, tact, expertise in any art*” (Zodhiates, CD).

REVELATION — • ποκάλυψις — “*An uncovering; a laying bare, making naked*” (Thayer, p. 62); “*Revelation, uncovering, unveiling, disclosure*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Revelation, disclosure*” (Bauer, p. 92).

KNOWLEDGE — ἰπίγνωσις — “*Precise and correct knowledge*” (Thayer, p. 237); “*It is more intense. than γνώσις, knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Knowledge, recognition*” (Bauer, p. 291).

What blessings did Paul ask GOD to give the Ephesians? Wisdom, revelation, and knowledge. But first, Paul described GOD as the “**GOD of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” The fact that the Father was GOD to Jesus is seen in the words of Jesus Himself. “**About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me**” (Matthew 27:46)? In the garden He told Mary, “**Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My GOD, and your GOD**” (John 20:17). Thus, one sees how Jesus willingly submitted to the Father, though He was equal to the Father.

The second person of the GODHEAD is described here as “**Lord**” (ruler) “**Jesus**” (savior) “**Christ**” (Messiah, the anointed One). This is the recognition that Paul calls for all Christians to recognize: the complete

nature and position of Jesus. This is something every Christian should strive to keep ever before his mind — He is our RULER, SAVIOR, and the ANOINTED ONE!

Next, GOD the Father is described as “**The Father of glory.**” Glory refers to “*reputation, praise, honor (true and false), splendor, light, perfection, rewards (temporal and eternal)*” (Zodhiates, CD). It refers to the honor and esteem that ultimately belongs only to GOD. Since a father is the progenitor of all that come from him, GOD is the Father of all glory.

The word “**spirit**” is correctly not capitalized in the KJV. This is a wish regarding the spirit of man, dealing with his attitude toward that which GOD gives. When one has a correct spirit, he is ready to accept and utilize the blessings of GOD for his benefit. In fact, he will be eager to appropriate these blessings.

“**Wisdom**” This word involves the ability to take knowledge and apply it correctly in the affairs of life. The Bible says a lot about both false and correct wisdom. The “wisdom” of the worldly is “**earthly, sensual, devilish**” (James 3:15) and is therefore of little or no value in spiritual matters. But the wisdom which proceeds from the study and application of GOD’s Word is that which leads to an eternal heavenly dwelling. This wisdom is “**pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy**” (James 3:17). GOD’s people are to turn their ears to wisdom (Proverbs 2:2). Godly wisdom is something for which all Christians should pray (James 1:5).

“**Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding**” (Proverbs 3:13).

“**Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding**” (Proverbs 4:7).

**“Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it”** (Proverbs 8:11).

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding”** (Proverbs 9:10).

**“Revelation”** Paul is not praying for them to receive miraculous ability. The word “revelation” means an *“uncovering; a laying bare.”* Notice that Paul prayed that the Ephesians would have a spirit of revelation. This refers to their attitude which would have insight into the wisdom and knowledge of GOD. It refers to a willingness, in this context, to observe the revelation of GOD and (by implication) to apply it to themselves.

**“Knowledge”** The word in this text is not the normal word used for knowledge in the Scriptures (γνῶσις). Here it is ἰπίγνωσις, where it refers to *“precise and correct knowledge.”* One can know the words of a verse by heart without having the precise knowledge which causes understanding. The use of this particular word puts the participation of the learner in the spot-light. It points to an intense desire to understand, which will cause one to meditate deeply on GOD’s Word. After all, **“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night”** (Psalm 1:1-2). Little wonder then that Peter tells Christians to **“grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18). No wonder then that the Hebrew writer condemns those who do not grow to become teachers (Hebrews 5:12).

*“They had already made high attainments (v. 15), but Paul felt that they might make still higher; and the idea here is, that however far*

*Christians may have advanced in knowledge and in love, there is an unfathomed depth of knowledge which they may still explore, and which they should be exhorted still to attempt to fathom”* (Barnes, p. 31).

Why do so many (even among Christians) seem to be afraid to gain deeper knowledge of GOD’s Word? Could it be that deeper knowledge and understanding place more responsibility on one and that is what many want to avoid? Christians have a responsibility to know and should have a desire to know everything they possibly can about GOD’s Word.

**Eph. 1:18 “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”**

*“having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”* (ASV)

UNDERSTANDING — διάνοια — *“The mind as the faculty of understanding, feeling, desiring”* (Thayer, p. 140); *“Understanding, intellect, intellectual faculty, thought, mind”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Understanding, intelligence, mind...mind as a kind of thinking, disposition, thought”* (Bauer, p. 187).

ENLIGHTENED — φωτίζω — *“To give light, to shine...to enlighten, light up, illumine”* (Thayer, p. 663); *“To illuminate, make one see or understand...to bring to light, make known”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Literally give light to, light (up), illuminate”* (Bauer, p. 873); *“Phaos is used especially for daylight. To express a being’s entry into life, the Greeks say that he has been brought to the day, that he appears in the light. ‘To see the light’ (horan phaos) is synonymous with ‘to live;’ ‘to leave the light’ (leipein phaos) is to die... Given that light shines and makes perceptible what was unknown or indiscernible in the darkness, it is understood metaphorically for knowledge”* (Spicq, p. 471-473).

Paul continued his request that their eyes

of understanding might be enlightened. Properly functioning eyes allow one to see what would otherwise be hidden in the dark. A blind man can stand in the midst of one of the most beautiful parks in the world, and its beauty is hidden from him. He has no comprehension of the beauty which surrounds him. Likewise, the mind has metaphorical eyes which, if functioning properly, allow one to see the greatness of GOD which surrounds him. In this context understanding infers an intellectual capacity to think and absorb truth. To enlighten is to illuminate, to make known. In discussing the background of the word “**enlightened**,” Spicq says, “*Phaos* is used especially for daylight. To express a being’s entry into life, the Greeks say that he has been brought to the day, that he appears in the light. ‘To see the light’ (horan phaos) is synonymous with ‘to live,’ ‘to leave the light’ (leipein phaos) is to die... Given that light shines and makes perceptible what was unknown or indiscernible in the darkness, it is understood metaphorically for knowledge” (Spicq, p. 471-473). Paul is praying that their intellectual capacity for understanding (“**spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**”) might be alive and grow.

Why does Paul pray that understanding be alive in his brethren? So that they may know the “**hope of His calling**.” This is speaking about the hope which GOD gives to man. Because of the hope which GOD provides to man, man indeed has a basis upon which to have hope. Hope is the expectation of receiving something of value. The Christian has as his hope eternity in Heaven, because GOD has provided it for him.

Why does Paul pray that understanding be alive in his brethren? So that they may understand “**the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**.” Notice that this glory is not shown “for” the saints, it is shown **IN THE SAINTS**. The text is speaking about the inheritance intended for man by GOD. Lenski asserts “*that the preposition en in the*

*phrase, in the saints, means ‘in the person of,’ or ‘in the case of’ the saints...En is quite often used with persons and refers to what is mentioned as pertaining to them: ‘in their case’”* (Berard, p. 84). “*This statement is wonderfully exhilarating to the Christian because Paul says that saints are counted by God as great riches or wealth. God is glorified in His inheritance, the saints (cf. Eph. 1:11)*” (Caldwell, p. 55).

**Eph. 1:19 “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,”**

“and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might” (ASV)

EXCEEDING — υπερβάλλω — “*To surpass in throwing; to throw over or beyond anything. To transcend, surpass, exceed, excel*” (Thayer, p. 640); “*To excel, surpass...surpassing, exceeding, highly eminent*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*go beyond, surpass, outdo*” (Bauer, p. 840).

POWER — δύναμις — “*Strength, ability, power; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth*” (Thayer, p. 159); “*Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem dúna- have the meaning of being able, capable. It may even mean to will*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Power, might, strength, force...ability, capability*” (Bauer, p. 207).

Second word POWER — κράτος — “*Force strength. Power, might...a mighty deed, a word of power*” (Thayer, p. 359); “*Strength or might, more especially manifested power, dominion. More closely related to ischús, strength, than dúnamis, power. Denotes the presence and significance of force or strength rather than its exercise*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Power, might of God’s power*” (Bauer, p. 449).

Why does Paul pray that understanding be alive in his brethren? Because GOD’s power to deliver is beyond question. His power is so

great that His promises cannot be prevented from being fulfilled. Man tries to understand the mighty power of GOD, but it is so far beyond his ability that he cannot. But to help man get at least some grasp of GOD's power, verse twenty will emphasize its use in raising Christ from the dead. The power used by GOD to raise His Son from the dead is the same power directed toward the saints.

**“The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe.”** JFB says that this is the climax: *“The **hope** which the calling awakens; the **glory** of that inheritance to which hope is directed; the **power** that shall bestow (and is bestowing) it”* (p. 401). Paul wanted the Ephesians (and all Christians) to *“understand and appreciate the ‘hope’ of His calling, the ‘glory’ of His inheritance, and the ‘greatness’ of His power”* (Workman, p. 19).

*“Significantly, the climax, the very ultimate demonstration of God's power was cited by Paul here as the resurrection of Christ. That is the act above all others and beyond all others that shows the unlimited power and ability of God to do all that he has promised to do for his children”* (Coffman, p. 146).

How is it that Paul could say, **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13)? Because he understood where the power came from to accomplish all things, and nothing could stop Him who has that power behind him.

Eph. 1:20 **“Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places,”**

“which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the Heavenly places,” (ASV)

WROUGHT — ἵεργέω — *“To be operative, be at work, put forth power”* (Thayer, p. 215); *“To be at work, to be effective, operative”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Work, be at work, operate, be effective”* (Bauer, p. 265).

Paul had just prayed regarding the

overwhelming power of GOD and the desire that the Ephesian brethren understand that power and its ability to work in them. In this verse, he shows the examples which manifest the power of GOD. First, the resurrection of Christ. To the Romans, Paul wrote that Christ was **“declared to be the Son of GOD with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”** (Romans 1:4). GOD has given man ability and power — man creates all kinds of amazing machinery and powerful bombs. But no man has ever been able to raise someone from the dead by his own power, notwithstanding the claims of some deceiving people. No greater demonstration of power is needed for man to know that GOD can fulfil all of His promises to man.

The ultimate promise that GOD has made to Christians is that He will raise them from the dead and give them an eternal home in Heaven. The proof that GOD has that power is in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In addition, the proof that He has the power to give man an eternal home is seen in the fact that, after raising Jesus from the dead, He then gave Him an eternal home in Heaven.

**“If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you”** (Romans 8:11).

**“GOD hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power”** (1 Corinthians 6:14).

**“Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you”** (2 Corinthians 4:14).

Further, it should be noted where GOD placed Christ in Heaven — **“at His own right hand.”** The heavenly beings (angels) may be gathered around the throne, but they do not

share the throne. None sit upon the throne except Deity. ***“The right hand (dextra) is a symbolic phrase denoting authority, degree of position, or level of rank. It indicates the closeness of relationship between Christ and the Father”*** (Caldwell, p. 59). The right hand of GOD signifies the highest position of power. This is indeed one of those passages, among many, which declare that Christ is presently ruling over His kingdom, contrary to the false doctrines of premillennialism.

**“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him”** (1 Corinthians 15:24-27).

PUT DOWN — καταργέω — *“To render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative”* (Thayer, p. 336); *“To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective... To destroy, cause to cease, do away with, put an end to”* (Zodhiates, CD).

**Eph. 1:21 “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:”**

*“far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:”* (ASV)

FAR ABOVE — ὑπέρανω — *“Above”* (Thayer, p. 640); *“Up above, high or far above”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“(High) above”* (Bauer, p. 840).

*“The English ‘far above’ is from huperano, an adverb formed by huper, meaning ‘over, beyond, more than,’ and ano, meaning ‘above.’ Christ is*

*not merely a great power, or a great power among the greatest powers, or a great power above the greatest powers; Christ is far above the greatest of great powers”* (Berard, p. 86).

In the first part of this passage, it is often speculated that these words refer to different orders of heavenly beings (angels). Though it is hinted at in the Scriptures that there are different orders of heavenly beings, no details are given of these orders. The last part of the verse obviously refers to any power which might arise among human beings — governments, heads of state, et cetera. The President of the United States — whoever it might be — is nothing in comparison to Christ or the power which He wields. In fact, a man could not hold such a position of power if GOD did not allow him to hold it. If all of the nations of the world were to combine themselves under one ruler, that ruler’s authority and power means nothing when compared to that which Christ holds.

The simple idea of this passage is that no matter who a being may be, no matter how much power he may possess, he does not even come close to that which Christ has.

**“Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth”** (Matthew 28:18).

**“For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist”** (Colossians 1:16-17).

**“Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of GOD; angels and authorities and powers being made**

**subject unto him”** (1 Peter 3:22).

**Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”**

“and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” (ASV)

PUT — υποτάσσω — “*To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection*” (Thayer, p. 645); “*To place under in an orderly fashion*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Bring someone to subjection*” (Bauer, p. 848); *hypotasso* “*is always reverent submission, seen as a self-offering (cf. Titus 3:1-2). It means first of all accepting the exact place God has assigned, keeping to one’s rank in this or that society, accepting a dependent status.... This religious subjection is made up of an obedient spirit, humaneness of heart, respect, and willingness to serve. To submit is to accept directives that are given, to honor conditions that are imposed, to please one’s superior or honor him by the homage that is obedience, to repudiate egotism and aloofness*” (Spicq, Vol. 3, p. 425-426).

The powerful GOD described by the apostle is now shown to be the One who was powerful enough to place everything under the control of His Son, except Himself, of course.

**“For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him”** (1 Corinthians 15:27).

It is important to note that “**ALL things**” is listed first and that the church is then one of those things put under Christ. Christ is

sovereign over ALL, not “just” the church, as important as that individual fact is.

To place “**all things under His feet**” is another way of saying that all dominion belongs to Him. This follows the imagery of ancient times when a conqueror placed his foot on the conquered as he lay on the ground. As such, all things under Him are to submit themselves to His rule. It might be pointed out that obedience and submission are not the same thing. One may obey only because of fear of punishment, not out of the love and adoration for which submission calls. Submission calls for a strictly voluntary action.

The aim of this text is to point to the fact that the church has been placed under the authority of Christ. It is emphasized that He is “**THE head over all things to THE church,**” which signifies singleness — there is ONE head and ONE church. When there is one head or one leader, and when that leader is supreme in all areas, no one has the right to take any of the authority which belongs to Him. Therefore, no one has the right to change, modify, or add to any law which He has given or any organization which He might establish. Just as in the physical body, the spiritual body is directed by the head.

Jesus promised, “**I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it**” (Matthew 16:18). He did not promise to build many churches or even two — just ONE. His church is not “our” church; therefore no one can change its laws. When a person buys something and pays for it, it belongs to him, and he has the right and authority to do whatever he desires with that object. The church belongs to Christ because He paid for it.

**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood”** (Acts 20:28; cf Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14;

Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:5).

From this text, there can be no misunderstanding that the terms “**church**” and “**body**” are used interchangeably. This is important when someone tries to say that there is more than one church, because Paul will later show in this epistle (Ephesians 4:4) that there is **ONE BODY**, i.e., **ONE CHURCH**. The denominational world claims that there are many bodies, all practicing different things and believing different doctrines from one another; yet they claim that they all have one head. Using the illustration of the body, one’s brain does not tell his left leg to move to the left and at the same time tell the right leg to go in a totally different direction unless the brain is abnormal, i.e., something is wrong with it. In claiming that they (denominations) have one head, who has given each one different directions, they are saying that Christ (as the head) is abnormal. Just imagine a human head with twenty bodies all attached to it. Such would be considered a freak. Yet that is exactly the picture the denominational world wants people to falsely believe about Christ. What a monstrosity the denominational world has created.

“**The fulness of Him that filleth all in all.**” The body, the church, “*is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ*” (Thayer, p. 518). “**It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.**” “**For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**” (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). “*He fills the church with his power, wisdom, majesty, truth, goodness, and holiness (John 1:16)*” (Caldwell, p. 65). How does He do this? Through, and only through, His Word.

Those who claim to be followers of Christ (but reject the church) are dead — just like a physical body which has had its head severed from it.

## Ephesians — Chapter Two

Eph. 2:1 “**And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**”

“And you did He make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins,” (ASV)

“*Death is simply a complete change of relationship, or a separation from former relationships*” (Fields, p. 56). Isaiah stated the truth of this verse when he said, “**your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you**” (Isaiah 59:2). In chapter one, Paul had spoken about the power of GOD to raise one from the dead. This power is to be exerted at the end of time, but it also manifests itself today when one through faith repents of his sins, confesses Christ as the Son of GOD and is baptized for the removal of his sins. Whether one speaks of physical death or spiritual death, there is only ONE Who has the power to raise one from the dead — GOD.

Physical death is the separation of soul (spirit) and body (James 2:6; cf Luke 8:55; 1 Kings 17:22). Yet, a person can be physically alive and yet be dead, i.e., dead spiritually. In today’s society, fictional writings and movies speak about Zombies (the walking dead). The fact is that there are Zombies on the earth, and most people on the earth are Zombies. They are physically alive but dead spiritually.

Adam and Eve became dead to GOD at the point at which they sinned. They were not physically dead, but they were spiritually dead!

This verse implies that those to whom this was written had been dead but were now alive. The author makes this statement because the words **“hath He quickened”** (made alive) are not found in the original. They WERE dead in trespasses and sins; therefore if they WERE something (dead), they are now something different (alive).

Regarding the words **“trespasses”** and **“sins,”** many think that they signify subtle differences in transgressions against GOD. But notice that the Lord used these terms interchangeably in parallel passages in Matthew and Luke.

**“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”** (Matthew 6:14-15).

**“Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”** (Luke 11:4).

It would seem to this writer that what one sees here is a double emphasis upon that which separates man from GOD. **“Trespasses”** may be thought of as stepping across a boundary (set by GOD) into territory (sin) where one does not belong. **“Sin”** is missing the mark of excellence at which one is to aim his life. Both refer to transgressing GOD’s Word.

Consider this passage in light of the false doctrine of Calvinism. Calvinism teaches that a man who is dead in sins is unable to do anything about his condition; therefore, he cannot become a saved person. *“Because the man is spiritually dead, he cannot believe, even though he hears the external preaching of the Word and perhaps reads it for himself*

*many times”* (Palmer, p. 60). Note carefully that it is the dead who are made alive in this passage. What makes one alive in Christ? His exercised faith. Calvinism teaches that a dead man cannot do anything, but the Bible teaches that those dead in sin can do something and must do something to be made alive in Christ. Thus, a spiritually dead person can be made alive.

**“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him”** (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Who gains eternal salvation? Those who submit themselves in obedience to Christ! Note Romans 6:16-17): **“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But GOD be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”** Note that the sinner yielded himself to be a servant of Christ; he was not forced to yield, as Calvinism teaches. Calvinism says, *“In another man, however, the Holy Spirit works irresistibly, regenerating him so that he understands fully that he is a sinner and needs God, and, therefore, wants to believe and to be saved”* (Palmer, p. 60). According to Romans 6:17-18, when does one become righteous? When he obeys from the heart the doctrine of Christ!

Unfortunately, some who claim to be members of the Lord’s church today are espousing the false claims of Calvinism. Rubel Shelly, Bob Hendren, Patrick King, and Roy Osborne are among that number (See documentation by Lester Kamp, p. 94ff.).

**Eph. 2:2 “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the**

**air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**"

"wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience;" (ASV)

DISOBEDIENCE — • πειθεῖα — *"Disobedience, obstinacy, and in the N.T. particularly obstinate opposition to the divine will"* (Thayer, p. 55); *"Disobedience, unwillingness to be persuaded, willful unbelief, obstinacy"* (Zodhiates, CD).

**"In time past"** refers to when they were dead in trespasses and sins, which equated to rebellion towards GOD. How did they live at that time? They **"walked;"** i.e., they were involved in continuous action. This was the normal pattern of their life, a constant life of evil. One must remember that he either belongs to GOD or he belongs to the Devil. That being the case, he is either evil or he is good in GOD's sight. Man often wants to perceive himself as "mostly" good or "mostly" evil, but in the Scriptures no such distinction is to be found. One either belongs to the Devil or to GOD. One is either good or he is evil! *"The sinner walks in the customs, manners, desires, cares, thoughts, and asperations of the evil world around him"* (Caldwell, p. 70).

**"The course of this world."** The word **"world"** here refers to a sphere of influence; it does not speak of this planet upon which human beings live. *"The course of this world' is the way of life that prevails within the population of the world. It is the popular way of life which, according to Jesus, is going to lead to destruction (Matt. 7:13). It is a life which is sown to the flesh and the satisfaction of the lusts and desires of the flesh (Gal. 6:7-8; 1 John 2:15-17)"* (Kamp, p. 92). The course of this world is selfish — it thinks only of itself and of what it wants instead of concentrating on GOD's will. Selfishness causes one to disregard the needs of another, whether physical or spiritual, in order to concentrate on

satisfying one's own desires.

Who leads man in this selfish direction? **"The prince of the power of the air."** There is no doubt that this refers to Satan — the Devil. Satan is also called **"the god of this world"** who blinds men to the plight they are in, who blinds men to the sinful beings they are (2 Corinthians 4:4). He even blinds them to the very fact that he exists. Take a survey and it might yield surprising results as to how many people will say that they believe in GOD but do not believe that there is a real being known as the Devil. Yet, when one looks around the world in which he lives, the evidence to honest minds is overwhelming — the Devil is real. Why does man blind himself to the existence of Satan? Because man likes to believe in himself, that he controls himself, and that there is no outside force guiding and directing his actions. But **"it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23).

**"Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way"** (Proverbs 20:24)?

**"O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes"** (Psalm 119:5)!

**"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"** (Proverbs 3:6).

It is interesting that Jesus called Satan **"the prince of this world"** (John 14:30; 16:11).

The term **"prince"** refers to one who has power. Satan's power is not absolute. He therefore cannot make man obey him. From the very beginning, he could not force Eve to look at the fruit, desire the fruit, or to partake of that fruit. He could suggest that she violate GOD's will, but he could not force such upon her. He could offer an alternative course of disobedience to her, but he could not force her to disobey. It is still that way today. Satan is real, his influence is real, but he cannot force anyone to obey him.

**“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren”** (James 1:14-16, emphasis mine, R.K.).

Where does Satan tempt man? At each man’s desire for that which is wrong.

**“The power of the air.”** This phrase has caused a lot of thoughts as to where Satan and his host live. Some advocate that they live in the air around us. Others believe it signifies that he is below the power of GOD but more powerful than man. It seems to this writer that the idea is rather that the sphere of evil constantly surrounds one in this world, like the physical air surrounds one.

**“The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”** In the Scriptures, it seems that one in the spiritual realm is the child of the one he imitates. To imitate is to pattern one’s self after, to mimic another. Thus, one can be a child of disobedience, i.e., a child of the devil (Acts 13:10), or he can be a child of righteousness, i.e., a child of GOD (1 John 3:10). The word **“disobedience”** refers to the one who is unwilling to accept the evidence of GOD, or — seeing the evidence of GOD — is unwilling to be persuaded by it. It is one who refuses to obey GOD. This refers to the general attitude of the ungodly, the servants of Satan. One should again notice that this attitude is working; it has never stopped since Satan introduced Adam and Eve to sin in the garden. It will not stop until death overtakes one or the end of time comes.

Eph. 2:3 **“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”**

“among whom we also all once lived in the lust

of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest: —“ (ASV)

**“Conversation”** is manner of life, referring to habitual conduct. It was not just the Ephesians who were children of disobedience, but all who have ever lived have made themselves children of disobedience. This refers to all before they obeyed the Gospel. After the birth at baptism, one becomes a child of GOD and does not remain in the state which brings GOD’s wrath upon him for his disobedience.

What is it that leads one to become **“children of disobedience”** or **“children of wrath?”** Paul gave two general reasons which include many specifics. He classified the sins which lead to destruction as the **“desires of the flesh and of the mind.”** *“The **flesh** (sarkos) involves the sensuous cravings motivated by the physical drives of our bodies for material satisfaction. The **mind** (dianoion) involves the intellect, understanding, and emotions”* (Caldwell, p. 72). It does not matter which of these is considered, GOD hates them, and He wants man to eliminate them from his life. Why? Because these classifications of sin, in fact any sin, are outside of the nature of GOD Himself.

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever”** (1 John 2:15-17).

Why should man not love the world? Because **“all these things shall be dissolved”** (2 Peter 3:11). If there is to be nothing physical left, why should man make them so important?

All of the sinful things around man do not come from GOD; they are foreign to Him. All of the sinful things which man may desire are temporary. The only thing that has lasting value for man is obedience to GOD.

**“Were by nature the children of wrath”** is the sugar stick of the Calvinists who teach that man is born a sinner. Listen to the words of Charles Hodge (famous Calvinist): *“Mankind as a race are fallen; they had their probation in Adam, and therefore are born in a state of condemnation. They need redemption from the moment of their birth”* (Hodge, p. 39). Apparently Hodge and others who advocate this doctrine have forgotten that Jesus said, **“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 18:3)? One who needs redemption is a sinner, and sinners cannot go to Heaven. Yet, Jesus said that one must become as little children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (church). One cannot enter the church or Heaven until he has his sins forgiven. Jesus said **“be converted, and become like little children.”** When one is converted, he becomes like a little child — sinless! Further, in Romans 2:14, *“Paul argued that the gentiles did ‘by nature’ that which was good. How could they do by heredity that which is good if man is born totally depraved”* (Caldwell, p. 73)?

It should be obvious from the above that the word **“nature”** in this passage has nothing to do with the way one is born, i.e., his heredity. Their nature was determined by the way they had continually walked (v. 2), i.e., by their habit of following the will of Satan instead of the will of GOD. Thus, the word **“nature”** here, refers to the character which they had developed. Such character which makes one a child of disobedience, a child of wrath.

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.  
The son shall not bear the iniquity**

**of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him”** (Ezekiel 18:20).

**“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin”** (Deuteronomy 24:16).

**Eph. 2:4 “But GOD, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,”**  
“but GOD, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,” (ASV)

**“Mercy”** is pity and compassion. Notice that GOD does not have a little bit of compassion for man, but is rich in that compassion. The term **“rich”** indicates an overabundance of whatever it is describing — in this case, mercy. Mercy is one of many great attributes of GOD, Whom the Spirit says is **“the Father of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort”** (2 Cor. 1:3).

The need man has for mercy is clearly stated by the Psalmist: **“Have mercy upon me, O GOD, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions”** (Psalm 51:1). When one looks at verses one through three, it is evident that verse four could have said, *“Because man is so evil, I will show him the wrath he deserves.”* Thankfully, that it is not how GOD has responded to man’s failure to obey Him. Instead, He offers man the opportunity to return to Him. But one should not consider this show of mercy as being permanent. The day will come when wrath will be showered on all who will not accept the mercy He is willing to bestow, because another attribute of GOD is justice. It should

be remembered that GOD hates sin, but He loves the sinner (This is also the attitude which Christians ought to have — hate sin, but love the sinner.).

It should not surprise anyone that the motivation behind GOD's rich mercy is His love, "**for GOD is love**" (1 John 4:8). This passage and its context show something very important about love. Love is not just a feeling. Love is not love unless it is active. If a young man discovers that he loves a young lady, that love will not be returned unless he expresses that love for her. If he does not show her his feelings, love will not bloom and mature between them. Hence, no benefit will be realized. Regarding a Christian's relationship with GOD, the Bible says, "**We love Him, because He first loved us**" (1 John 4:8). Because He first loved, GOD showed the object of His affection (man) His feelings toward him. This was done by the greatest act ever accomplished, the giving of His Son on a cross to die in man's place.

**"For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16; emphasis mine, R.K.).

**"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses"** (Isaiah 63:7).

Here is a question which all Christians need to honestly ask themselves. "Do I love sinners?" Before passing this question off with a quick, "*Of course I do,*" one should remember that love is active or it is not true love. So what has been done to show that love to the sinner? Has time and money been sacrificed to teach them the saving Gospel? Or is it simply lip service to say, "*We love the*

*sinner.*"

**Eph. 2:5 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"**

"even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)," (ASV)

**"Even when we were dead in sins."** Even when man was the enemy of GOD, and thus separated from Him and all spiritual blessings, GOD still loved him.

**"GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8).

**"Hath quickened us together with Christ."** This phrase emphasizes the contrast between being dead and being alive. Paul was showing the Ephesians that, though they were once dead in their sins, now (through their obedience to Christ and His Gospel) they were alive. This phrase would probably be better translated as Littrell has given it: "*made us alive together in Christ*" (Littrell, p. 406). "*With Christ' is the 'instrumental dative of means — with or by Christ, the instrument, means with which or wherewith God quickened or made them alive*" (Wallace, p. 148).

Grace is undeserved blessings. How does GOD extend His grace to mankind? Was it only in the fact that His Son died for mankind? If that be the case, then all of mankind will eventually be saved. The thought of universal salvation is contrary to the teachings of Christ (Matthew 7:13-14); all will NOT be eternally saved. GOD extends His grace to man through the agency of His Word.

**"Brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified"** (Acts 20:32).

What does GOD's Word do? It builds up and provides the inheritance which man has

through obedience to it.

**“The grace of GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour Jesus Christ”**  
(Titus 2:11-13).

The grace of GOD brings salvation — how? GOD’s grace TEACHES man what he must deny in order to receive salvation in Christ. Further, it teaches man what he must accept and do to receive that salvation. Where does one learn these things? Only in GOD’s Word. How does man know about the hope of eternity with GOD? Only through the Word of GOD. The crucifixion of Christ paid the redemption price for man, but salvation is provided through the instructions and obedience to those instructions found in the Bible.

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”** (Romans 1:16).

Would man today even know about the crucifixion of Christ and what it means if the Word of GOD did not exist? To ask is to answer. Through His grace GOD gave man the instructions he needs for forgiveness and to gain an eternal home in Heaven.

Can grace be earned? Absolutely not! There is not anything any man can do (or for that matter every man who has ever lived) which can obligate GOD to forgive him. At the same time, the grace which GOD offers to mankind does not take away man’s responsibility to meet those conditions which GOD has set for him to receive that grace and all of its benefits. If GOD’s grace is unconditional, then all men would be saved regardless of the kind of depraved life they

lived. Universal salvation is not only an unbiblical concept, but it is simply not logical. GOD’s saving grace is a conditional gift.

**“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him”** (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Why would man think obedience is not a condition for salvation when Christ had to be obedient to His Father’s commands?

**Eph. 2:6 “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”**

“and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.” (ASV)

**“And hath raised us up together.”** This phrase seems to be referring to the resurrection of Christ from the dead (physical) and the resurrection from death which the Christian experiences at baptism (spiritual).

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3-4).

**“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of GOD, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses”** (Colossians 2:12-13).

**“And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”** Not only have

Christians been raised; they have been seated in heavenly places. Obviously these Ephesians, and Christians today, were not in Heaven itself. Therefore, this passage cannot be speaking about the final resurrection and entrance into that Heavenly abode. So where is the “**heavenly places**” of this text? The only answer is the church. On the day of Pentecost, when those people obeyed the directions given to them by the apostles, when they came forth from that watery grave of baptism, the Lord added those who were being saved to the church (Acts 2:47). The church was designed in Heaven as a place where all spiritual blessings are found. **“Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”** (Eph. 1:3). Again, where is one blessed with all spiritual blessings? **In the church!**

Eph. 2:7 **“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”**

“that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus:” (ASV)

**“That in the ages to come.”** There are two basic thoughts concerning this phrase. (1) That it refers to all generations which follow that of Paul and the Ephesians. (2) That it represents Heaven and the eternal abode of saints with their Father. It is this writer’s position that this phrase refers to the earthly years, the generations to come. *“The **ages to come** (tois aiCsin tois eperchomenois) are literally ‘the ages that are coming one upon another’”* (Caldwell, p. 79).

The word **“show”** means *“to point out.”* Where is it that GOD points out to man His **“exceeding riches,”** His **“grace,”** and His **“kindness?”** Going back to verse six, it is in **“heavenly places,”** which is speaking of the church. When men obey the Gospel of Christ,

having their sins forgiven, and receiving all spiritual blessings in Christ, they point out to the world the characteristics of GOD and His willingness to forgive sinners — all sinners. This is of course conditional upon man’s responding to GOD’s abundant love by reciprocating that love to GOD through obedience.

How is this so? It revolves around the fact of His willingness to forgive, showing beyond measure His love for His creation. They were in rebellion to Him and to His laws, yet He is ready and willing to forgive those who seek forgiveness. What man deserved for his rebellion to GOD was separation from GOD, but GOD in His infinite love desires to bring the rebellious back to Himself by giving them a basis upon which to lovingly obey Him.

Where is man able to reclaim what he lost through rebellion? It is only through Christ Jesus that such can be accomplished. When one repents of his sins (Acts 17:30-31), confesses Jesus as the Son of GOD (Matthew 10:32), and is baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38), then he is added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). One cannot be **“in Christ”** without being **“in the church!”** It is for the church that Jesus died, that the exceeding riches of GOD’s grace and His kindness toward rebellious mankind are pointed out. Thus, through viewing this salvation, man is led to glorify GOD to the highest degree.

Eph. 2:8 **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD:”**

“for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD;” (ASV)

**“Grace”** is the favor that GOD has provided for man’s salvation. Lipscomb stated, *“God gives man the capacity to believe, reveals to him the things to believe, and ample testimony to produce the faith required”* (Lipscomb, p. 42). This word shows

that man does not deserve nor can he earn salvation, no matter how many things he does. Jesus said, **“When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”** (Luke 17:10). Grace does not take away man’s obligations to obey the commands of GOD, as Jesus’ above statement clearly shows. Yet, when man does everything he is told to do, he has not earned a thing — he is simply an unprofitable servant!

**“Saved through faith.”** There are two possibilities as to what the word **“faith”** refers. (1) Some believe the word **“faith”** in this passage means the faith which a human being develops in GOD and His promises. (2) The second thought is that the word **“faith”** refers to the Christian system of faith, which refers then to the Gospel of Christ — the New Testament. This second view is the view of this author, because in the Greek, the definite article appears before the word **“faith.”** This would make the phrase read, **“For by grace are ye saved through the faith.”** This understanding also fits the context better, since the next phrase shows that man did not accomplish his salvation — **“and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD.”** Salvation is obtained by man because GOD was willing to favor him by providing what man needed to gain salvation, i.e., the Gospel. How could the faith of sinners be in view when one considers this last phrase? It may also be considered that one’s personal faith is acquired through the faith. Personal faith comes when one hears, reasons upon, and accepts GOD’s Word for direction in his life (Romans 10:17).

**“Gift of GOD.”** *“Salvation does not originate from human activity, nor is it earned by what we do. It is ‘the gift of God,’ a statement also verified by Romans 6:23”* (Clarke, p. 112).

**“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of GOD is eternal life through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23).

Webster states that a gift is *“something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation”* (Webster, CD). A gift may be given and yet have requirements set in order to receive the gift. Such requirements do not mean that it is not a gift, or that it has been earned in any way. If a son was told, *“You pay for the insurance, and I will buy you that new car,”* upon paying the insurance and the car being given to him, was the car anything less than a gift because the son agreed to the terms set? No one in his right mind would say that the son earned that car.

There is something else which should be considered about a gift. *“A gift requires a giver and a willing receiver”* (Caldwell, p. 84). If someone offers a person one million dollars, will that million dollars benefit that person if he refuses to receive it? Obviously, to ask is to answer. Just so, the same is true of GOD’s gift of salvation. Through His favor (grace), GOD has offered man a system which allows him to gain salvation (The Bible). But man may refuse to accept that gift, thus forfeiting it. If GOD forced one man to accept the salvation He offers, He would have to force every man who has ever lived to accept it. Otherwise GOD would be a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Eph. 2:9 **“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

*“not of works, that no man should glory.”* (ASV)

BOAST — *καυχάομαι* — *“To glory...to glory (on account) of a thing...to glory in a thing”* (Thayer, p. 342); *“To boast, glory, exult, both in a good and bad sense”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Boast, glory, pride oneself...boast about, mention in order to boast of”* (Bauer, p. 426).

Man cannot boast (glory) of his salvation based upon what he has done. Man is saved when he proves his faith by doing the works

which GOD has commanded of him. There is nothing man can do which earns him salvation or places GOD in debt to man so that GOD must give him salvation. All of one's boasting should be in GOD.

**"In GOD we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name for ever"** (Psalm 44:8).

**"My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad"** (Psalm 34:2).

**"All the workers of iniquity boast themselves"** (Psalm 94:4).

**"Ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil"** (James 4:16).

Since man's salvation comes by GOD's grace and not his own works, does that mean that there is no work which a man must do in order to be saved? From the Scriptures, it is clear that Paul believed that there were works which must be done by Christians to be saved. Emphasized again, these are works of faith, which prove that one truly believes that GOD can save him.

Carefully notice the following passage regarding "work."

**"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Philippians 2:12, emphasis mine RK).

Notice two things from this passage: (1) To obey means that there was something done to accomplish some desired end result. (2) Paul clearly told the Thessalonians to **"work out their own salvation."** If there are no works which must be done in order to obtain salvation, how can one do what Paul commanded here? **"Save yourselves from this untoward generation"** (Acts 2:40). How can one save himself if there is nothing for him to do? Notice also First Thessalonians

1:2-3; **"We give thanks to GOD always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of GOD and our Father."** (Emphasis mine, RK) Notice: (1) Paul gave thanks for them. Why? (2) Because of their unceasing work of faith. Paul could not have prayed unceasingly for their work of faith if they had not continued their work of faith. (3) He thanked GOD for their labor of love. From the passages cited above, it is obvious that Paul believed in work which must be done in order for one's salvation to occur. Notice something else Paul said in the book of Romans. Paul said that GOD **"will render to every man according to his deeds"** (Romans 2:6). The judgment day is coming, and every man will be judged by what? His deeds — deeds are something done — WORK.

Further, Peter and the rest of the apostles in Acts chapter two believed that there was something a man must do in order to be saved. Those people heard the first Gospel sermon preached, and it caused them to realize that they had murdered the Messiah for which they had long looked. They cried out to the apostles, **"Men and brethren, what shall we do"** (v. 37)? If the doctrines of grace only or faith only were true, this would have been the perfect time for those apostles to say, *"There is nothing you can do or need to do; GOD has done it all."* But that is not what the Holy Spirit instructed them to say to these new believers. They were told to **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"** (2:38). Question: If there is nothing a sinner has to do after he believes, then from where does this command to repent come? They believed GOD before they were told to repent. If salvation comes when one believes, then repentance is not necessary. Since repentance is a change of mind that will lead

to a change of action, if faith saves by itself then there is no need to change one's mind nor his former evil actions. It is not GOD who needs to repent — man is the one who must repent. Further, if faith is all that is required and then GOD does all the rest, why this command to be baptized for remission of sins, when verse thirty-seven clearly shows they had come to believe in Christ as the Son of GOD? They believed and gained salvation, BUT notice that in between belief and salvation, there were two things listed which they had to do. If one does something, one has been involved in the action of work.

One should also consider Matthew chapter twenty-five regarding work. There the lord of the story had three servants to whom he respectively gave five talents, two talents and one talent. The lord then went away for a while, eventually returning and taking account of his servants. The five and two talent men had taken what they were given and had produced double. The Lord praised their industry in using what they had. But the third servant did not do anything; he did not work with what he had been given. Instead, he thought that if he did nothing and just gave back what he had been given, then his master would be pleased. He seems to be like many who are afraid to do anything, because they might make a mistake. The Lord did not give this man a reward. Instead, He called him a **“wicked and lazy servant”** (Matthew 25:26). Everyone knows what a lazy person is — one who will not WORK. What did the Lord say would happen to that lazy servant? **“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”** (Matthew 25:30). Does this sound like the Lord approves of the doctrines of grace or faith only? Does this passage sound like the Lord does not believe man should do something?

Regarding work, notice also another passage where Jesus was asked, **“What shall we do, that we might work the works**

**of GOD?”** Did Jesus say there was no work they could do?

**“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of GOD, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent”** (John 6:28-29).

Their question and Jesus' answer show that there is work which the Lord requires of man and that GOD even considers “faith” to be a work on man's part. Why is faith work? Because man is not born with, nor does GOD zap a person with faith. Faith is something acquired by the one who becomes a man of faith. Since **“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of GOD”** (Romans 10:17), faith cannot exist or grow without diligent study of that Word. Solomon stated that **“much study is a weariness of the flesh”** (Ecclesiastes 12:12). To have weariness of the flesh requires labor.

One should also consider Matthew 7:22ff. There Jesus spoke of those who thought their good works would save them, but they were cast into everlasting punishment. Contrasted are those who by faith obeyed and their works were considered a mark of wisdom on their part.

*“We cannot invent good **works** to save ourselves. Nor can we determine which works will bring about salvation. We cannot be saved by working perfectly the Law of Moses or any other law”* (Caldwell, p. 84).

**Eph. 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”**

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which GOD afore prepared that we should walk in them.”* (ASV)

WORKMANSHIP — ποίημα — *“That which has been made; a work”* (Thayer, p. 527); *“Something made, a work, workpiece, workmanship....It denotes the result of work, what is produced as contrasted to ποιεΜσις which is the act of making, the doing itself and not that which is made”*

(Zodhiates, CD); *“What is made, work, creation”* (Bauer, p. 683).

ORDAINED — προετοιμάζω — *“To prepare before, to make ready beforehand”* (Thayer, p. 539); *“To prepare beforehand”* (Zodhiates, CD).

WALK — περιπατέω — *“To walk...to make one’s way, make progress...to make a due use of opportunities...to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self”* (Thayer, p. 504); *“To walk. To tread or walk about, generally to walk”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Go about, walk around...the walk of life”* (Bauer, p. 649).

**“For we are His workmanship.”** This is true in both a physical and spiritual sense. The workmanship of this verse refers not to man as a whole, but to Christians — and is thus used in a spiritual sense. A Christian has been molded or made what he is, not by his own ability or power, but rather through the guiding power of GOD’s Word. This is part of the reason why a Christian cannot boast in what he has become or of his salvation on any level. GOD made one a Christian through that individual’s obedience to His decrees.

This can be compared to a machine which is designed by a man and built by a man. That machine turns out one thousand parts an hour. Does the machine which turned out the parts have a right to boast (if it could)? No. Rather, the designer and builder deserve all of the credit. So it is with the Christian. GOD laid down the laws, principles, and goals for a Christian life, and any attainments one might gain in life can only be attributed to His guiding hand.

**“Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”** Christians are created in Christ to do good works. But what are good works? Often man believes that, because he considers something good, that thing (whatever it may be) is good and is something which will please GOD if he does it. That which is good is determined by GOD — not by man. When did GOD determine what a good work is and what is not a good work?

**“Which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** The word **“ordained”** shows that the things called good works were *“prepared before, to make ready beforehand.”* These good works were determined before anyone became a Christian. In fact, they were determined before the world ever came into existence. GOD determined to create a creature who would have the freedom to obey Him or not. He set out works of obedience to determine who would gain the eternal reward. *“God prepared works whereby we are to regulate our lives, order our behavior, and conduct ourselves...While our own efforts are not sufficient to save, his works are necessary if we are to be saved”* (Caldwell, p. 87).

The word **“walk”** is used to show an habitual way of life. The one who would be a faithful child of GOD must continue to live by faith, doing the works which GOD has assigned him to do, until the last breath is drawn in his mortal body.

**“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”**  
(Revelation 2:10).

Eph. 2:11 **“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;”**

*“Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands;”*  
(ASV)

**“Wherefore”** points back to what has already been said regarding the grace by which they had been saved. What are they to do? Remember. *“Remember” is present, active imperative and carries the force of “keep on remembering” i.e., they (we) were (are) never to forget what they (we) were before their (our) conversion”* (Varner, p. 39). There is a great deal said in the Bible about

remembering. One should remember the state he was in before he became a Christian, before he was saved by the blood of Christ. In that state one is lost, without hope, and it is only through the grace of GOD that one can obtain salvation. There was nothing man could have done to get out of that state until GOD provided the means of escape. Remembering these things will help one maintain joy in his salvation as well as gratitude and love for the One who was willing to provide what man could not provide for himself. It will also help one maintain humility and not become arrogant, as had the Jews. Remembering from whence one came will cause appreciation to continue to grow for GOD's blessings.

**“In time past Gentiles in the flesh.”** One cannot help but notice the change in status. Even though physically these Ephesians are still Gentiles, they are no longer to be viewed as Gentiles. A physical relationship has been exchanged, so to speak, for a spiritual relationship. This same idea is later expressed in this letter: **“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord”** (Ephesians 5:8). Because of the grace of GOD which allows one to be in Christ, he becomes the circumcised — of the chosen ones.

The terms *“circumcised”* and *“uncircumcised”* are terms which basically classified people as being respectively a Jew or a non-Jew. Circumcision referred back to the time when Abraham was given this ordinance as a sign of the family relationship he had with GOD and was to be maintained in that family. Even then, circumcision was of value only when the proper spiritual relationship was maintained. If a descendant of Abraham, though physically circumcised, did not maintain his spiritual relationship with GOD, the circumcision was of no value (Example: King Saul).

Today, the circumcised, i.e., those who belong to GOD, have a circumcision, but it is

of the heart and not physical. It is the cutting away of the sin from the heart.

**“He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of GOD”** (Romans 2:29).

**“Ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of GOD, who raised Him from the dead”** (Colossians 2:11-12).

**“We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of GOD, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”** (Philippians 3:3).

**“Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new”** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To the Jewish mind, the most horrible thing imaginable was to have been born a Gentile. *“The Jew said that God created Gentiles as fuel for the fires of hell, that of all the nations God made, he loved Israel alone, that the best of serpents crush and the best of Gentiles kill, that it was not even lawful to aid a Gentile woman in labor because it would only bring into the world another Gentile. The barrier was absolute. If a Jewish boy married a Gentile girl, a funeral for that boy was carried out. Even setting foot in a Gentile's house defiled a Jew”* (Barclay, p. 125). Paul made it very clear in this letter, as well as in others he wrote, that no such distinction is to be made in the church. The Gospel is to be taken to both Jew and Greek (Romans 1:16),

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him”** (Romans 10:12).

**“There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all”** (Colossians 3:11).

**Eph. 2:12 “that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without GOD in the world.”**

“that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without GOD in the world.” (ASV)

WITHOUT GOD — —θεος — *“Without God, knowing and worshipping no God...in classic authority generally slighting the gods, impious, repudiating the gods recognized by the state”* (Thayer, p. 13); *“In Class. Gr. it primarily and actively meant godless, destitute of God, without God, and consequently *ἀλογος*, devoid of reason, thus denoting a person who was forgetful of God. It also refers to one who did not care about the existence of the gods and consequently did not honor them. In the NT it occurs only in Eph. 2:12 in the pass. meaning without divine help, forsaken by God, excluded from communion with God. ‘Without God’ does not really convey the full meaning. It means more than not knowing God, it means neglectful of God”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Without god, godless”* (Bauer, p. 20). The English word “atheist” comes from this original word.

The picture painted in these verses is one of the Gentile, who had once been at the bottom of the barrel — there was no lower position to which he could have sunk. Again, one reminds himself that this was his condition before obedience to Christ, and the same is true of anyone outside of Christ today.

Being **“without Christ”** (ASV, NKJV) implies a lack of knowledge of Christ and describes the position of the natural man. Without Christ there is no knowledge of an atonement for sin, no assurance of pardon, and no hope of eternal salvation.

They had been **“aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.”** A commonwealth is a community, a place where one belongs, thus citizenship. They were outside of the nation of “old Israel.” Thus, they did not have the privileges, protections and blessings associated with being a Jew.

They had been **“strangers from the covenants of promise.”** The word **“strangers”** signifies one who is a foreigner, thus, one who does not have the same rights or protections as a citizen. The covenants of promise no doubt refer to those promises made to the Jews through Abraham. *“God’s promises to the family of Abraham brought rights and privileges not available to the other families of the earth”* (Caldwell, p. 92). Inherent in the promises made to Abraham was indeed a future promise for the Gentiles in Christ, a blessing which the Gentiles now enjoyed.

They had previously had **“no hope.”** Of all of the words in the English language, these are indeed sad words. Biblically the word **“hope”** refers to a desire for something, coupled with the expectation of receiving that for which one hopes. Such hope **always** exists based upon evidence, not a fantasy or wishful thinking. GOD has made promises to man with regard to eternal salvation in a home of eternal bliss. By GOD’s nature, man is assured that these blessings are attainable, **“In hope of eternal life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”** (Titus 1:2). Those hopes of salvation had either been forgotten or had never been known. In Christ they now had hope.

They had previously been **“without GOD in the world.”** The words **“without GOD”** come from a Greek word from which one gets

the word “atheist” today. They had not known GOD nor worshipped Him. In today’s society, an atheist is one who claims that there is no GOD (yet he makes himself his own god). The Gentiles had worshipped many gods, yet Paul showed that to worship any god other than **the** GOD is atheism. In fact Paul, in another place, shows that the Gentile world had given up knowledge of the true GOD to serve the gods of their imaginations (Romans 1). Outside of Christ one is godless.

What a hopeless situation the Gentiles HAD BEEN IN. But all of that had changed **“in Christ.”** They were no longer without Christ, aliens, strangers, without hope, and without GOD. Oh, how this knowledge must produce gratitude for the wonderful grace shown by GOD to them. How it should manifest the same in Christians today and in any age.

**Eph. 2:13 “But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.”**

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (ASV)

Verses eleven and twelve painted a hopeless picture for the Gentiles who were outside of a covenant relationship with GOD. Verse thirteen starts with the word **“But,”** which indicates a change. Here it is both a change of status and situation. Outside of Christ, they had been far away from GOD. But the opportunity to draw near to GOD was made available by the blood of Christ. When they accepted the blood of Christ, their status changed; they were then made children of GOD with all of the blessings associated with such. Now instead of being far away (detestable), they are brought very close. This might be compared to the disciple whom Jesus loved laying his head on His chest at the feast (John 21:20).

What makes this new relationship possible? The blood of Jesus. It seems that

more and more people object to the blood, and some even consider it repulsive to put so much emphasis upon it. But without the blood, there is no remission of sins.

**“Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”** (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus sanctifies **“the people with His own blood”** (Hebrews 13:12). Man was in the kingdom of Satan, in the kingdom of sin, and needed redemption, Jesus’ blood provides that redemption price.

**“Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ”** (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Once redeemed, the Christian will not live a sinful life, though that should be his earnest goal. Thankfully, the blood of Christ has the power to continue washing sins away.

**“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:6-7).

How does one come into contact with the blood of Christ so that it can wash away his sins? In Revelation 1:5, the Bible says that Jesus Christ **“loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”** Notice that a washing takes place. Where? In the blood of Jesus, which He shed on the cross. What happens when one is washed in the blood? His sins are removed. Now notice Acts 22:16, where one finds the only other time in the Scriptures where this phraseology is used. Saul of Tarsus was told to **“arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling**

**on the name of the Lord.”** When were Saul’s sins washed away? When he was baptized. In allowing Christ to wash away one’s sins in His blood, he finds himself in a new relationship — in Christ.

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3-4).

Once in Him, one is not to live the old life of sin but to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to walk a life of righteousness.

**“Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him”** (1 John 2:29).

Eph. 2:14 **“For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”**

“For He is our peace, Who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition,” (ASV)

The only One Who can bring peace to man is Jesus Christ. The word **“peace”** basically signifies an absence of war. But it is also inclusive of a new relationship. It is not just an absence of war which is included in this word, but now a friendship between former enemies which allows them to work together in harmony.

In this context, the primary application of the apostle deals with the Jew and Gentile who are now united in Christ. Any Jew and any Gentile who have rendered obedience to GOD through baptism have been added to the church. Thus, they have been united together in the church. Before Christ came, there was division between Jew and Gentile because of the law and covenant relationship which had been given to the Jews by GOD. This law

(covenant) had been given to the Jews at Mount Sinai.

**“The LORD our GOD made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day”** (Deuteronomy 5:2-3).

Notice the exclusive nature of this covenant. It was given to them, not to their fathers, i.e., the generations which went before them. This would also then include all those not at Mount Sinai when the law was given, i.e., the Gentiles. As time passed, a hatred developed between Jew and Gentile because of the law. But in Christ, this wall which separated Jew and Gentile has been torn down by Him. This allowed Jew and Gentile to be one in the only place where such a union can exist — IN Christ.

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (Romans 10:12-13).

**“GOD is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him”** (Acts 10:34-35).

Regarding peace, there is another consideration to be made. If individual “A” has peace with GOD, and individual “B” has peace with GOD, then they will have peace with each other as well. If there is no peace between individual “A” and individual “B,” then one or both of these individuals does not have peace with GOD. When Christ came to this earth and offered Himself, it was primarily for the purpose of establishing a relationship with the Father — a peaceful relationship. Such also made it possible for peace to exist between all people. If all would obey Christ, then there would be no racial tensions, no war in Palestine, Iraq, the Sudan, or any other

place. Without obedience to Christ, there will always be wars between human beings.

This middle wall of separation is symbolized by a wall which existed at the temple complex during the time of Christ. There was a court of the Jews which was separated from the court of the Gentiles by a rock wall. Fields states that there was a sign on this wall which read, *“No foreigner is allowed within that balustrade and embankment about the sanctuary. Whoever is caught (violating this rule) will be personally responsible for his ensuing death”* (Fields, p. 68).

How this middle wall of partition was broken down is described in the next verse.

**Eph. 2:15 “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace;”**

“having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that He might create in Himself of the two one new man, so making peace;” (ASV)

ABOLISHED — καταργέω — *“To render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative...to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish”* (Thayer, p. 336); *“To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Make ineffective, powerless, idle...abolish, wipe out, set aside”* (Bauer, p. 417); *“To make null and void”* (Robertson, p. 473).

The Law of Moses is the **“law of commandments”** referred to in this passage. What did Christ do with that law?

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil”** (Matthew 5:17).

**“Fulfill”** — *“To fulfill, bring to a full end, accomplish, complete....By implication, to fill out, complete, make perfect, accomplish an end”* (Zodhiates, CD). When looking at the definitions of **“abolished,”** it is seen that it

refers to making that law inoperative, inactive, ineffective. The purpose of the Law of Moses was to lead men to Christ.

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of GOD by faith in Christ Jesus”** (Galatians 3:24-26).

Once Christ came upon the scene, taught, died and was resurrected, the old law was fulfilled. There was no longer any need for that law. At one time, adherence to that law (coupled with the expectation of the atoning blood of Christ), led men to salvation. Such is no longer the case. Today, the Law of Moses is invalid; in fact, to follow the Law of Moses today is sin!

**“You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross”** (Colossians 2:13-14).

While the Law of Moses existed, there was a separation (enmity) between Jew and Gentile. That law itself was the middle wall of partition between them. Why? Because the Law of Moses was given only to the Jews; it was a national law for them. Under Christ, and in obedience to Him, a new law governs mankind (Galatians 6:2). In this law, all of mankind can be united under one law, unlike the time when the Law of Moses was in force. In the body of Christ, i.e., the church, all are to be united in that one body.

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”**

(Galatians 3:28).

While the Law of Moses was in effect, where did the Gentiles stand? Were they under law, and if so, what law? *“Gentiles (non-Jews) were under patriarchal law until the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Patriarchal law was not repealed when the law of Moses came into force because the law of Moses was not a universal law (it was addressed to the Jews, cf. Rom. 3:19)...when the gospel of Christ (the law of Christ, the faith, et al.) Came into force (on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, Acts 2), then patriarchal law was repealed because the gospel is a universal law — i.e., the gospel of Christ is addressed to all men (both ‘Jews’ and ‘Gentiles’ are under [amenable to] the gospel)”* (Warren, p. 46).

**Eph. 2:16 “And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”**

“and might reconcile them both in one body unto GOD through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:” (ASV)

To reconcile means to turn from a hostile position to a position of friendship. In this case, it is the reconciliation of man to GOD. It is interesting that, in the Scriptures, reconciliation is never portrayed as GOD being reconciled to man. It is always man being reconciled to GOD. Why is this so? Because GOD did not change His position; it was man that changed his position. What caused this separation between GOD and man?

**“The LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear”** (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Man causes the separation between GOD and himself because of his sins.

In this text, it is declared that **“both”** need

reconciliation, i.e., Jew and Gentile. When both parties are reconciled to GOD, then they are also reconciled to each other. All barriers to fellowship are to be broken down in the church. In the church, it does not matter if one is rich or poor, educated or uneducated, black or white, male or female, Chinese or American — ALL are to be one in Christ. But outside of Christ, i.e., in the world of the ungodly, these distinctions will continue to be a source of division and discrimination, because only the cross and the blood which was shed there has the power to unite all people in one body. Since that is the case, if one in the church discriminates against another because of wealth, gender, race, et cetera, then that person is sinning. What does this context teach us about a community where there is a “black congregation” and a “white congregation?” Would Paul have tolerated a Gentile church of Christ and a separate Jewish church of Christ in the same town? All the excuses regarding “culture,” et cetera, which man may devise to maintain separation are sin! The real culprit for their separation is the sin of prejudice, just like the separation for which Paul condemned Peter in Galatians 2:11-14. *“No man can be in union with God without being in union and fellowship with every other being in the universe in union with him”* (Lipscomb, p. 49).

**“I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts”** (Psalm 119:63).

**“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7).

The **“one body”** has already been shown by Paul to be the church (1:22-23). Jew and Gentile are reconciled to GOD, and to each other, when they are both added to the church after their obedience to the Gospel (Acts 2:47). When GOD adds, He adds to only

## ONE BODY — ONE CHURCH.

*“By elementary logic one must conclude that if there is reconciliation in one body, and if there is **only** one body, and if that one body is the church of our Lord, then reconciliation with God (which is necessary for our salvation) is to be found only in the church of our Lord”* (Whitten, p. 128).

**“Having slain the enmity thereby.”** In verse fourteen, the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile is exposed as the Law of Moses. Verse sixteen speaks about the enmity — not between Jew and Gentile (specifically) — but between man as a whole and GOD. This enmity is the result of sin. The Law of Moses was abolished, but the cause of enmity between GOD and man, which is sin, is to be destroyed (“slain” - put to death). When sin is slain in one’s life, he can then have a complete reconciliation with GOD.

**“GOD was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation”** (2 Corinthians 5:19).

*“In losing his (Christ, RK) own life, he was killing the bitterness and hostility that existed between God and man because of sin”* (Caldwell, p. 99).

**Eph. 2:17 “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”**

*“and He came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh:”* (ASV)

PREACHED — εὐαγγελίζω — *“To bring good news, to announce glad tidings”* (Thayer, p. 256); *“To evangelize, proclaim the good news, preach the gospel”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Bring or announce good news”* (Bauer, p. 317).

Who came and preached peace? The context points to Christ as the one who

proclaimed this good news of peace. The **“you”** of this passage points specifically to the Gentiles. While on earth, Jesus taught almost exclusively the Jews, so how is it said that He preached to the Gentiles (here specifically to the Ephesians)? The answer can be seen by understanding Matthew 28:18-20.

**“Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”**

The apostles are not still alive in this world; thus, He is with all those who teach the world the Gospel which He brought. This is being done representatively by those who take the Bible and teach its message to others. Representatively, Christ was proclaiming the message of peace to the Ephesians through the apostle Paul. Christ is still proclaiming the Gospel to the world today — representatively through His disciples who teach His Word.

To whom was this Gospel of peace being proclaimed? To all men. **“You which are afar off”** (Gentiles) and **“them that are nigh”** (Jews). It is interesting to observe the repetition of these thoughts throughout this context. Over and over, Paul tells them that there is no difference between those in Christ. Peace between whom? Peace between GOD and mankind because of forgiveness of sin for those in Christ, and consequently peace between human beings who are in Him. This reminds one of the announcement made by the angels in Luke 2:14: **“Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”** The world was introduced at that time to the One who brings true peace between GOD and man, and man with man.

Will there ever be total peace on earth between all men? In Mark 13:7 the Lord says there will always be wars and rumors of wars until He comes again.

**Eph. 2:18 “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”**

“for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.” (ASV)

Notice the trinity found in this verse: **“For through Him** (Christ, RK) **we both** (Jew and Gentile) **have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**” The Father, Son and Spirit work together for the common purpose of providing salvation for all who are willing to accept it. One of the things which seems to be implied in this is the perfect unity which exists in the GODHEAD. The text has been speaking about the unity which is to exist among all men (Jew and Gentile). That oneness is clearly portrayed in the unity of the GODHEAD as an example for man. This perfect unity of Deity was portrayed in John 17:21.

**“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.”**

Zodhiates states that the term **“access”** (προσγωγή) was originally *“used for the audience or right of approach granted to someone by high officials and monarchs”* (CD). Thayer says it refers to *“the act of bringing to, a moving to”* (p. 544). A number of writers believe this refers to the oriental custom whereby one could not approach a ruler without someone bringing him to the ruler. This well fits what is said in First Peter 3:18: **“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to GOD, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”** Both Jew and Gentile have this access.

**Eph. 2:19** “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD;”

“So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD,” (ASV)

**STRANGERS** — ξένος — *“A foreigner, stranger”* (Thayer, p. 432); *“Strange, foreign, not of one’s family... a guest, stranger, meaning a friend although a stranger... It generally means a stranger from another place”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“The stranger, alien”* (Bauer, p. 548).

**FOREIGNERS** — πάροικος — *“Dwelling near, neighboring. In the Scriptures a stranger, foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship”* (Thayer, p. 490); *“A sojourner, one who dwells in a foreign country, a temporary dweller not having a settled habitation in the place where he currently resides”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Stranger, alien, one who lives in a place that is not his home”* (Bauer, p. 629).

Two words are now used to show what the Gentiles had been — **“strangers”** and **“foreigners.”** Both words signify an outsider, though with slight differences. A **“stranger”** refers to one who is not part of a group. It might be illustrated by thinking of a visit by a young man or woman with the family of the one they intend to marry. He/she is an outsider. The word **“foreigner”** refers to one who is from a certain country but who lives in another country without citizenship in the country in which he presently resides.

Gentiles who obey the Gospel are no longer outsiders but rather **“fellowcitizens,”** with all of the rights and privileges of citizenship. The stranger and foreigner must follow the laws of the land within which they find themselves, but they cannot enjoy the same privileges as the citizen. Barnes describes the way these words were used in Greek society. *“Strangers and such as proposed to reside for a short time in Athens, were permitted to reside in the city, and to pursue their business undisturbed, but they could perform no public duty; they had no voice in the public deliberations, and they had no part in the management of the state. They*

*could only look on as spectators, without mingling in the scenes of state, or interfering in any way in the affairs of the government. They were bound humbly to submit to all the enactments of the citizens, and observe all the laws and usages of the republic”* (Barnes, p. 49). The word “**fellowcitizens**” implies that there is a nation or kingdom to which one belongs. Scripturally, a Christian is a member of the kingdom of GOD, i.e., the church.

A Christian is also called a “**saint.**” There is not a special group among Christians who are called saints; ALL Christians are called saints in the Bible. A saint is one who is “*Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated*” (Zodhiates, CD). When one hears, believes, repents of his sins, confesses Jesus as the Son of GOD and is baptized for the remission of sins, he becomes a saint. GOD sets him apart from the world to which he once belonged. He is set aside to follow GOD as a member of His family.

**“The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved”** (Acts 2:47, NKJV).

Christians have been removed from one world (world of sin) to a new world (righteousness and salvation).

“**The household of GOD**” simply refers to the family of GOD. They have all the privileges and blessings associated with being a member of that family, the greatest of these blessings being an heir in that family.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD: And if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together”** (Romans 8:16-17).

**“Being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”** (Titus 3:7).

**Eph. 2:20 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;”**

“being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone;” (ASV)

The household of GOD is now portrayed as being built on a solid foundation. In a physical house, the most important part of the building is the foundation. It does not matter what kind of building is built or how expensive the materials used to build may be. If the foundation is not right, cracks will begin to appear in its walls; then the building will begin to crumble. Likewise, in the spiritual house of GOD, the foundation upon which the church is built (both individually and collectively) is the most important aspect of the house. If the foundation upon which one builds is not right, the house will not be right.

Since the foundation is so important, what is the foundation upon which a Christian’s life is to be built?

**“According to the grace of GOD which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”** (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

**“Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded”** (1 Peter 2:6).

In the present text, one is shown the importance of the apostles and prophets in the foundation upon which the church rests. It is easy to understand who the apostles were, but who is being referenced by the word “**prophets?**” Some believe that this refers to

prophets in the Old Testament who pointed the way to Christ and the establishment of the church. But notice two things about them in this text and context. (1) One should notice the order in which they are found. It would seem that if this was speaking of the Old Testament prophets, then they should have been listed before the word “**apostles**” because they came before them, and did their work before them. (2) Notice the same order in chapter three and verse five where the New Testament is spoken of as being revealed to the apostles and prophets. The New Testament was not revealed to the prophets of the Old Testament, only promised to come. Therefore, the text is probably speaking of men like Agabus (Acts 11, 21).

What was the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets? Was it not the truth which had been given to them by the Father through His Son, who then commissioned the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth? *“To illustrate, we might say that the United States is built upon its founding fathers. We would all understand that we mean that the nation is established upon the principles of democratic government and individual freedom proclaimed by the fathers in our Constitution. So with the temple of God. The church is not laid upon the foundation of any man, group of men, decrees or philosophies or traditions of men, councils or schools or journals of men, or creeds of men. Its sole foundation is the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ and all that that truth represents”* (Caldwell, p. 103). The foundation is like the foundation of the house pictured in Matthew 7:24-25. There the rock (foundation) upon which the house (church) is built is seen to be the “**sayings**” of Jesus. Compare that to the promise made by Jesus when He said that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18).

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of this spiritual building. In ancient times, the cornerstone was much different from those of today. It was a massive stone upon which the

rest of the building depended. *“In ancient times, the cornerstone was the primary foundation stone set in at the corner of the building. The architect fixed his standard for all other measurements of the building on this stone. There was not one single line or angle of the building which was not determined by and adjusted to the perfect symmetry of that stone”* (Caldwell, p. 103). Christ and His teachings are the stone by which everything in the church is to be measured.

The following comments by Coffman regarding the foundation are given as food for thought. *“There are five foundations of the Christian faith mentioned in the NT: (1) The foundational teaching is composed of the teachings of Christ delivered through the apostles and prophets of the new dispensation (Matt. 7:24-26). (2) The foundational fact is that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:13-20). (3) The foundation person is Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 3:11). (4) The foundational personnel was made up of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, as revealed here. (5) The foundational doctrines of Christianity (six of these) are enumerated in Hebrews 6:1-2”* (Coffman, p. 173).

**Eph. 2:21 “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:”**

*“in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;”* (ASV)

**“The building.”** Of what material is this building composed? The foundation of the building has been seen in the preceding verse to be the apostles and prophets with Christ as the cornerstone. The building is composed of stones — to be precise — living stones, i.e., Christians.

**“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by**

**Jesus Christ**” (1 Peter 2:5).

Each Christian is a stone in this house and has a responsibility to take his proper place in the building. But also notice that these “stones” are to be **“fitly framed together.”** When a mason builds a wall of rock, each stone is carefully picked to go with the other stones in a building. This reminds one of ancient structures built by the Mayans. Each stone is different in shape, but they are carefully chosen and shaped so as to fit so closely together that a piece of paper cannot be placed between the stones. As the building goes up, the relationship of each stone is critical to the others for the completion of the building. This seems then to emphasize the relationship of each Christian to all others in the house of GOD. Each stone has its purpose and is necessary for the building to be what the Designer intended it to be — the habitation of GOD.

What is the end result of the building? **“An holy temple.”** A physical building of brick and mortar is not under consideration. The phrase is often heard, *“We are going to church,”* but such terminology is not correct. That terminology causes one to think of the building where the church meets. But the physical building is not the church. The church is made up of “living stones” (1 Peter 2:5), and the building is called “holy.”

**“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light”** (1 Peter 2:9).

It should also be carefully noted that it is a holy temple only if it is **“in the Lord.”** This indicates that, if the building is not built according to the instructions of its Architect (Christ), then it is not holy and therefore is not the church He promised to build. Such a building would be designed and constructed by man — not GOD. Because such a building does not have the right foundation, when

tested by GOD it crumbles to the ground.

**Eph. 2:22 “In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit.”**

“in Whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of GOD in the Spirit.” (ASV)

Again, the trinity is seen: (1) **“In Whom”** (Christ), (2) **“GOD”** (Father), and (3) **“Spirit”** (Holy Spirit). In Christ, Christians are built together, i.e., in a harmonious whole. In the previous verse, one is told that the church (Christians) is a **“temple in the Lord.”** A temple is a place to worship and is considered the dwelling place of the god for whom it was erected. The word **“habitation”** simply means *“a dwelling place.”* The church, made up of many lively stones (Christians), is thus said to be **“an habitation of GOD through the Spirit.”**

How does GOD dwell in His church? Does He dwell literally in each Christian, or does He dwell in them figuratively, i.e., representatively? The Bible clearly states that GOD does not live in temples made with hands.

**“GOD that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands”** (Acts 17:24).

Many are afraid to make the statement that deity lives within them, because of the errors taught by the denominational world. The Scriptures state that GOD the Father lives in Christians.

**“What agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people”** (2 Corinthians 6:16).

**“GOD dwelleth in us, and His love is**

**perfected in us”** (1 John 4:12).

The Scriptures teach that Christ dwells likewise in Christians.

**“I am the vine, ye are the branches:  
He that abideth in me, and I in him”**  
(John 15:5).

**“He that eateth My flesh, and  
drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me,  
and I in him”** (John 6:56).

The Scriptures teach in the present verse that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians.

**“If the Spirit of Him that raised up  
Jesus from the dead dwell in you,  
He that raised up Christ from the  
dead shall also quicken your mortal  
bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in  
you”** (Romans 8:11).

Since it is clearly taught that all three members of the GODHEAD dwell in Christians, it now behooves one to find out how this is so. If one can learn how one member of the GODHEAD dwells in him then he has learned how all of Them dwell in him.

In chapter three of Ephesians, one is told,

**“For this cause I bow my knees unto  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Of whom the whole family in Heaven  
and earth is named, That He would  
grant you, according to the riches of  
His glory, to be strengthened with  
might by His Spirit in the inner man;  
That Christ may dwell in your hearts  
by faith”** (Ephesians 3:14-17).

Since **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD”** (Romans 10:17), then Christ dwells in Christians as far as His word is allowed to dwell in them and act upon them. **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”** (Colossians 3:16). Christ does not dwell literally in a Christian, but rather representatively through the Word of GOD. How does Deity dwell in Christians? They dwell in the heart of the Christian to the extent that GOD’s Word dwells in his heart. GOD only works in man through His Word!

Thus, whether or not the Father, Son, and Spirit dwell in a man is dependent upon whether that man allows the operating influence of GOD’s powerful word to dwell in his heart. GOD will not force any man to allow Him to dwell in his heart.

The word shows that he was in bonds (chained). To whom was Paul a prisoner? While it is true that he was a Roman prisoner, probably at Rome at this time, he does not consider himself Rome's prisoner. Instead, he is saying that he belongs to the Lord; he is His servant. The reason that he is chained in a Roman prison is because he is chained (figuratively) to the Lord. He has, in essence, voluntarily chained himself to the Lord — made himself the Lord's prisoner. Consider Fields appropriate words here. *"If his heart had not been bound by chains of love, gratitude, duty, trust, and faith in Christ Jesus, he would soon have been free of his iron chains"* (Fields, p. 77).

It should be remembered that the Lord told Ananias to go teach Paul, because Paul would be a chosen representative of His to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Further, Ananias was told that the Lord would show Paul **"how great things he must suffer for My name's sake"** (Acts 9:16). In the present text, Paul was physically suffering, just as he had caused others to suffer for the Lord.

Going back to Acts chapter twenty-one, one can learn why Paul was in a Roman prison at this time. He had been preaching that the Gentiles were acceptable unto Christ and now to be included in the family of GOD. When the Jews heard this, they became infuriated and mobbed him. The Romans saved him, and after several other adventures, he was shipped to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. Thus, Paul says that his imprisonment was for the benefit of the Gentiles. He had stood up for their rights and now suffered for it.

Eph. 3:2 **"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given me to you-ward:"**

"if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of GOD which was given me to you-ward;" (ASV)

DISPENSATION — οἰκονομία — *"The*

## Ephesians — Chapter Three

Eph. 3:1 **"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,"**

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,-" (ASV)

PRISONER — δέσμιος — *"Bound, in bonds, a captive, a prisoner"* (Thayer, p. 129); *"One who is bound, a prisoner, captive"* (Zodhiates, CD).

**"For this cause,"** i.e., because of all that has just been written. Paul next states that he is **"the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."** The word **"prisoner"** signifies more than one who is in a prison or jail cell.

*management of a household or of household affairs; specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of the other's property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship*" (Thayer, p. 440); *"The position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or of property, either one's own or another's"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Management of a household, direction, office"* (Bauer, p. 559); *"Household governor"* (Littrell, p. 414).

**"If ye have heard."** The English word "if" generally begins a conditional statement. Fields says, *"If ye have heard' is a simple conditional expression, used when one wishes to assume that what he said was true. We could also translate it, 'For you must have heard...' or, 'Assuming that you have heard...'"* (Fields, p. 79). Zerr states that this phrase carries the meaning of, *"I take it for granted ye have heard"* (Zerr, p. 99).

What had they heard? Of Paul's stewardship (dispensation). In First Corinthians 9:17, Paul wrote, **"I have a stewardship intrusted to me"** (ASV, "dispensation" in the KJV). In Colossians 1:25, Paul said, **"I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of GOD which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of GOD."** When studying the word **"dispensation"** (see above), it is quickly seen that Paul is referring to the oversight he had been given in the house of GOD (the church) to fulfill a certain mission. What was his mission? To teach the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. Further, to "manage" means that one enforces the commands given him by the householder, the master of the house (GOD).

Paul further showed that it was through GOD's grace that he had been allowed to assume this position. Paul had not earned the right to be the teacher of the Gentiles. In fact, he had not sought that position and, before his conversion, would have shunned such a thing as going to the Gentiles. After his conversion, he came to view the responsibility

given to him by GOD as a privilege, as a favor granted to him by GOD. GOD's people should always view their responsibilities in the church as did Paul — **a privilege to serve.**

**"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 1:5-6).

Eph. 3:3 **"How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,"**

*"how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words,"* (ASV)

REVELATION — • ποκάλυψις — *"An uncovering; properly a laying bare, making naked"* (Thayer, p. 62); *"Revelation, uncovering, unveiling, disclosure"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Revelation, disclosure"* (Bauer, p. 92).

GOD had uncovered (disclosed) something which had not been fully known or understood in the past. What was this mystery which GOD exposed to their view? That the Gentiles would be brought into complete fellowship with the Jews in the one body of Christ.

**"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"** (Eph. 1:9-11).

How had Paul come to know that which had not been known before? He did not stumble across it in some book, nor had it

been taught to him by some man. This knowledge had been uncovered (disclosed) to him by GOD.

**Eph. 3:4 “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)”**

“whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ;” (ASV)

READ — • γαγινώσκω — *“To distinguish between, to recognize, to know accurately, to acknowledge...to read”* (Thayer, p. 36); *“To perceive accurately. Later it came to mean to recognize. In Attic Gr., it usually meant to read and always so in the NT and the Sept. The consequential meaning is to know by reading”* (Zodhiates, CD).

UNDERSTAND — νοέω — *“To perceive with the mind, to understand...to think upon, heed, ponder, consider”* (Thayer, p. 426); *“To perceive with thought coming into consciousness as distinct from the perception of senses. To mark, understand, apprehend, discern”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Of rational reflection or inner contemplation perceive, apprehend, understand, gain an insight into...consider, take note of, think over”* (Bauer, p. 540).

KNOWLEDGE — σύνεσις — *“A running together, a flowing together...the understanding, i.e., the mind so far forth as it understands”* (Thayer, p. 604); *“Comprehension, perception, understanding. The word denotes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“The faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness...insight, understanding”* (Bauer, p. 788).

Because what Paul wrote came from GOD, and was revealed to him and other inspired writers chosen by GOD, it can be understood. In the word studies above, it is seen that accurate knowledge leads to proper (correct) understanding when it is rationally pondered. Insight into GOD’s word with correct understanding is guaranteed. Many today

proclaim that GOD’s Word cannot be understood by the common man, that he needs the church to tell him what the Bible means or a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon him. Others say that GOD’s Word cannot be understood alike by all. Such thinking is an affront to the GOD of Heaven. If He were not capable of speaking in such a way that all rational beings could understand His meaning, then He is not GOD. Or, if He chose to speak in such a way that His words could not be understood except by some elite group, is He not a respecter of persons? The Bible teaches that we can beyond question know what GOD wants us to know!

**“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:31-32).

**“Every Scripture inspired of GOD is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of GOD may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work”** (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ASV).

**“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him. But GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the Spirit of GOD. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of GOD; that we might know the things**

**that are freely given to us of GOD”**

(1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

**“The mystery of Christ.”** The mystery, that which formerly had not been revealed with regard to Christ. What had not previously been revealed? There are indeed a number of things with which this phrase could deal, but in this text it speaks of the knowledge that He would bring Jew and Gentile together in one body — the church. Salvation is provided for all of mankind through the sacrifice He made on the cross — no one is excluded from that saving grace.

**Eph. 3:5 “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”**

“which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;” (ASV)

AGES — γενεά — “A begetting, birth, nativity...passively, that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family...the several ranks in a natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy, the whole multitude of men living at the same time...an age (i.e., the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation)” (Thayer, p. 112); “Originally meaning generation, i.e., a multitude of contemporaries. In NT Gr. *geneá* literally means space of time, circle of time, which only in a derived sense signifies the meaning of a time, a race; then generally in the sense of affinity of communion based upon the sameness of stock” (Zodhiates, CD); “Family, descent...those descended from a common ancestor, a clan...basically, the sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time generation, contemporaries...age, the time of a generation...a period of time” (Bauer, p. 153).

**“Which in other ages.”** This phrase points to all those people who lived before Acts chapter two when the church was established. What happened in other ages?

The **“mystery of Christ”** (v. 4) **“was not**

**made known unto the sons of men”** (v. 5). This does not mean that there was no knowledge at all of GOD’s plans in Christ. The Old Testament clearly shows that they could have had an understanding that the Gentiles would be blessed through a Messiah. GOD told Abraham, **“I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”** (Genesis 12:3). Isaiah predicted the time when **“it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it”** (Isaiah 2:2). Daniel foresaw **“in the days of these kings (Roman empire, RK) shall the GOD of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever”** (Daniel 2:44). As can be seen from these verses, and many others which could be cited, there was a certain amount of knowledge of the Christian dispensation which these **“other ages”** knew about. Peter writes, **“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into”** (1 Peter 1:10-12).

The Jews indeed had some knowledge, but they were confused about the role of the

Gentiles, as well as many other details of Christ's coming. *"Many of the Jews had concluded that the nations (Gentiles) would receive the blessing of Abraham only by submitting to the law of Moses (this might have grown out of a misinterpretation and misunderstanding of such passages as Isaiah 60:1-5). These Jews did not comprehend (despite Jehovah's messages) that the law of Moses was added because of transgressions, till the seed (Christ) should come, and thus it was temporary (Jer. 31:31-34; Gal. 3:19)"* (Melson, p. 144).

**"As it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets."** The word **"revealed"** shows that the mystery now being known in detail as the finished product was made known through inspiration **"by the Spirit."** First notice that the apostles and prophets are called **"holy."** The word **"holy"** means *"set apart, sanctified, consecrated"* (Zodhiates, CD). The apostles and prophets spoken of in this passage were set apart to deliver the details of the church, its laws and the acceptance of the Gentiles as being equal partners with the Jews in the church. But who were the **"prophets"** in this passage? They could not be the Old Testament prophets, because their knowledge of the kingdom was seen in shadows — brief glimpses of things to come. This can only be spoken of the New Testament prophets such as Agabus.

**"In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar"** (Acts 11:27-28).

Also consider Acts 13:1.

**"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had**

**been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."**

Evidence that the word **"revealed"** speaks of inspiration is further verified by the last phrase — **"by the Spirit."** The Spirit directed the things taught by the apostles and prophets, in particular in this context, about the Gentiles' acceptance on equal footing with the Jews.

**Eph. 3:6 "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel:"**

*"to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel,"* (ASV)

What was not made known in the ages which came before? The knowledge that the Gentiles would be fellowheirs with the Jews. It must be remembered that the Jews had a great deal of difficulty accepting the Gentiles, because they had formerly been the "only child" in the family, i.e., the only nation in this special relationship. Part of what they were going through in acceptance of the Gentiles is like an only child in a family who has to get used to a new brother. They had formerly gotten all of the attention; now that attention must be shared. Quite often that situation causes problems in a physical family. The Jews then, should not treat the Gentiles like step-children (step-brothers or sisters). Those who might have accepted the idea of Gentiles receiving a blessing did not seem to consider the Gentiles ever being accepted on a totally equal plain.

It should be noticed in this passage that there are things which the Gentile Christians had which they formerly had not had: (1) They are fellow-heirs, (2) They are in the same body (the church), and (3) They partake of the same blessings. Where are these things found? ONLY "in Christ."

**"Ye are all the children of GOD by**

**faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-28).**

**“In Christ,” “by the Gospel,”** all are on an equal footing — there are no second-class citizens in the Lord’s kingdom — the church.

Note a key ingredient in this unity — **“by the Gospel.”** Without the Gospel’s direction, one would never know about the salvation offered, nor the unity which can exist among all people who are **“in Christ.”**

**Eph. 3:7 “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of GOD given unto me by the effectual working of His power.”**

“whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of GOD which was given me according to the working of His power.” (ASV)

MINISTER — διάκονος — “One who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; univ.: of the servant of a king...a deacon...a waiter, one who serves food and drink” (Thayer, p. 138); “A minister, servant, deacon” (Zodhiates, CD); “Servant of someone” (Bauer, p. 184).

EFFECTUAL WORKING — ἰσχύρια — “Working, efficiency; in the N.T. used only of superhuman power” (Thayer, p. 215); “Energy, the being at work, operation, efficiency, active power” (Zodhiates, CD); “Working, operation, action so in NT, and always of supernatural beings...way of working” (Bauer, p. 265).

**“Whereof”** points back to the Gospel. One should not forget that Paul was not saved or put in the position of apostleship because he saw the Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-4). Neither did the Lord tell him the conditions he must meet to be saved. The Lord told him to **“Arise, and go into the city,**

**and it shall be told thee what thou must do”** (Acts 9:6). After Paul was led into the city, the Lord sent Ananias to tell (teach) him what to do to be saved, and then he was placed into the office of an apostle to the Gentiles by the Lord.

**“I was made a minister.”** As noticed above in the word study of “minister,” this word refers to Paul’s being a servant, *“one who executes the commands of another.”* The word **“minister”** is not used to designate an office or a special position, i.e., placing one on a higher plane than another. It is indicative of a servant and in fact is sometimes translated “deacon.” In the present time, the word “minister” is often used in a special sense to designate a preacher. *“Preachers are servants of the Lord. They have a great work to perform, but it is incorrect to set them apart as a so-called ‘clergy’ by using the word Minister to distinguish them and set them apart from the remainder of the flock”* (Melson, p. 146). AMEN! When Paul used the word **“minister,”** it is easily seen that he rejoiced in being allowed to be the servant of Christ.

**“By the grace of GOD I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me”** (1 Corinthians 15:10).

It should also be pointed out that Paul never took credit for what he did but always pointed out, as he did in this context, that what he accomplished as a servant was to be attributed to GOD.

**“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase”** (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Note that Paul attributed all that he was and had been given to GOD's grace. The loving, undeserved favor of GOD provides all men with what they need to obey GOD. In this context, there is no doubt that one of the things which GOD's grace provides for man is the Gospel which Paul had just mentioned. The Word of GOD is not often thought of in connection to His grace, but it should be considered often.

**“The grace of GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”** (Titus 2:11-14).

Paul next spoke about GOD's grace being given **“by the effectual working of His power.”** The grace of GOD is seen to be an active working of GOD (see definitions above), an active power. *“The ‘working’ of God’s power enabled Paul to work miracles, speak by prophetic inspiration, and guided him into great, marvelous, and hard service”* (Fields, p. 85). It should be understood that GOD's grace is still working today (though not miraculously) and that it is a powerful working that will accomplish the goal of salvation for those who will let it.

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”** (Romans 1:16).

Again, it is emphasized that the power to convert is not in any man — it is in GOD's Word which was given for that purpose by the grace of GOD. The Bible is not a *“dead*

*letter,”* as some claim; it is active and extremely powerful (Hebrews 4:12).

**Eph. 3:8 “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”**

*“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”* (ASV)

LESS THAN THE LEAST — ἡλαχιστότερος — *“Less than the least, lower than the lowest”* (Thayer, p. 202); *“Less than the least, far less, far inferior”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Very small, quite unimportant, insignificant”* (Bauer, p. 248).

UNSEARCHABLE — •νεξιχνίαστος — *“That cannot be traced out, that cannot be comprehended”* (Thayer, p. 44); *“Impossible to be traced out, untraceable, unsearchable”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Inscrutable, incomprehensible”* (Bauer, p. 65); *“Past finding out”* (Barnes, p. 57); *“Trackless, inexplorable”* (Coffman, p. 185).

It should be noted that Paul did not here say that he was the “least of all apostles,” but rather that he was the least of all saints — all Christians. On another occasion, he did refer to his relationship to the original apostles in the same light.

**“I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of GOD”** (1 Corinthians 15:9).

It is in this passage that one sees the reason why he considered himself such — he had **“persecuted the church of GOD.”** It would seem that the remembrance of what he had done to the Lord and His church caused Paul to react in an humble manner toward his brethren. By using the term **“less than the least,”** Paul was expressing the idea that he was far inferior and insignificant when compared to his brethren. This is not false humility on the part of Paul but rather an acknowledgement of how unworthy he was to

receive the grace which GOD offered to him.

**“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting”** (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

Let each one who reads these words consider how unworthy he is to receive GOD’s grace.

As great as the office of an apostle was, that office provided fuel for Paul’s humility. He knew that he did not deserve or earn that office — GOD had given it to him. Paul understood that his opposition to the Lord and His church deserved death. Instead, GOD had granted him the favor of allowing him to preach Christ to mankind (Every preacher should consider the favor GOD has granted in letting him preach His Son’s Word.). Further, Paul knew it was an unfathomable favor which GOD had granted him when He was allowed to preach among the Gentiles. What was Paul allowed to preach among the Gentiles?

**“The unsearchable riches of Christ.”**

Paul was not talking about an inability to understand those things man needed for salvation. The word **“unsearchable”** means *“cannot be traced out.”* This refers to the vastness of the riches found in Christ. These riches are so many that man cannot by his own devices see them all. *“It is the riches of Christ that is unsearchable, not the terms on which a man may obtain them”* (Zerr, p. 100).

**Eph. 3:9 “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”**

“and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in GOD who created all things;” (ASV)

MAKE ALL SEE — φωτίζω — *“To give light, to shine...To enlighten, light up, illumine...to bring to light, render evident”* (Thayer, p. 663); *“To give light to, to enlighten, shine light upon; to illuminate, make one see or understand; to bring to light, make known”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Give light to, light (up), illuminate”* (Bauer, p. 873).

**“To make all men to see,”** i.e., to give them the light which allowed them to see what had previously been veiled from man’s sight. In what were men enlightened? The mystery. In considering the context, the mystery here must be connected with the knowledge that all men are now “one” in Christ. They had been separated by the Law of Moses into two camps. Now all are one in the church — there is **“neither Jew nor Greek”** (Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11) — there are only Christians.

**“From the beginning of the world,”** or rather “From the beginning of the ages.” From the time of the creation, GOD had kept the knowledge of this oneness in Christ to Himself, not revealing the total picture to His creation.

The phrase “by Jesus Christ” is not found in the original texts (ASV). It may have been added at a later date because Christ was the agent by which GOD created all things as is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made”** (John 1:1-3).

**“By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him”** (Colossians 1:16).

**“GOD, who at sundry times and in**

**divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds”** (Hebrews 1:1-2).

**Eph. 3:10 “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of GOD,”**

“to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of GOD,” (ASV)

MANIFOLD — πολυμερᾶς — “By many portions” (Thayer, p. 529); “Manifold, multifarious, greatly diversified, abounding in variety” (Zodhiates, CD); “In many ways” (Bauer, p. 687).

How long did GOD keep the mystery of His intentions hidden from man and angels? Until the church was placed into existence. It was then that the full wisdom of GOD was revealed to man and angel.

Why was the church established? According to this verse, it was for the intent (purpose) of teaching or showing the angels the full extent of the wisdom of GOD. It is true that the church was established by GOD for other purposes as well, but here it speaks of His wisdom revealed to the angels.

There are some who argue that the “**principalities and powers**” here refer to the Jewish leaders and other human leaders. But the phrase “heavenly places” (or the heavenlies) shows that this is not speaking of human beings but rather the heavenly host.

Be it remembered that the angels desired to look into (for the purpose of understanding) those things which GOD had designed and was doing, i.e., until the church came into existence (1 Pet. 1:12). When the church came into existence, everything became clear to them. Consider that these angels understood the nature of GOD, knowing that

He could not and cannot stand evil, and that evil cannot dwell with Him. They knew that justice demanded that man, when he sinned, forfeited eternal existence with GOD. They also had the understanding that man sinned and that none was perfect. Therefore how could a just GOD allow any human being to inhabit Heaven? This was a great puzzle to them until the church was revealed. Consider how they must have looked upon the separation of Jew and Gentile and contemplated how hard it would be to bring them together as one — until the church was revealed in its fulness.

It should also be considered that the church makes known the wisdom of GOD through teaching the Word of GOD, but that is not the point of this passage.

**“If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of GOD, which is the church of the living GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Timothy 3:15).

**“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD”** (1 Corinthians 2:1).

This passage speaks about the wisdom of GOD from the perspective of its being able to be seen through His plan in action in the church. This does not rely upon man’s ability to perfectly fulfill GOD’s purpose for the church, for man often fails. Rather, it is the ability of GOD to put such a plan in action, to complete His intended purpose.

The word “**manifold**” speaks of the great diversity and abounding variety of GOD’s wisdom. His wisdom is complete in every area, whether one speaks of the physical or spiritual realms. GOD’s wisdom here refers to His understanding of all things.

**Eph. 3:11 “According to the eternal**

## **purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"**

"according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" (ASV)

PURPOSE — πρόθεσις — *"The setting forth of a thing, placing of it in view"* (Thayer, p. 539); *"A setting forth, presentation, an exposition, determination, plan, or will. It involves purpose, resolve, and design. A placing in view or openly displaying something. A thought or purpose"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Setting forth, putting out, presentation...plan, purpose, resolve, will"* (Bauer, p. 706).

PURPOSED — ποιέω — *"To make"* (Thayer, p. 524); *"To make, form, produce, bring about, cause, spoken of any external act as manifested in the production of something tangible, corporeal, obvious to the senses, completed action"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Do, make, of external things make, manufacture, produce...of actions that one undertakes, of events or states of being that one brings about to do, cause, bring about, accomplish, prepare, etc."* (Bauer, p. 680).

When considering the original words here, this verse shows that what GOD planned to do ("purpose") He accomplished ("purposed") in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Notice that GOD's plan was determined before the world came into existence — it was eternal. GOD foresaw that His beautiful and perfect creation would stumble and fall, so He devised a plan to raise it up. GOD did not have to make unexpected adjustments in His plan due to unforeseen circumstances or events. Those who advocate that GOD had to change His plans because He did not realize that the Jews would reject His Son are sadly ignorant of the Scriptures. In fact, such an assertion is blasphemy. The establishment of the church was not a stop-gap measure instituted because of the Jews' rejection of Jesus. The church was in the eternal purpose of GOD and, when revealed to mankind, manifested **"the manifold wisdom of GOD."**

All of GOD's plans for man's redemption were planned in eternity to be accomplished in Christ Jesus. Therefore in the mind of GOD, Jesus was **"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"** (Revelation 13:8). All of GOD's plans are fulfilled in Christ. *"He alone can fulfill God's purposes, provide for justice, become man for man, reveal God to the world, extend the Father's grace, offering the anointing sacrifice, and become the continuing mediator. He is all in all"* (Caldwell, p. 123)!

## **Eph. 3:12 "In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him."**

"in Whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him." (ASV)

BOLDNESS — παρρησία — *"Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech...free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance"* (Thayer, p. 491); *"Freedom or frankness in speaking. NT meanings: freedom in speaking all that one thinks or pleases; confidence or boldness, particularly in speaking; plainness or exactness of speech; openness, speaking publicly; freedom, liberty; being in the public eye rather than being concealed"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing...openness to the public...courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, esp. in the presence of persons of high rank"* (Bauer, p. 630).

**"In Whom we have boldness."** The boldness spoken of here is the freedom to speak clearly and precisely, especially in the presence of a ruler or one who has great authority — and to do it with great confidence. What this text speaks of is the opposite of what is seen in Esther 4:16. Mordecai had instructed Queen Esther to approach King Ahasuerus on behalf of her people (Jews) in order to save them from death at the hands of Haman and his followers. Under the law, no one could approach the king unless he was invited. To appear before the king

unsummoned could be a death sentence if the king did not extend his staff to him. Esther said, **“so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish”** (Esther 4:16). She would go before Ahasuerus, but it was with uncertainty as she approached him. Not so with the Christian. Faithful Christians can approach and have access to the GOD of Heaven with confidence because of the faith they have in **“Christ Jesus our Lord.”** **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”** (Heb. 4:16). To have freedom of speech in these two texts (present and Hebrews) seems then to signify the prayers of the saints. Christians have the privilege and right through Christ to boldly bring their praise, thanksgiving and petitions before the throne of GOD. GOD WILL give His children an audience!

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”** (John 14:6).

*“Unlike the heathen who are afraid of their gods, we come to God with boldness. But let us come with reverential boldness, not with impudence, reckless demands, and irreverence”* (Fields, p. 93).

Further, consider the confidence with which the saints may approach GOD. Confidence that He hears and answers one’s prayers. This is contemplated in the epistle to James: **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord”** (James 1:5-7). Notice that one must (1) ask in faith, and (2) without doubting (wavering). Notice the following passages with regard to “confidence.”

**“This is the confidence that we have**

**in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us”** (1 John 5:14).

**“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need....Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end...Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward”** (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19; 3:6; 10:35).

**“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward GOD. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight...And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him”** (1 John 3:21-22; 2:28-29).

Faith should also be considered in reference to this verse. The first thing which should be noticed here is the accuracy of the ASV in translating the latter portion of this verse — **“confidence through our faith in Him.”** What is the faith which allows one to have access to GOD? It is not the Lord’s faith in the sense of His personal belief in His Father. It is the Christian’s faith which has been produced by the Word of GOD (the faith producing word). Thus, the term **“the faith”** in this passage is that which one relies upon

to develop his personal faith in every realm relative to GOD. Compare what is said in Gal. 2:16: **“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”** This passage clearly shows that the faith “of Christ” is “the faith,” the Scriptures, given by Christ to mankind to develop man’s faith in GOD to the fullest extent.

**“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD” (Romans 5:2).**

One’s faith that GOD will hear him is based upon the promises of the Scriptures.

**“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:13-18).**

**Eph. 3:13 “Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is**

**your glory.”**

“Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory.” (ASV)

FAINT — ἡκκακέω — *“To be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted” (Thayer, p. 195); “To turn out to be a coward, to lose one’s courage. In the NT, generally, to be fainthearted, to faint or despond in view of trial, difficulty” (Zodhiates, CD); “Lose heart” (Bauer, p. 240); “Faint means literally, to turn out a coward, or to lose one’s courage; then to be fainthearted” (Barnes, p. 60); “The word ‘faint’ refers to one’s becoming as a coward in battle, who loses heart and deserts, or abandons, his place as a soldier” (Cates, p. 68).*

It should be remembered that at the time of this writing, Paul was in a Roman prison because he had preached to the Gentiles. See Acts 21:27-29 and 22:22ff. This might cause the Ephesians, and other Gentiles, to blame themselves for his suffering. It is easy to see how the Ephesians could be discouraged when the one who had brought them such freedom was himself imprisoned because he had taught them. It is more probable that they might consider the suffering he was enduring and become afraid, because if he suffered for being a Christian, they, too, would suffer the same fate. Indeed, such would be the case, for the Spirit taught that **“all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”** (1 Timothy 3:12). Further, the Lord also taught in the sermon on the mount that persecution would follow those who followed Him, even as such had always been the case for faithful men of GOD.

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).**

Considering the definitions given above for

the word “faint,” Paul was encouraging them not to give up their faith because of the suffering he was enduring. By extension, it would seem to include the idea that when suffering came because of their faith, they were not to act like a coward in the face of persecution. Instead of looking ahead, dreading and dwelling on persecution, they should live for Christ today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

**“Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”** (Matthew 6:33-34).

How were they to view the suffering that Paul was enduring for the sake of the Gentiles? **“Which is your glory.”** Paul’s imprisonment and suffering was a source of honor for the Ephesians, not something of which they should be ashamed. As Zerr stated, *“It should be regarded as an honor to be the brethren of a man whose faith causes him to keep cheerful under such conditions”* (p. 101). To suffer as a Christian is an honorable thing.

**“When they (the counsel) had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”** (Acts 5:40-41).

**“If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord GOD in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in**

**you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of GOD be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing”** (1 Pet. 3:14-17).

Consider also James 1:2-4: **“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”** Persecution and trials should be thought of as a means of building faith and making one stronger.

This passage is also good instruction for those who would throw a pity party for themselves when they suffer in any way. Some people spend a good amount of time looking for things to feel sorry for themselves about. Paul’s advice would be stop thinking about yourself and think about others. Paul was in prison, but instead of dwelling on his own problems, he was concerned about the brethren and how they might be damaged because of his suffering. Paul is concerned that they might lose their faith — not about his suffering. Paul understood that this was where the Lord wanted him to be at this time — in prison. When Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem, **“the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”** (Acts 23:11). Paul accepted the Lord’s will for his life, knowing that suffering was all a part of being His faithful servant.

**“Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the**

**cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord”** (Matthew 10:22-24).

Thus, he had **“learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”** (Philippians 4:11). The brethren needed to learn this lesson then — and it needs to be learned today.

**“I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake”**  
(Acts 9:16).

**Eph. 3:14 “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,”**

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,” (ASV)

**“For this cause”** seems to refer to the fact that the church had come into existence and that it was for all men — Jew and Gentile.

Bowing the knee represents humility and reverence, as well as submission. Here it seems to further indicate the posture of prayer. It should be remembered that there is no particular position of body in prayer which a Christian should take. The key to proper prayer is the attitude of heart, whether one is standing, looking up toward Heaven, bowing, prostrate, et cetera.

*“In Matthew 26:39 Jesus ‘fell on His face’ and prayed; the publican’s prayer was acceptable though he prayed “standing” in Luke 18:13; Jesus gave thanks while sitting (Luke 22:14-17)”* (Zerr, p. 101).

*“Bowing the knee is an expression which expresses spiritual attitude much more than physical posture”* (Caldwell, p. 131).

It should be noted that Paul’s prayer is not addressed to the Lord, though he is thankful for all the Lord did in making the church possible for man’s salvation. Prayer should be addressed to the Father. Why? Because

when His disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He said, **“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name”** (Matthew 6:9). To whom one addresses his prayers and the posture of the heart are extremely important. Surely the directions given by Jesus are to take precedence in one’s prayer life, or any part of his life.

**Eph. 3:15 “Of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named,”**

“from whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named,” (ASV)

While it is true that GOD is the Father of all human beings by right of creation, that is not what is under consideration here. The context speaks of spiritual blessings which are all found, and only found, in Christ. Therefore, this passage speaks of a spiritual relationship. Sheerer says, *“The Jews thought of the angels as God’s family in heaven and men and women as God’s family on earth”* (p. 827). Barnes says, *“The Jews were accustomed to call the angels in heaven God’s upper family, and his people on earth his lower family”* (p. 62). It would seem to this writer that the text is speaking of all those who will eventually be in Heaven with the Father.

A name is a mark of identification. Here it does not seem to refer to the identification known as “Christian,” but rather simply as the mark of all those who belong to GOD. It would seem that it is used as a symbol of ownership. Yet, the phrase **“of Whom”** points back to Christ Himself, so in some way there may be a designation in eternity which has something to do with the name of Christ. If such is the case, it does not seem to be “Christian,” for that is a designation which is specifically given to baptized believers, and there is no indication that “angels” have been baptized, nor were the Israelites.

It might be noted that “angels” are also pointed out in the Scriptures as being “sons of GOD.”

**“Now there was a day when the sons of GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them”** (Job 1:6).

**“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy”** (Job 38:7).

Eph. 3:16 **“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man;”**

“that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man;” (ASV)

Paul now prays that the brethren will have strength which is provided by GOD. Is he praying that they might have physical strength? While physical strength is desirable, physical strength cannot see one to Heaven. Samson is an example of a man who was physically strong, but not spiritually strong in the early portion of his life. Paul is speaking of the strengthening of the inward man, the soul of man, the real essence of a man. In fact, while the outward man (physical body) grows weaker with time, the inward man (spirit) can and should grow stronger. This is the thought of Paul to the Corinthians: **“though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day”** (2 Corinthians 4:16).

How does GOD provide this strength of man’s spirit? It is only done through the instructions of the Spirit of GOD through His Word — the Scriptures. Man’s spiritual strength can come from no other quarter. Paul told the Romans, **“be not conformed (“To fashion alike”) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD”** (Romans 12:2). Note two things from this

passage: (1) There is a renewing, or growth which takes place for the Christian in his MIND, and (2) this renewing must take place according to the WILL of GOD which is revealed to man in His Word.

Consider the word **“might”** in this passage. The original word is δύναμις, from which we get the word “dynamite.” When looking at the Scriptures, one finds his source of power is found in GOD’s Word.

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”** (Romans 1:16).

GOD’s power is exhibited in His Word, which application in man’s heart gives him the strength he needs to accomplish GOD’s will.

**“The Word of GOD is quick, and powerful (active power), and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”** (Hebrews 4:12).

Eph. 3:17 **“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,”**

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,” (ASV)

DWELL — κατοικέω — *“To dwell, settle...to dwell in, inhabit”* (Thayer, p. 341); *“A certain, fixed and durable dwelling”* (Zodhiates, CD).

The word **“dwell”** refers to a permanent dwelling, not a casual or temporary one. Thus, Christ is to be allowed to permanently dwell in one’s heart.

How does Christ dwell in one? By faith. **“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD”** (Romans 10:17). Christ dwells in a Christian’s heart so far as that one allows the active Word which Christ delivered from His Father to dwell in him. That this

“indwelling” exists cannot be denied. But this indwelling is not literal. This can be seen by the following passage and a thought which will follow.

**“I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:1-10, emphasis mine, RK).**

Notice that Christ's words are to abide in the Christian. But more to the point, it should be noticed how many times the abiding is said to be mutual, i.e., Christians are to abide in Christ, and Christ abides in them. If Christ's dwelling in Christians is literal, would it also not necessitate the Christian literally dwelling in Christ? Thus, Christ dwells in Christians

spiritually, representatively, through His Word.

**“If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).**

“**Rooted**” and “**grounded**” are terms signifying strength and stability. “**Rooted**” is from the idea of a plant or tree which has a strong root system. The mighty oak is able to stand when the winds uproot lesser trees. It continues to stand because of a great root system which spreads deep and wide. When a Christian develops a deep and wide faith in Christ, he is able to withstand the storms of this life and remain upright in GOD's sight. “**Grounded**” is used to signify a strong foundation upon which Christians must build in order to withstand the storms of life which threaten one's destruction. One's faith in Christ provides the foundation needed to remain standing after the storms have passed (Matthew 16:13-19; 7:24-27).

Consider the relationship of faith and love. Is it possible to have faith without love? Paul told the Corinthians, “**though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing**” (1 Corinthians 13:2). Obviously, it is possible to have great faith without love. Much of the “Christian” world has faith (belief), but it is not coupled with love and is therefore worthless to them. True love for Christ demands that one obey Him. Jesus said, “**If ye love Me, keep My commandments**” (John 14:15). He further said, “**If a man love Me, he will keep My words**” (John 14:23, emphasis mine RK). John writes, “**this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments**” (1 John 5:3). Since faith that saves comes through acceptance of and obedience to GOD's Word, the connection between love and faith is clearly seen by the observant student.

**Eph. 3:18 “May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length,**

## and depth, and height;”

“may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,” (ASV)

ABLE — ἰσχύω — “To be eminently able, to have full strength” (Thayer, p. 224); “To be in full strength, fully able, followed by the infinitive. It is the strongest word available to indicate strength or ability, a comp., and stronger than *ischúoM*, which in turn is stronger than *dúnamai*, to be able, have power, or *dunamóoM* used trans. meaning to make strong, or *hikanóoM*, to be competent, able, qualified” (Zodhiates, CD); “Be able, be strong enough, be in position” (Bauer, p. 276); “To have full strength” (Robertson, p. 474).

“**May be able.**” Note that the ASV uses the word “strong” in place of “able” as in the KJV. Paul seems to be praying that they would have the strength and ability to understand the great love GOD has for them and all saints. Yet, it is impossible for mere human beings to completely understand the great love that GOD has shown toward them. As life progresses, the Christian will see more clearly the great love GOD has for him, will indeed comprehend it more fully, but never perfectly in this life. Further, Paul seems to imply that it is the responsibility of every Christian to try to the best of his ability to grasp as much knowledge of GOD as he is capable of learning and understanding.

“**The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.**” These are all word pictures of dimensions. No matter what subject may be addressed by these words, it seems they are meant to convey the idea of infinite dimensions, dimensions which are ultimately unfathomable by mere human beings. Many ideas as to the meaning of these four words in this context have been put forth by writers. None of them, including this writer’s thoughts seem adequate to explain them.

**Eph. 3:19 “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of GOD.”**

“and to know the love of Christ which passeth

knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of GOD.” (ASV)

It is one thing to have knowledge of something and another thing to have a complete and working knowledge of it. Engersol had knowledge of the Bible, but it did not change him from the atheist he was. It is one thing to read about the love which GOD and Christ have shown to mankind; it is another to fully comprehend it. Who can fully understand the love GOD has for man who murdered His Son, yet His love desires to make those who killed His Son His children? As one grows in faith, surely his comprehension of GOD’s love grows as well. But does anyone believe that he can know every detail and extent to which that love is given? This writer does not pretend to understand the depth of GOD’s love, nor all that is attached to it. Yet, what each one is capable of understanding must be grasped. Note: that demands continued growth in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures.

*“When Christ dwells in the heart, we have love perfecting the faith which roots the life in him, a thoughtful knowledge, entering by degrees into the unsearchable riches of his love to us; and filling the soul, itself weak and empty, up to the perfection of likeness to him, so renewing and deepening through all time and eternity the image of God in our very being”* (Lipscomb, p. 68).

An example of how love grows with knowledge can be seen in a good marriage. Two people begin married life together having a love for each other which they believe is supreme. As time goes by and they nurture that love and become more knowledgeable of the extent of that love, they will look back and realize the love they had for one another at the beginning of their marriage does not compare with what is presently realized. Further, as that love continues to be nurtured,

sacrifices being made for each other, a time will come when they cannot imagine ever being separated from one another. Now watch what happens in such a marriage — as their love grows, they become more and more like each other! By faith, a Christian nurtures his love for GOD based on the knowledge of the sacrifice(s) made for him. As time passes, that love will intensify until the time comes that one is so filled with that love that he cannot imagine being separated from it. As the Christian's love for his GOD grows, he will become more and more like Him.

*“The full characteristics of holiness become part of the his nature: mercy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, meekness, gentleness, truth, holiness, justice, patience, etc.”* (Caldwell, p. 148).

**“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect”** (Matthew 5:48).

Nothing is more important than for Christians to become more like the Lord as time passes.

**Eph. 3:20 “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”**

*“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”* (ASV)

Hightower correctly observes, *“Here is one of the most challenging statements ever made, for it once again demonstrates the inadequacy of even a man directly inspired by the Holy Spirit to describe how great our Father (v. 14) is”* (Hightower, p. 195).

Verses twenty and twenty-one are often called a “doxology,” which means, *“expression of praise to God”* (Webster, CD). A doxology is meant to glorify GOD. It is GOD who planned the entire scheme of redemption and the culmination in the establishment of the

church where all men can be united through His Son.

Paul has talked about many blessings Christians have and asked for a long list of blessings for them. Some might consider that he had asked for too much and that GOD might not be able to grant it all. Lest one say that no one would think like that, he should examine some of the statements made to Jesus (Luke 1:34-35; John 3:9; Mark 9:22). Man far too often thinks of spiritual things only from a human perspective. When speaking of how hard it was for a rich man to be saved, Jesus' disciples asked, **“Who then can be saved?”** Jesus answered them, **“With men this is impossible; but with GOD all things are possible”** (Matthew 19:25-26).

As Paul praised GOD, he was telling the brethren that no matter what man **asked**, GOD could go beyond his request. No matter what man could **think** to ask, GOD could see even better what will benefit him. There are many times when feeble man does not know exactly what is best for him and what to ask for in order to fulfill a given need — but GOD knows and can provide for those needs.

Notice that Paul implied that there is power within the Christian. From where does this power come? The context reveals that it comes through the agency of Deity through the Word of GOD. *“It is the power of the Spirit exercised by the force of what has been said to us in the revealed word”* (Caldwell, p. 149). Is there anything which can limit man in achieving the will of GOD? Yes — Man himself. GOD's Word is the power which GOD has given to convert souls, a power which cannot be stopped from accomplishing its goal (Romans 1:16). GOD has told His children to take the powerful word into all the world — to teach it so that men might find salvation. What stops GOD's people from accomplishing their Father's will? *“I do not know enough to teach someone else.” “I am not a good communicator.” “I am a no-body, so no one will listen to me.”* “No one will

believe me.” *“Send someone more talented than I.”* That is right — His children stop themselves. These are not new excuses. Study Moses in Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 13.

**Eph. 3:21 “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”**

“unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.” (ASV)

GOD is to be glorified above all.

**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD”** (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of GOD; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which GOD giveth: that GOD in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”** (1 Peter 4:11).

What glorifies GOD? The church. The very design of the church brings glory to GOD. The accomplishment of bringing the church into existence glorifies GOD. Those who desire to glorify the Father can only do so in the church.

**“Now unto the principalities and powers in Heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of GOD, According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Remember: to be “in Christ” is to be “in the church,” the opposite is also true. *“She (the church, RK) reflects the light of God’s glory and makes it shine into the midst of the benighted world”* (Lipscomb, p. 69). This glory is also by, or through, Christ who brought about the scheme of redemption through His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and

glorification with the Father. How long is GOD to be glorified? Is it only as long as the church exists on earth?

**“Every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever”** (Revelation 5:13).

*“Only the Lord’s faithful church sets forth ‘the whole counsel of God’ in making known God’s purposes and manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10), and it is through Christ Himself that the Father’s purpose is realized (vv. 11-12)”* (Hightower, p. 197).

The phrase **“world without end”** is another way of saying until the end of the world. Those who say that the church is a “parenthesis” in time until GOD can succeed in establishing the kingdom that Christ originally came to establish have a problem here. The Holy Spirit says the church will last until the world ends.

The phrase **“throughout all ages, world without end”** is literally interpreted, *“unto all the generations of the ages of the ages”* (Caldwell, p. 151; notice also the ASV and NKJV). GOD is not only to be glorified as long as the world exists, but throughout eternity. Christians should constantly glorify GOD for what He has done in them and through them.

## **Ephesians — Chapter Four**

**Eph. 4:1 “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,”**

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called,” (ASV)

BESEECH — παρακαλέω — *“To call to one’s side, call for, summon...to address, speak to (call*

to, call on)” (Thayer, p. 482); “To aid, help, comfort, encourage. Translated: to comfort, exhort, desire, call for, beseech with a stronger force than *aitéoM*... To invite to come... To call for or upon someone as for aid, to invoke God, to beseech, entreat...To call upon someone to do something, to exhort, admonish” (Zodhiates, CD); “Call to one’s side, summon...appeal to, urge, encourage...request, implore, appeal to, entreat...comfort, encourage, cheer up” (Bauer, p. 617).

WORTHY — • ξίως — “Suitably; worthily, in a manner worthy of” (Thayer, p. 53); “Worthily, suitably, properly” (Zodhiates, CD); “Worthily, in a manner worthy of, suitably” (Bauer, p. 78).

VOCATION — κλ-σις — “A calling, calling to...a call, invitation: to a feast; in the N.T. everywhere in a technical sense, the divine invitation to embrace salvation in the kingdom of God” (Thayer, p. 350); “A call, invitation to a banquet. In the NT, metaphorically, a call, invitation to the kingdom of God and its privileges” (Zodhiates, CD); “Call, calling, invitation...station in life, position, vocation” (Bauer, p. 435).

The first three chapters of the Ephesian letter were written to point out the great blessings of being a Christian. This was to produce thankfulness in Christians for GOD’s great blessings. The last three chapters are a call to live as GOD directs **because** of the great blessings received through Jesus Christ, GOD’s Son.

At the time Paul wrote this epistle, he was a prisoner in Rome, in custody because of his service to the Lord. He had not done anything worthy of being restrained by civil authorities — he had not broken their laws. He simply suffered as a Christian. This was an honorable imprisonment. It is always honorable to suffer simply because one is a faithful Christian.

**“This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward GOD endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it**

**patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with GOD”** (1 Peter 2:19-20).

**“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of GOD resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify GOD on this behalf”** (1 Peter 4:14-16).

It should be noted that Paul was not feeling sorry for himself, nor was he soliciting sympathy for his plight. He was simply stating the facts of imprisonment as he had done in chapter three.

Of whom was Paul a prisoner? The Lord. Consider that the word “**Lord**” is not a title in this text but rather a designation of one who has the right to command and rule over another because of what that one has done for him. Consider also that Paul had voluntarily submitted himself to the Lordship of Christ.

“**Beseech**” entails an earnest desire, in this case, for them to walk worthy of their vocation. The sense is one of pleading for them to do as he asked. The word “**walk**” calls for a progressive and continuous action. When man obeys the will of GOD in becoming a Christian, he promises to continue to obey GOD’s will in all areas. To “**walk worthy**” is to live one’s life in such a way as to bring honor to GOD, the One who has called him. To “**walk worthy**” will cause a Christian to carry his religion with him wherever he goes: to work, to play, at home, as well as to the place where he gathers with other Christians to worship. The desire to “**walk worthy**” will cause one to strive to do right in thought,

language and action — because he is striving to please GOD, not man.

Liddell has assembled two lists with regard to “walking” which are noted below.

Christians must walk:

1. In the light (John 11:9; 12:35; 1 John 1:7).
2. In the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).
3. In the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31).
4. In the steps of the faith of our father Abraham (Rom. 4:12).
5. In newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
6. After the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, 4).
7. Honestly (Rom. 13:13; 1 Thess. 4:12).
8. By faith (2 Cor. 5:7).
9. In the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).
10. According to this rule (Gal. 6:16).  
(Context indicates the letter which the Holy Spirit wrote through Paul, RK)
11. In good works (Eph. 2:10).
12. In love (Eph. 5:2).
13. As children of light (Eph. 5:8).
14. Circumspectly, as wise (Eph. 5:15; Col. 4:5).  
(Circumspectly — “*Diligently, accurately, exactly*” — Zodhiates, CD. RK)
15. By the same rule (Phil. 3:16).
16. Worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10).
17. In Christ (Col. 2:6).
18. Worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:12).
19. Pleasing God (1 Thess. 4:1).
20. As Christ walked (1 John 2:6).
21. In truth (2 John 4; 3 John 4).
22. After His commandments (2 John 6).

Christians must **not** walk:

1. In darkness (John 8:12; 11:10; 1 John 1:6; 2:11).
2. In their own ways (Acts 14:16).
3. After the flesh (Rom. 8:1, 4; 2 Pet. 2:10).
4. In rioting and drunkenness, etc. (Rom. 13:13).

- a. (Rioting — feasting and revellings - usually in honor of some god – god of pleasure. RK)
  - b. (Chambering — “*Co-habitation*” contrary to GOD’s laws. RK)
  - c. (Wantonness — “*licentiousness, sexual excess.*” RK)
  - d. (Strife — “*contention, wrangling.*” RK)
  5. Carnally, as men (1 Cor. 3:3).
  6. In craftiness (2 Cor. 4:2).  
(Craftiness — “*Shrewdness, unscrupulous.*” RK)
  7. By sight (2 Cor. 5:7).  
(Idea of in order for something to be real it must be seen. RK)
  8. As other Gentiles, in the vanity of their minds (Eph. 4:17).  
(Vanity — futile, worthless thinking. RK)
  9. As fools (Eph. 5:15).
  10. As enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).
  11. Disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6, 11).  
(Disorderly — irregular, out of step. RK)
  12. After their own rules (2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 16, 18).
- (Liddell, p. 209).

The “**vocation**” or “**calling**” is to be the most important thing one does in this life. It requires the greatest and most serious effort one can possibly put forth. The calling discussed in this passage is obedience to Christ, which demands a Christian’s absolute best effort, if for no other reason than the sacrifice Christ paid for one’s opportunity to be called.

**“We are bound to give thanks always to GOD for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because GOD hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory**

**of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

Christians should ever keep in mind that life is short.

**“Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”** (James 4:14).

Man must learn to live every moment as if he faced the judgment tomorrow. It may not literally be tomorrow — but whenever tomorrow is, it comes quickly for all.

**Eph. 4:2 “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;”**

“with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;” (ASV)

**LOWLINESS** — ταπεινοφροσύνη — *“The having a humble opinion of one’s self; a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind”* (Thayer, p. 614); *“Humility, lowliness of mind, the esteeming of ourselves small, inasmuch as we are so, the correct estimate of ourselves”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Humility, modesty”* (Bauer, p. 804).

**MEEKNESS** — πρ’ ὀτῆς — *“Gentleness, mildness, meekness”* (Thayer, p. 535); *“Meekness, mildness, forbearance. Primarily it does not denote outward expression of feeling, but an inward grace of the soul, calmness toward God in particular. It is the acceptance of God’s dealings with us considering them as good in that they enhance the closeness of our relationship with Him”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness”* (Bauer, p. 699).

**LONGSUFFERING** — μακροθυμία — *“Patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance...patience, forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs”* (Thayer, p. 387); *“Forbearance, long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to action. The quality of a person who is able to avenge himself*

*yet refrains from doing so”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Patience, steadfastness, endurance”* (Bauer, p. 488).

**FORBEARING** — •νέχω — *“To hold one’s self erect and firm (against any person or thing), to sustain, to bear (with equanimity), to bear with, endure”* (Thayer, p. 45); *“To hold up or back from falling,...To hold in or back, restrain, stop....To hold oneself upright, to bear up, hold out, endure”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Endure, bear with, put up with”* (Bauer, p. 65).

The qualities of Christian character which Paul points out in this passage are the opposite of those for which the world strives. Christians desire these qualities because they please GOD and prepare them for the eternal home. A Christian strives for these qualities because he recognizes that the whole purpose of his existence is to glorify GOD.

**“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear GOD, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”** (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

**“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven”** (Matthew 5:14-16).

**“Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples”** (John 15:8).

We are to be **“filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of GOD”** (Philippians 1:11). Because the world thinks

in terms which glorify it in its own eyes; it thinks of the characteristics mentioned in this passage as signs of weakness and worthlessness — in other words, as being a “sissy.”

**LOWLINESS** — See definitions above. If one is lowly, he will place Christ before himself. He will put Christ on the pedestal and himself in the background. This is what is meant by preachers who say they need to “*hide themselves behind the cross.*” Not only will this be one’s attitude toward Christ, but notice how it will cause one to view his fellow man.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 2:3-5).

Lowliness involves humility which is willing to submit one’s self to GOD. Lowliness is thus the opposite of sinful pride. Wrongful pride is almost always the result of selfishness which will demand one’s own way because he views himself as superior to or more important than others. Remember the Pharisee of Luke eighteen who lacked lowliness?

**MEEKNESS** — See definitions above. Barnes states that meekness “*relates to the manner in which we receive injuries. We are to bear them patiently, and not to retaliate or seek revenge*” (Barnes, p. 71). Lipscomb says, “*Meekness is that unresisting, uncomplaining disposition of mind which enables us to bear without irritation or resentment the faults and injuries of others. It lays hold on the sovereign will of God as our supreme good, and delights in absolutely and perfectly conforming itself thereto*” (Lipscomb, p. 70-71). Although lowliness and meekness are quite alike, neither word means that the Christian is easy to manipulate, or that he

goes along with whatever doctrine one might teach, or that he simply flows with the tide of public opinion. Instead, these attitudes of lowliness and meekness show how a Christian reacts toward others, especially with regard to ill treatment which may be rendered toward him.

As Liddell states, “*Meekness is not weakness, but is simply strength under control*” (p. 212). Moses is a great example of one who tolerated many injustices and slights against himself by his brethren, yet he constantly sought their well being. Regarding Moses, one should remember the account at Sinai. Moses had gone up on the mountain of Sinai to receive the Law. As he tarried with GOD, the people rose up and made an idol and began worshipping it. Moses’ righteous anger was aroused, not because of a perceived insult to his leadership, but rather their insult to GOD Who had done so much for them. But when GOD threatened to destroy the Israelites and start over with the seed of Moses (Exodus 32:10), Moses pleaded for their lives (Exodus 32:11-14). Of course the greatest example of lowliness is the Lord Himself. Look at the way the Son of GOD was treated by sinful man. Yet, as He hung upon the cross, with the power to destroy all of mankind, His thoughts were for their forgiveness and their eternal salvation.

**“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:34).

**“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”** (Matthew 11:29).

Preachers who are meek and lowly are not “milk toast” preachers. They will not shy away from the “hard” subjects for fear of losing their creature comforts.

*“We have preachers today who can tiptoe through a totally dark room at the midnight hour — eggs all over the floor — tiptoe so carefully they will not step*

on a single egg! They are experts in 'not' breaking eggs. We need some strong preachers that will send the shells flying in every direction. Some real mashing needs to be done. We are in the big mess that we are in today because of this tiptoe, water-down, stand-for-nothing preaching. And such an attempt not to preach the strong news of the gospel is equal to no preaching at all" (Foy Smith as quoted by Liddell, p. 212).

**LONGSUFFERING** — See definitions above. Longsuffering is the result of recognizing that no one is perfect, thus one will not retaliate quickly toward those who wrong him. Instead, one will be patient enough to try to overcome their error with truth. A longsuffering person will gently try to guide the erring to renounce the error and accept truth. Longsuffering requires patience and endurance. It is not a spirit of retaliation for either supposed or real injuries suffered at the hand of another. Longsuffering is not an attitude which will not stand for truth, letting error have its way to sustain so-called "unity." Longsuffering is not an attitude of surrender and/or compromise to maintain so-called "peace."

At times this may be hard to do, because it would seem such might be in conflict with justice. While there can be no compromise with GOD's truths, there must be a sustained effort to bring an individual who opposes GOD to repentance, whether he be an alien sinner or an erring child of GOD. A Christian must be all things to all men as long as he does not practice sin (1 Corinthians 9:20ff; 10:33). **One cannot compromise truth in any way!** It is one thing to be patient toward those who do not understand GOD's truth on some matter under discussion, but quite another matter to compromise GOD's truth to pacify another human being.

**"Of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with**

**fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh"** (Jude 22-23).

**FORBEARING** — See definitions above. Forbearance calls for self-restraint. The injury suffered may only exist in the mind of the one "injured." Injury may exist because of thoughtlessness or be totally accidental or unintended. But even if one is intentionally injured by another, the godly person will restrain himself from retaliation. Retaliation will destroy unity and peace between individuals, and their "fuss" may affect an entire congregation.

The characteristics or qualities observed in this passage should be in Christians because of love — love for GOD, love for their own souls, love for the souls of brethren and non-brethren. This writer likes something Coffman said about forbearing one another in love. *"In a word, this means that a Christian should accept his place with other Christians, having an attitude that grants to them the same 'right to belong' which he claims for himself"* (Coffman, p. 197).

**Eph. 4:3 "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

"giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (ASV)

**ENDEAVORING** — σπουδάζω — *"To hasten, make haste...to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence"* (Thayer, p. 585); *"To be diligent, earnest, or eager...To make every effort to do one's best, to be eager"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Hasten, hurry...be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort"* (Bauer, p. 763).

**KEEP** — τηρέω — *"To attend to carefully, take care...to guard"* (Thayer, p. 622); *"To keep an eye on, watch, and hence to guard, keep, obey"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Keep watch over, guard someone, something...keep, hold, reserve, preserve someone or something"* (Bauer, p. 814).

The word **"endeavoring"** is more correctly rendered in the ASV as *"giving diligence"* (see definitions above). Before a man dies, he

generally dwells upon those things about which he is most concerned. When one observes the prayer of Jesus in John chapter seventeen, he sees Jesus concerned with the unity (the oneness) of His disciples. Christians must hastily make every effort, zealously pursue unity in the body. This takes a great deal of effort, because all are human beings and thus all are filled with frailties which, if not kept in check, will divide the body. *“To divide the body of Christ is as cruel a crime against God and man as it is to pierce the fleshly body of Jesus with a spear”* (Lipscomb, p. 72). When a doctrinal matter is at stake, who divides the body of Christ? The one who holds the false doctrine! Unity is often broken in the body of Christ because someone does not like the personality of another.

Christians must not allow the spirit of “party-ism” which existed in the Corinthian church to exist (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). Unity is one of the most prized possessions a Christian can have. Where is unity to be found for those who seek it? It is to be found through adherence to the seven ones of the next few verses. All of these are revealed to man in the Scriptures. When man is united on a “thus saith the Lord,” unity will exist between himself and all others who have the same attitude toward GOD’s Word.

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works”** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Christians are to endeavor to “**keep**” the unity of the Spirit. To keep is to guard carefully, to preserve something or someone. Thus unity not only must be carefully sought, but once obtained, it must also be carefully guarded lest it be lost and chaos exist.

It is the “**unity of the Spirit**” of GOD for which Christians must strive, not the whims

and desires for so-called “peace” and “unity.” Peace and unity can only exist based upon GOD’s will, not man’s. The peace GOD desires is given to man through adherence and obedience to the Word which the Holy Spirit delivered to man. Unity is oneness.

The “**unity of the Spirit**” is to be kept in the “**bond of peace.**” The word “**bond**” refers to the ligaments or tendons which tie the bones together. If the ligaments are damaged or torn apart, then the joint cannot operate as GOD intended it to do. The two parts of the body held by the ligaments will not function in harmony. This writer learned the importance of ligaments, having suffered a serious knee injury in 1981 in which every ligament of his right knee was torn or exploded. Those ligaments hold the upper and lower leg together. If they do not do their job, the leg cannot function properly. That which holds the Christian body (the church) together, so that it might function as GOD intended, is peace. But, as noticed earlier, peace can only exist when all are following the Word of GOD. When each person (through obedience) has peace with GOD, then all others who have peace with GOD will maintain peace with each other. It takes diligent effort, but true peace is so beautiful and desired that it is worth every bit of effort it takes to achieve it and maintain it.

**“Can two walk together, except they be agreed”** (Amos 3:3).

“**Peace,**” harmony, lack of hostility. *“When Christians love God, love Christ, love the word of God, love the church and one another there will be unity and harmony in the bond of peace”* (Sheerer, p. 828).

**Eph. 4:4 “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;”**

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling;” (ASV)

In the first three verses, the apostle spoke

of the need for unity. Is there a formula for maintaining unity? Yes. He proceeds to enumerate that in verses four through six. In order to have unity, there can only be ONE body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and GOD.

**“One body.”** Just as the Lord had only one physical body, He has only one spiritual body. One might ask, *“What is the body he speaks of here?”* Paul defined what the **“body”** is in chapter one when he said that GOD **“put all things under His (Christ, R.K.) feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”** (Ephesians 1:22-23). The apostle Paul further affirmed the truth that the body is the church in Colossians 1:18. There he said Christ **“is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”** Notice carefully that there is ONLY ONE BODY. If there is only one body (and the church is the body), then there can only be ONE CHURCH. Denominationalism with its many churches does not promote unity, but rather division. This division causes souls to be lost as they follow a man-made church instead of the one which Christ established (Matthew 16:18-19). Further notice Paul’s comments on the one body in First Corinthians 12:12-13, 20: **“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit...now are they many members, yet but one body.”** Notice that Christians are baptized into one body. How can a person claim to be a part of the one body if he does not believe baptism is a necessary entrance requirement to the body?

One should carefully consider the many

condemnations which the Bible issues for religious division, i.e., denominationalism, besides the present text. **“I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”** (Romans 16:17-18).

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul”** (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Honesty demands the recognition that not everyone is going to be saved.

**“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”** (Matthew 7:13-14).

The **“one Spirit”** is the Holy Spirit. All truth was given to the apostles by Him. Jesus said, **“when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come”** (John 16:13).

Since “**all truth**” came through one source, it will be one truth for all men.

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of GOD may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”** (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV).

Hope is desire and expectation for that for which one hopes. We are saved by the “**one hope**” (Romans 8:24). What is that hope? It is the hope of eternal salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

**“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”** (Hebrews 6:18-20).

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

It should also be noted that one is “**called**” to this hope. How is one called?

**“Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

It is not some mystical call, but rather that which is firm and observable — the Word of GOD.

Consider: If, as some claim, there is more than one body, then would it not stand to reason that there can be more than one Spirit? More than one hope, et cetera? Why

is it that it can be admitted that there **can only be** one Spirit (Holy Spirit), one Lord (Jesus Christ), and one GOD (Father) — but not one body (church)? How can the term “**one**” in these three verses (4-6) logically be changed to mean more than one? The simple truth is that ONE means ONE in all of these marks of unity! To claim anything else is simply dishonest.

**Eph. 4:5 “One Lord, one faith, one baptism,”**

“one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” (ASV)

**“One Lord.”** What is a “lord?” It is one who as a superior has the right to rule, not just to rule, but to rule absolutely. There can be no doubt that the “Lord” of this context is Jesus Christ, the Son of GOD. The apostles told the Jews on Pentecost, “**let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ**” (Acts 2:36).

**“One faith.”** The word faith is basically used in two different ways in the Scriptures. It may refer to one’s individual faith or it may refer to the body of faith which one believes, i.e., one Gospel. When used in the latter way, the word “**faith**” is often preceded by the word “the.” Zerr makes this interesting comment: “*Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17); since there is but one inspired Word there can of necessity be but one faith.*” (Zerr, p. 103). It is this objective use of faith which the context proves is under consideration. All of these seven items are objective and not subjective.

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving”** (Colossians 2:6-7).

**“Let your conversation be as it**

**becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel”** (Philippians 1:27).

It is that one body of faith for which Christians are to contend.

**“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3).

**“One baptism.”** Liddell lists eight different baptisms which appear in the Scriptures, which this writer lists below for consideration:

1. *In cloud and sea ‘unto Moses’* (1 Cor. 10:2)
2. *In water by John* (Matt. 3:1-11a; Acts 19:1-5)
3. *Of Jesus* (“to fulfil all righteousness”) (Matt. 3:13-15)
4. *In suffering* (Matt. 20:22-23)
5. *In (ASV) the Holy Spirit* (Matt. 3:11b; Acts 2:1-21, 33)
6. *In water for the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38; 8:36)
7. *In water for the dead* (1 Cor. 15:29)
8. *In (ASV) fire* (Matt. 3:11b-12)” (Liddell, p. 218).

It is obvious that numbers 1-4 and 7-8 are not the one baptism of which Paul speaks in this passage. It should also be considered that, by the time Paul wrote this letter, there is only ONE BAPTISM which is to be administered.

Many today claim that the required baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then reject baptism in water as the one of which Paul spoke. Others (specifically the Mormons) say that there are two baptisms today — baptism for those living and a

baptism by a believing proxy for those who have died. This is very similar to the Catholic doctrine of “purgatory.”

Regarding “baptism for the dead,” this writer defers to the wise and accurate words of Liddell.

*“Baptism in water for the dead may mean ‘in view of death’s coming,’ that is, in one’s preparation for death and the eternity that follows. Or it may mean that there were those baptizing the living for the physical dead who, in their inconsistency, did not even believe in the resurrection. It does not and cannot mean that one living can be baptized ‘by proxy’ for another who has already died (Ezek. 18:20; cf. ‘everyone of you’ - Acts 2:38; ‘thy sins’ - Acts 22:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; et al.)”* (Liddell, p. 218).

One might add that the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:20ff) clearly shows that death seals one’s fate for eternity. Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham, and the rich man was in a place of torment. Abraham, being with Lazarus, clearly stated that **“between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence”** (v. 26). There was no crossing from one realm to the other. If it were possible to cross from one realm to the other, then the possibility existed that one in eternity could pass from the joys of eternity with the blessed to eternity with the damned.

Regarding the popular belief among many denominationalists that one must be baptized with the Holy Spirit in order to be saved, there are several considerations which should be weighed. First, the promise of the Holy Spirit was just that — it was a promise, not a command for all to have. Second, it was not promised to all men, but to the apostles for the express purpose of their being able to recall and teach GOD’s Word to mankind. Since

GOD's Word has been given to man, Holy Spirit baptism is no longer needed (See Jude 3 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.). Third, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered by GOD and not by man (The baptism of the Great Commission is administered by man.). Fourth, there is no recorded instance of Holy Spirit baptism after Cornelius. It should be remembered that the only reason for Cornelius' baptism was to prove to the Jews that Gentiles were now accepted into GOD's family as well as the Jews.

The only baptism relevant after the middle of the first century is the baptism of the Great Commission — water baptism administered for remission of one's sins! This baptism is commanded for those who would be saved.

**“Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen”** (Matthew 28:18-20 — NKJV).

It is the baptism of the great commission which cleanses one from his sins. No reference can be found in the New Testament for any other baptism, including Holy Spirit baptism, that will take a persons sins away! Saul of Tarsus was told **“why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”** (Revelation 1:5, emphasis mine, RK).

It is the baptism of the great commission

which allows one to enter Christ and the church. No other baptism can accomplish these two things.

**“Ye are all the children of GOD by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (Galatians 3:26-27).

**“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls....Praising GOD, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”** (Acts 2:41, 47).

What is the baptism mentioned in this passage? The Greek word found in this verse is βάπτισμα, which Thayer defines as *“immersion, submersion”* (p. 94). The apostle Paul affirmed that baptism is a burial: **“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3-4). Quickly notice — When does one begin walking in a new life? After he has been buried with Christ.

**Eph. 4:6 “One GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”**

*“one GOD and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.”* (ASV)

In a very real sense, this verse is a summation of the previous two verses. Why is there only one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, and baptism? Because there is only one Father! Each nationality does not have its own spiritual father — there is only one for mankind. Why? Because it is by His direction

that all came into existence, and He desires unity among them. But unity can only exist among those who do His will. As one writer put it, there is only one way to please GOD — His way!

He is the Father of all believers because He is **“above all”** — over all (ASV). There are no other gods. There are none above Him, and there are none below Him (except those mythical gods imagined by man).

He is the Father of all believers because He is **“through all”** — throughout all. His influence for Christians is immeasurable; He influences all they do and become.

He is the Father of all believers because He is **“in you all”** — fills all. **“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones”** (Isaiah 57:15).

Let it be emphasized that the term **“all”** refers only to those who are attempting to faithfully follow the Father’s will.

The followers of Islam accuse Christians of following not one GOD but three GODS. It should be remembered that the followers of Islam believe in the Bible (in reality, only those parts they want to believe, which do not contradict the teachings of Muhammad). When making their accusation, they will often cite Deuteronomy 6:4 (**“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our GOD is one LORD”**). On the surface, this appears to be a valid argument. Coffman points out that the Old Testament *“does not deny the New Testament conception of the godhead as a plurality. The word for God’s oneness in the Old Testament is echad, the same being a compound unity (as in ‘The people is one’ — Gen. 11:6). Therefore, Deuteronomy 6:4, and similar passages, may not be alleged as a denial of that plurality associated with deity in the New Testament”* (Coffman, p. 200). Barnes states, *“All sincere Christians worship one God, and but one. But they suppose that this one God subsists as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,*

*united in a mysterious manner, and constituting THE one God, and that there is no other God”* (Barnes, p. 75).

That there is a GODHEAD is actually affirmed by implication in the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1:26: **“Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”** (Emphasis mine, RK). Who are the **“Us”** and **“Our”** of this passage? Man did not exist yet, nor did any man have the capability of creating life. The very next verse says, **“GOD created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him; male and female created He them”** (Genesis 1:27). Note: In verse twenty-six, plural pronouns are used, and in verse twenty-seven, singular pronouns are used. By implication the GODHEAD is affirmed!

Note passages which speak of the GODHEAD IS GOD:

**“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of GOD, we ought not to think that the GODHEAD is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device”** (Acts 17:29).

**“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse”** (Romans 1:20).

**“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily”** (Colossians 2:9).

In passing, the following note by Claiborne is interesting. *“Muslims believe in one god, but he is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John affirms: ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8, 16). Allah does not love*

*unbelievers or apostates. The god of Islam predetermines who will be saved and who will be lost, somewhat like the god of Calvinism. According to the Qur'an, Muslims are to fight against those who do not accept Islam. And the only people who can know for sure they are going to be saved are those who die in jihad" (Claiborne, p. 103).*

**Eph. 4:7 "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."**

"But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (ASV)

To "**every one of us is given grace.**" The question becomes, Who is the "**every one of us?**" Does this phrase refer to everyone who is a Christian, or is it limited to those mentioned in verse eleven? The danger of envy which causes division is always potentially under the surface to destroy the unity of the church in any generation. It is interesting that the context speaks of promoting the unity of the Spirit. This unity is worth the greatest endeavor one may give toward attaining it.

The question then becomes, What grace (favor) was given as a gift? Is this talking about the common salvation provided for man through the death of Christ? Or is it talking about miraculous gifts? Or does it refer to both ideas? If this text is speaking about miraculous gifts, then it is limited to certain ones, for all who became Christians did not receive miraculous ability. In this context, certain ones are indeed designated (v. 11).

One should consider that Paul included himself in those who received these gifts with the use of the word "**us.**" As one looks ahead, he sees who the "**us**" of this passage is (v. 11). It is by GOD's good will that Christ has for His bride (the church) given these individuals these gifts. But it should be observed that these gifts were measured out by Christ. He knew the need of each person

and each congregation of His people. He also knew the capability of each as to what he could handle or not handle with regard to these gifts. But let it be emphasized again, the purpose of these gifts was to bring the church to unity in the Spirit. Today unity is achieved through adherence to the written Word of GOD. In that day the miraculous was needed because the Word had not been written down and distributed yet.

While it is true that there are no miraculous gifts today, there is still a lesson for Christians. Every Christian must strive for unity in the Spirit. How? First, by each one diligently studying the Word of GOD in order to know what GOD requires of all. Second, by each one using whatever ability he has and growing so as to add abilities for the "**perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ**" (v. 12). It is only when the church is knowledgeable with regard to GOD's Word that unity can exist as it should. When all then take that knowledge and use the abilities they have for the good of the whole, true unity can be achieved. Then the body (church) will grow in lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love. Unity in the bond of peace is achievable only in the Spirit.

**Eph. 4:8 "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."**

"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men." (ASV)

CAPTIVITY — αἰχμαλωσία — "A taking by the spear" (Young's, p. 143); "Captivity" (Thayer, p. 18); "A captive. The state of being captive or of taking someone captive by the force of the spear. In Eph. 4:8...to take captive, meaning a captive multitude" (Zodhiates, p. 104); "He led captivity captive' seems to be an allusion to the triumphal procession by which a victory was celebrated, the captive taken forming a part of the procession" (Vine, p. 167).

The quotation here is from Psalm 68:18. **“Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.”**

When Jesus **“ascended up on high”** can have no other reference than to His ascension after His resurrection. One sees the details of that ascension in Acts 1:9-11. This is the triumph of Christ, as He was able to defeat Satan in life and in death. He arose from that grave victorious, ascending to His Father to receive the honor and glory that are His alone.

In returning to His Father, He **“led captivity captive.”** This appears to be an allusion to the customs of the time. When a conqueror returned home, he brought gifts, and among those gifts were the captives who were often given or sold into slavery. But what did Jesus take captive? Some believe this refers to the saints which were brought forth in Jerusalem at the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 27:52-53). Others believe that it was death itself that was conquered, and is a captive under the control of the Lord. Others believe it means that Jesus descended into Sheol and led out the saints of past ages, taking them to His Father, where they could not go before because the atonement for their sins had not yet been offered. Others, this writer included, believe the reference is to sin.

When one looks through the Bible, he sees sin portrayed as that which enslaves people. **“But GOD be thanked,**

**that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”**

δοῦλος — servant, slave. As man serves Satan, he is a slave, a captive under the power of the Devil himself. Christ died to save man from the bondage of sin, **“And deliver them who through fear of death were all**

**their lifetime subject to bondage”** (Hebrews 2:15). Thus, He gave gifts to men to help them maintain the freedom which they had gained through obedience to the Gospel.

What were these gifts? The instructors of verse eleven who were endowed with miraculous ability to proclaim the truths of GOD’s Word. Abilities which allowed them to proclaim the **“unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, who created all things by Jesus Christ”** (Ephesians 3:8-9). This is exactly why the Comforter would be sent after Jesus’ death and ascension (John 14 and 16). Christians have been freed from the stranglehold of sin so that they might enjoy fellowship with GOD. This is His gift given to Christians.

Some would rightly point out that the Scriptures also proclaim Christians to be the servants/slaves of GOD (Colossians 4:12; James 1:1, etc.). While this is true, it is not the same kind of servitude. Slavery to Satan is cruel and destructive, often achieved by deception, so that one is often trapped without realizing it. On the other hand, Christians voluntarily submit themselves, not to a cruel taskmaster, but to a benevolent Lord Who only seeks their welfare. There is a tremendous difference between the two. Instead of being destroyed with Satan, the servant of the Lord is preserved in Christ (Jude 1).

The voluntary servitude of a servant of Christ was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. In Exodus, chapter twenty-one, one finds a description of how servants should be treated and released after they had served their master for a specified time. If after being released the servant plainly said, **“I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and**

**his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever**" (Exodus 21:5-6). When a Christian plainly says he believes Christ to be the Son of GOD and obeys the commands of the Lord for salvation, he has declared that he will serve Him the rest of his life. Let that servant, by his choice, not abandon the Master whom He has chosen to serve.

**Eph. 4:9-10 "(Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.)"**

"(Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)" (ASV)

DESCENDED — καταβαίνω — "To go or come down" (Young's, p. 246); "To go down, come down, descend...the place from which one has come down being evident from the text" (Thayer, p. 329); "To come or go down, descend from a higher to a lower place" (Zodhiates, p. 825); "Come down, go down, climb down" (Bauer, p. 408).

LOWER PARTS — κατώτερος — "Lower down" (Young's, p. 624); "Lower...which many understand of Christ's descent into Hades" (Thayer, p. 341); "Below. Lower. In Eph. 4:9, referring to the lower parts of the earth. Some have believed this implies that Christ became subject to death (see Eph. 1:20) and went to the dwelling place of the disembodied spirits which is called Hades" (Zodhiates, p. 853); "The region is that of Hades, the Sheol of the O.T. Inasmuch as the passage is describing the effects not merely of the Incarnation but of the Death and Resurrection of Christ" (Vine, p. 23-24).

HEAVENS — οὐρανός — "Heavens, skies" (Young's, p. 472); "The region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of an order of things eternal and consummately perfect, where God dwells and

the other heavenly beings" (Thayer, p. 465); "Heaven, sky, air" (Zodhiates, p. 1075).

FILL — πληρόω — "To fill, make full" (Young's, p. 346); "To make full, to fill, to fill up...to fill (pervade) the universe with His presence, power, activity" (Thayer, p. 517); "To supply fully (spoken of Christ as filling the universe with His influence, presence, and power)" (Zodhiates, p. 1177); "Make full, fill...bring something to its completion, finish something...fulfill" (Bauer, p. 670).

These two verses are a parenthetical statement which addresses the ascension of Christ. It points to the fact that the "ascended" in verse eight is dealing with His ascension back to His Father and not His ascension from the grave. It is understood that He could not ascend back to the Father without first coming forth from the grave, but this text deals with His ascension back to His Father from which He originally came ("**far above the heavens**").

That He ascended to the Father implies that He had at one time descended to this lowly earth ("**lower parts of the earth**"). Though there has been much discussion over the years as to what the "**lower parts of the earth**" are, this writer has come to the conclusion that it involves every aspect of His life here on earth (His birth, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, etc.), but specifically in this passage to His coming to this earth. He came to this earth from a higher state to a lower one: "**we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of GOD should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings**" (Hebrews 2:9-10). After Jesus' ascension, John wrote, "**no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven**" (John 3:13).

When considering John 3:13, it caused

this writer to consider Enoch and Elijah, whom he was taught as a youngster had been taken directly to Heaven. But how can this be in light of John's inspired statement? The only way this can be resolved is that it means they (Enoch and Elijah) were taken directly to Hades (specifically the realm of Hades known as Paradise) without suffering death as all others have through the ages.

Notice that the text says Christ has **“ascended up far above all heavens.”** The word **“heavens”** is speaking of the physical heavens as known by man. It includes the atmosphere of this planet and what is called outer space. He ascended far beyond the temporal. Why did He ascend far beyond the heavens? **“That He might fill all things.”** He has all dominion and exercises that dominion in upholding all things.

**“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”** (Hebrews 1:3-4).

**Eph. 4:11 “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”**

“And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;” (ASV)

APOSTLES — • πρέσβυτος — “One sent forth” (Young's, p. 44); “A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders...Specifically applied to the twelve disciples whom Jesus selected” (Thayer, p. 68); “used as a subst., one sent, apostle, ambassador” (Zodhiates, p. 238).

PROPHETS — προφήτης — “A prophet, public

expounder” (Young's, p. 780); “An interpreter or spokesman for God; one through whom God speaks...In the NT, one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration” (Thayer, p. 553); “In the NT prophetes corresponds to the person who in the OT spoke under divine influence and inspiration. This included the foretelling of future events or the exhorting, reproving, and threatening of individuals or nations as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to man (Ezek. 2). Hence the prophet spoke not his own thoughts but what he received from God, retaining, however, his own consciousness and self-possession (Ex. 7:1; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; especially 1 Cor. 14:32)” (Zodhiates, p. 1244). “One who speaks forth or openly, a proclaimer of a divine message, denoted among the Greeks an interpreter of the oracles of gods” (Vine, p. 222); “Prophet as proclaimer and interpreter of the divine revelation” (Bauer, p. 723).

EVANGELISTS — εὐαγγελιστής — “One who announces good tidings” (Young's, p. 309); “A bringer of good tidings, an evangelist. This name is given in the N.T. to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles” (Thayer, p. 257); “An evangelist, a preacher of the gospel” (Zodhiates, p. 670); “A messenger of good, denotes a preacher of the Gospel” (Vine, p. 44); “Preacher of the gospel, evangelist” (Bauer, p. 318).

PASTORS — ποιμήν — “Shepherd, feeder” (Young's, p. 734); “A herdsman, esp. a shepherd...of the overseers of the Christian assemblies” (Thayer, p. 527); “Shepherd, one who generally cares for flocks...The spiritual guide of a particular church” (Zodhiates, p. 1191); “A shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them)...Pastors guide as well as feed the flock; cp Acts 20:28, which, with ver. 17, indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops)” (Vine, p. 167); “This word poimen is from a root meaning to protect” (Robertson, Vol. 4, p. 537); “Shepherd, sheep-herder” (Bauer, p. 684).

TEACHERS — διδάσκαλος — “Teacher,

*instructor*" (Young's, p. 963); "A teacher; in the N.T. one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man...of those who in the religious assemblies of Christians undertook the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit: 1 Cor. 12:28 sq.; Eph. 4:11; Acts 13:1 cf. James 3:1" (Thayer, p. 144); "To teach. Instructor, master, teacher" (Zodhiates, p. 449).

The first thing which should be noticed in this verse is the word "**some**." This shows that everyone did not receive the same gift. Further, it implies that not everyone received a gift, the same being taught in First Corinthians chapter twelve. It should also be observed that the purpose of those "offices" mentioned in this verse was to promote the unity of all Christians.

As one looks at the list of "offices" here, he notices that they can be divided into two lists. (1) Those which existed only at the beginning of the church (apostles and prophets), and (2) those which exist as long as the church on earth exists (evangelists, pastors and/or teachers). Both groups have the purpose of uniting the church in the doctrine and work of the church.

APOSTLE: While it is true that the word "**apostle**" simply means "*one sent*," here it should be applied exclusively to those personally chosen by the Lord to carry His message of salvation to the world. Thus, this refers to the twelve of Acts chapter one and Paul, as he was later commissioned by the Lord. These men had miraculous abilities far beyond any other human being, even to the point of being able to give people the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:14-19). Their authority to bind the Lord's teachings was absolute: "**whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven**" (Matthew 16:19).

**"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"** (John 20:23).

Fields observed that while "*the office of*

*apostle was temporary, the teachings of the twelve apostles will always direct the church. In one sense, we can say that the church still has apostles, the same ones it had in the beginning*" (Fields, p. 122). Their words and decrees still judge men today (Matthew 19:28). The difference between then and now is that there are no living apostles on the earth today.

PROPHETS: The primary role of the prophet was that of publicly expounding GOD's will to mankind, having been commissioned by GOD for that purpose. The prophet spoke under divine influence, and his speech "*included the foretelling of future events or the exhorting, reprovng, and threatening of individuals or nations as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to man*" (Zodhiates, p. 1244). In chapter two, verse twenty, one finds that the prophets were part of the foundation upon which the church would be built. This writer believes that that verse is speaking of the Old Testament prophets. But the present text is speaking of the prophets in the Christian age who had the task of helping to unify and perfect the church. This obviously speaks of men like Agabus (Acts 11:27-28), Judas, and Silas (Acts 15:32). This office, like that of the apostles, was temporary. It passed from existence when that which was perfect was accomplished and when the basis for the church was established — the Bible.

**"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"** (1 Corinthians 13:10).

Unlike the apostles, who could impart miraculous gifts, the prophets could not.

In both the offices of the apostles and prophets the need for miraculous ability was essential. When there was no longer a need for the miraculous, these offices ceased. The offices which follow are different in that they do not require the miraculous to continue, though the present text seems to indicate that at that time these were miraculous, or that

they received miraculous ability.

EVANGELISTS: An evangelist is “*a bringer of good tidings*” (Thayer, p. 257), “*a preacher of the Gospel*” (Zodhiates, p. 670). Like the apostles, they had the specific task of taking GOD’s Word to the world. Their task seems to have been that of going from place to place, establishing congregations through the proclamation of the saving Gospel. The role of an evangelist, a preacher, is needed in every generation, both in a local setting and in “mission” work (some established local congregations are mission works).

PASTORS: Vine states that this is a “*shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them)... Pastors guide as well as feed the flock; cp Acts 20:28, which, with verse seventeen, indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops)*” (Vine, p. 167). Thus, the primary work of the pastor is to care for and protect the flock. “*Pastor has (the, RK) connotation of sheepmaster, constant care of (the, RK) flock, never leaving them unattended, numbered them daily, gathered them, fed them, led them, guarded them*” (Wallace, p. 194). Pastors are also known as presbyters and bishops. Their office is for all ages and did not end with the first century as did that of the apostles. They have strict qualifications which must be met and which are primarily given in First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Those who are commonly called “pastors” today do not fit the Biblical example, for they tend to rule over a congregation of people as a single entity. The Bible always speaks of a plurality of elders in each congregational setting.

**“When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on Whom they believed”** (Acts 14:23; cf “elders” - Acts 20:17; “overseers” - Acts 20:28; et cetera).

It is further revealed that it is their obligation to rule in the church.

**“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine”** (1 Timothy 5:17).

This writer has heard some elders over the years say they do not rule, they only lead. Elders who do not accept GOD’s command for them to rule as well as lead are not godly elders. In the denominational world, it is the preacher who wants to, and often does, rule the church. Unfortunately, some in the Lord’s church desire to be denominational preachers in this area, and equally unfortunate is the desire of many in the church to make their preachers unauthorized pastors. Those who wish to be such often refer to this as having “evangelistic authority” or “oversight.” While the evangelist/preacher has authority to proclaim GOD’s Word, using it to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2), he **DOES NOT** have the right to rule the congregation. **That is the exclusive role of the elders!**

Interestingly, the New Testament uses the word “**shepherd**” in reference to Christ.

**“Now the GOD of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant”** (Hebrews 13:20).

**“When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”** (1 Peter 5:4).

**“Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls”** (1 Peter 2:25).

Indeed He leads, feeds, and protects His flock!

TEACHERS: The term “**teachers**” in this text is rather “*indefinite and applies to any disciple engaged primarily in giving instruction*”

to others” (Zerr, p. 105). Again, this is a role which is needed in every generation.

**“The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”** (2 Timothy 2:2).

**“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation”** (James 3:1).

It is believed by some that the terms **“elders”** and **“teachers”** in this passage are one and the same office, because one of the requirements of an elder is that he is **“apt to teach,”** (1 Timothy 3:2). This thought is also bolstered by the absence of the word **“some”** before the word **“teachers.”** The word **“some”** seems to be used to designate individual functions or offices, being found four times in this verse. If such be the case, there are only four offices found here, not five.

These offices were necessary at the beginning of the Christian age and were able to provide the needed guidance for the unity of the church through the gifts which they were given. As pointed out earlier, two/three of these roles continue until the end of time. All Christians need to encourage men to meet the qualifications for these continuing roles, i.e., evangelists, pastors, and/or teachers.

**Eph. 4:12 “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”**

“for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:” (ASV)

PERFECTING — καταρτισμός — *“Perfecting, complete adjustment”* (Young’s, p. 745); *“A strengthening, perfecting, of the soul (a training, disciplining, instructing)”* (Thayer, p. 336); *“To make fully ready. Perfection of completion (Eph. 4:12). Differs from katartisis, the act of making*

*perfect, fitting in that the latter denotes the process while katartismos denotes the process as completed”* (Zodhiates, p. 843); *“Setting of a bone...equipment, equipping for something...to equip the saints for service through training, discipline”* (Bauer, p. 418); *“A fitting or preparing fully”* (Vine, p. 175); *“For the mending (repair) of the saints”* (Robertson, Vol. 4, p. 537).

MINISTRY — διακονία — *“Ministration”* (Young’s, p. 663); *“Service, ministering, esp. of those who execute the commands of others...of the ministration or service of all who, endowed by God with powers of mind and heart peculiarly adapted to this end, endeavor zealously and laboriously to promote the cause of Christ among men, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, elders, etc.”* (Thayer, p. 137); *“A minister, servant, deacon”* (Zodhiates, p. 430); *“Service”* (Bauer, p. 184).

EDIFYING — οικοδομή — *“Building up”* (Young’s, p. 288); *“The act of building, building up...edifying, edification, i.e., the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness”* (Thayer, p. 440); *“A building up. The act of building, building as a process, also that which is built, the building....edification, spiritual profit or advancement”* (Zodhiates, p. 1031); *“Building as a process, construction”* (Bauer, p. 558); *“This is used only figuratively in the N.T., in the sense of edification, the promotion of spiritual growth (lit., the things of building up)”* (Vine, p. 18).

This verse shows why the roles in verse eleven were established and why the gifts were given to them: (1) their role in **“perfecting the saints,”** (2) so the saints could do **“the work of the ministry,”** and (3) the saints could be involved in **“the edifying of the body of Christ.”**

**“The perfecting of the saints.”** Zodhiates states that the word **“perfecting”** means to *“make fully ready”* (p. 843). He then made this interesting observation about this word. It *“differs from katartisis, the act of making perfect, fitting in that the latter denotes the process while katartimos denotes the process as completed”* (IBID). This shows the

ongoing nature of the work of the above-mentioned offices. In this life, Christians are to strive for that perfection which will allow them to go to Heaven. But in this life one never completely attains such. That is why there is a continuing need for evangelists, pastors and teachers. A Christian is constantly to grow toward that perfection he seeks in Heaven.

Of the word “**saint**,” Wallace says, *“In the Old Testament the word distinguished worshippers of God from heathen idolaters. It denoted the people of God, as distinguished from the nations of the world. In the New Testament it is a designation for believers in Christ. The word saint simply defined means one separated from the state of sin and consecrated to the service of God”* (Wallace, p. 195).

These offices were given so that Christians (“saints”), those who choose to set their lives apart in the service of GOD, could be equipped with the knowledge they needed to perform the services He requires of them. This was especially needed because of their background and the fact that the New Testament was not fully given as yet. They needed someone to tell them the nature of the true GOD and His requirements for their lives. They needed someone to teach them how to live and worship acceptably. This strengthening could only come through the miraculous abilities which the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers could provide.

“**For the work of the ministry.**” This denotes man’s service to Christ in general. This word does not designate the preacher as it is commonly used in our day. This word speaks of the service which is rendered to help others. Lipscomb says the word “**minister**” originally *“was the individual who performed the most menial and laborious work in the congregation — physical labor for the congregation — who waited upon the sick, fed the hungry, and labored for the relief of*

*sorrow, distress, and the physical ills of the off cast of earth”* (p. 78). Such was the case of Stephanas and others who “**addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**” (1 Corinthians 16:15). So often people are selfish with their time and abilities like the rich farmer of Luke 12:16-21. GOD called this man a fool because he “**layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward GOD.**” What does it mean to be rich toward GOD? It means to use what GOD has given one in service to Him by doing what He says with it. As the story of the rich man above reveals, to be rich toward GOD is to be involved in helping those around one who are sick, hungry, naked, thirsty, in prison, et cetera (Matthew 25:35-36). As one grows in Christian maturity, he learns to give as the Father gave (John 3:16) — unselfishly for the welfare of others. Every member of the Lord’s church should/must be involved in this labor.

“**For the edifying of the body.**” Thayer shows that the action of “**edifying**” is *“building, building up...the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness”* (p. 440). Zodhiates says it is *“spiritual profit or advancement”* (p. 1031). Vine says this word is used in the New Testament only as *“the promotion of spiritual growth”* (p. 18). The “**body**” is of course the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), of which there is only one (Ephesians 4:4).

As those who held these offices built up, strengthened, and perfected the saints through the inspired word, they performed the work of their vocation. Such would fulfill the purpose of edifying the body of Christ. Thus, the church would grow, becoming strong through the efforts being made by the whole. This would primarily come to pass through the initial work of those listed in verse eleven. Today it will continue through the work of evangelists, pastors and teachers. There is an individual responsibility on the part of each Christian to minister and edify, and the church

will not grow until each individual grows.

When lists are given in the Scriptures, it should be noted that the most important in that list is usually listed first and the least last. That being the case, this verse teaches us that *“the first and most important work of the church is to seek to perfect themselves in the divine knowledge and Christian character. Second, to look after the poor, afflicted, and destitute of the children of God, and then after the preaching of the word and building up of the church. This order of GOD is effective”* (Lipscomb, p. 79). Too often man reverses the order which GOD has given and then perverts the idea of edification to a bunch of social activities meant to comfort the physical rather than the spiritual.

**Eph. 4:13 “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”**

“till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:” (ASV)

UNITY — ἑνότης — “Unity” (Young’s, p. 1015); “Unanimity, agreement” (Thayer, p. 217); “oneness, unity” (Zodhiates, p. 592).

KNOWLEDGE — ἰπίγνωσις — “Full knowledge” (Young’s, p. 579); “Precise and correct knowledge...of Christ, i.e., the true knowledge of Christ’s nature, dignity, benefits” (Thayer, p. 237); “It is more intense, than *gnosis*, knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. In the NT, it often refers to knowledge which very powerfully influences the form of religious life, a knowledge laying claim to personal involvement” (Zodhiates, p. 624); “Denotes exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition, and is a strengthened form of γνῶσις, expressing a fuller or a full knowledge, a greater participation by the knower in the object known, thus more powerfully influencing him” (Vine, p. 301).

PERFECT — τέλειος — “Ended, complete” (Young’s, p. 745); “Brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect” (Thayer, p. 618); “Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing” (Zodhiates, p. 1372); “Having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect...full-grown, mature...perfect, fully developed” (Bauer, p. 809); “Signifies having reached its end, finished, complete, perfect...with ethical import, fully grown, mature” (Vine, p. 174).

STATURE — ὀλικία — “Greatness, length” (Young’s, p. 932); “Suitable age for anything” (Thayer, p. 277); “Adult, full aged. Adulthood, maturity of life, mind or person” (Zodhiates, p. 709); “Age, time of life” (Bauer, p. 345); “Primarily an age, as ascertain length of life, came to mean a particular time of life, as when a person is said to be ‘of age’” (Vine, p. 42).

FULNESS — πλήρωμα — “Fullness” (Young’s, p. 379); “That which is (or has been) filled...In the N.T. the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ” (Thayer, p. 518); “To make full, fill, fill up. Fullness...by implication, meaning completeness, reaching the intended goal (Eph. 4:13, to the attainment of the state and stature of a man in Christ, to full maturity in Christian knowledge and love)” (Zodhiates, p. 1177); “That which fills...that which is full of something...that which is brought to fullness or completion...fulfilling, fulfilment...the state of being full” (Bauer, p. 672); “Fullness” (Young’s, p. 379); “Denotes fulness, that of which a thing is full; it is thus used of the grace and truth manifested in Christ, John 3:16; of all His virtues and excellencies” (Vine, p. 137).

It is important to remember that the context deals with the church. These gifts were given to the church with goals in mind: (1) that unity might exist, and (2) that the church might grow to manhood. This is true whether one thinks of the church as a whole or whether he thinks of the individual in the church. Because there were different gifts, and different ones had different abilities, it does not mean that unity is unattainable. One of the great Biblical

passages which deals with unity is found in First Corinthians, chapters twelve through fourteen. One recalls that the Corinthians had many troubles among themselves because they did not understand that all of the gifts they were given were necessary in order to have unity and peace. And, just as here, Paul told the Corinthians that these gifts were temporarily necessary — that these gifts belonged to the childhood (infancy) stage of the church. But, he also told them that they were not to remain in that state but to grow to adulthood — maturity

**“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”** (1 Corinthians 13:11-13).

In the present context, men were designated who were specifically endowed with miraculous gifts which allowed them to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and/or teachers. (Interestingly these are all found in the plural tense.) One is told these gifts were given so the saints could be perfected, i.e., made mature, for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the church, “till,” or until all come to “**the unity of the faith.**” This unity of faith was achieved when the perfect (full-grown) will of GOD was revealed and practiced. Look at the purpose of all these offices — to instruct the church in how to grow up. This was a time when they did not have the completed written word to guide them. When that word was completely given, then there would be no need for these miraculous gifts to continue. Two of these offices would vanish; there would no longer be a need for apostles and prophets to pass

along GOD’s message to the people. But three of these offices would continue, but not as they had formerly done with miraculous abilities (elders, evangelists and teachers).

The phrase “**Till we all come in the unity of the faith**” (emphasis mine, RK) should be carefully considered. Notice the definite article “the.” The phrase “**the faith**” does not speak of an individual’s faith or the faith developed by a group. It refers to the same thing to which Jude three refers — a system of faith.

**“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3, emphasis mine, RK).

Some have taught that unity among believers does not occur until the eternal phase of life begins, i.e., in Heaven. This belief is fostered in an attempt to justify denominationalism (many faiths). This belief would make “**the faith**” spoken of in this passage personal faith. “*If the **unity of the faith** does not occur until the next life (as some aver), it will **never** be, because **faith** will end in **sight** in Heaven (1 Cor. 13:13)*” (Meadows, p. 221).

The word “**knowledge**” (ἐπίγνωσις) is a “*precise and correct knowledge*” (Thayer, p. 237). Zodhiates says the Greek word “*is more intense than **gnomosis**, knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner*” (CD). A perfect or complete knowledge of Christ was coming to them, but until that written knowledge was available, they needed these special gifts. Later when they had the completed Word of GOD, these gifts would disappear.

**“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge,**

**it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”** (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

**“A perfect man”** — a full-grown man. The church would pass from an infant state into the full-grown state. In a sense, the spiritual gift age is likened to the baby which requires milk to grow. The baby is given milk until it grows and its digestive system is strong enough to eat meat. The church was given miraculous gifts to guide it through its infancy stage until it became strong enough to stand upon the Word of GOD and become a mature man.

*“One can grow from an unskilled diet of milk to a full age diet of meat, and able to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14)”* (Bristow, p. 27).

**“Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”** *“The stature to be attained to was that of Christ. He was the standard – not in size, nor in age – but in moral character. The measure to be reached was Christ; or we are to grow till we become like Him”* (Barnes, p. 80).

**“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps”** (1 Peter 2:21).

It is sad to note that some seek to know as little as possible about GOD’s Word. They deceive themselves into believing such shallow knowledge will get them the Lord’s commendation on the judgment day.

*“Rather than asking how little we can know and remain in fellowship with Christ, how much we can sin and escape judgment, or how much ignorance or weakness God will overlook, all children of God should seek full growth. We should measure ourselves by the word of God and realize that learning that Christ is Lord*

*is only a beginning”* (Caldwell, p. 187).

Christians must come to a realization that GOD demands that he continually grow so that he can avoid being ignorant, because ignorance causes one to twist the Scriptures to his destruction.

**“Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen”** (2 Peter 3:15-18, emphasis mine, RK).

In view of eternity, no one can afford to allow himself to remain a baby in knowledge because GOD condemns such laziness.

**“When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”** (Hebrews 5:12-14).

**Eph. 4:14 “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”**

“that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;” (ASV)

HENCEFORTH — μηκέτι — “No more, not again” (Young’s, p. 476); “No longer; no more; not hereafter” (Thayer, p. 412); “Not anymore...no more, no further, no longer” (Zodhiates, p. 981).

TOSSED TO AND FRO — κλυδωνίζομαι — “To be tossed, agitated” (Young’s, p. 995); “To be tossed by the waves; metaph. to be agitated (like the waves) mentally” (Thayer, p. 350); “To surge, be tossed in billows; metaphorically, to fluctuate” (Zodhiates, p. 871); “Signifies to be tossed by billows; metaphorically, in Eph. 4:14, of an unsettled condition of mind influenced and agitated by one false teaching and another, and characterized by that immaturity which lacks the firm conviction begotten by the truth” (Vine, p. 145).

SLEIGHT — κυβεία — “Playing at dice, cheat, artifice” (Young’s, p. 900); “Dice-playing...because dice-players sometimes cheat and defrauded their fellow-players” (Thayer, p. 364); “A playing at dice implying trickery, fraud” (Zodhiates, p. 897).

CUNNING CRAFTINESS — πανουργία — “Unscrupulousness” (Young’s, p. 210); “Craftiness, cunning” (Thayer, p. 476); “Shrewdness, cunning, craftiness, unscrupulousness; the word signified the employment of any or all means necessary to realize an end” (Zodhiates, p. 1093); “Unscrupulous conduct, craftiness, is always used in a bad sense in the N.T.” (Vine, p. 254).

LIE IN WAIT — μεθοδεΐα — “Toward the methodizing” (Young’s, p. 603); “To follow craftily, frame devices, deceive” (Thayer, p. 395); “To work by method. Method, the following or pursuing of an orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. In the NT, connected

with evil doing, a device, artifice, art, articial method, craft or wile” (Zodhiates, p. 954); “To lie in wait for, to lay wait for” (Vine, p. 336).

DECEIVE — πλάνη — “Wandering, leading astray” (Young’s, p. 238); “A wandering, a straying about, whereby one, led astray from the right way, roams hither and thither. In the N.T. metapho. Mental straying, i.e., error, wrong opinion relative to morals or religion” (Thayer, p. 514); “A wandering out of the right way. In the NT, used only figuratively meaning error” (Zodhiates, p. 1165); “A wandering from the right path” (Vine, p. 279).

Paul is not talking about the many virtues of children in this passage. As Barnes states, children are often “docile, gentle, mild, and free from ambition, pride, and haughtiness” (Barnes, p. 80). These are qualities which should be developed in every Christian. Paul speaks in this passage about those who are childish in nature in a bad sense — they should be full grown. Paul talks about the childish person who is easily swayed by those with whom he comes in contact, first to one doctrine, and then to another. He is basically insecure in his beliefs. Paul says Christians are not to be children who are so easily swayed from one doctrine to another. Rather, Christians are to grow into maturity (v. 13), thus having firm belief systems which are based on a “thus saith the Lord.” Yet a caution needs to be expressed. One should not be afraid to examine his beliefs in order to reaffirm what he has previously believed. On the other hand, if he finds that the Scriptures do not affirm his previous beliefs, then he must be willing to change those beliefs to conform to the Scriptures.

The imagery in this passage refers to a ship, possibly without an anchor — or maybe a ship which has no power to direct its course. When the winds come, they create waves which toss the ship in whichever direction the winds are blowing at that moment. Christians are to have an anchor of the soul which is sure and steadfast, which keeps them from

being blown in first one direction and then another.

**“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil”** (Hebrews 6:19).

The wind represents false doctrines which are espoused by false teachers. The cause behind natural winds in this world is GOD. But the winds of false doctrine in this passage are caused by **“the sleight of men”** and their **“cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”**

The word **“sleight”** conveys the idea of cheating and the use of deception to accomplish a purpose. Paul shows that this is being done intentionally. Coffman states that *“the biggest mistake a Christian can make is to assume that teachers of error are sincere”* (p. 206). AMEN! Almost always when false teachers are spoken about, someone will interject the idea that they are “sincerely wrong” or that they are such good people that they would never intentionally teach error. While it is true that a few, a very few, are sincerely wrong, most are teaching error which they know cannot be defended. Remember, it is the teachers being spoken of and not the flock.

**“Sanctify the Lord GOD in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear”** (1 Peter 3:15).

How do these who lie in wait to deceive operate? They use **“cunning craftiness”** to blow the Christian around for the purpose of destabilizing him. They are unscrupulous and will employ any and every means available to achieve their end of making merchandise of men. It is emphasized by this writer that they **“lie in wait to deceive.”** This shows their actions to be intentional. Zodhiates says the original for **“lie in wait”** means *“to work by method”* (Zodhiates, p. 954). These false

teachers methodically plan to destabilize Christians in order to deceive them — to lead them astray. They are like a robber who watches his prey, plans his actions, and then lies in wait from concealment for just the right time to ambush his prey which innocently walks along the path.

The word **“deceived”** means *“A wandering out of the right way”* (Zodhiates, p. 1165). Again, these false doctrines have been purposely devised to lead people into error — to wander away from the strait and narrow path (Matthew 7:13). They are trying to lead them away from the path of righteousness which leads to Heaven to a path which only leads to destruction — eternal Hell.

**“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”** (Matthew 7:13-14).

It should be considered that Paul is dealing with those who would intentionally lead Christians from truth to error in this verse. It has been this writer’s observation that if one implies or states that a “religious” person is deceiving, and especially intentionally deceiving people so as to lead them from the truth, that many will automatically jump to the false teacher’s defense. Why then is it the case that there are so many warnings in the New Testament about those who intentionally try to lead men into error? Not one time can it be found in the Scriptures that a false teacher was defended in any way. Jesus talked about those who craftily tried to tempt Him (Luke 20:23). He did not then add that they were honestly mistaken. Paul spoke of those who walk in craftiness handling GOD’s Word deceitfully (2 Corinthians 4:2). Further, Paul said there are **“many”** who corrupt the Word of GOD (2 Corinthians 2:17). The Galatians were told

that “**false brethren**” would try to bring them into bondage to a gospel which was not the Word of GOD (Galatians 2:4; 1:6-7). The list of such passages which show the intentional efforts of false teachers to corrupt and destroy the souls of men could be greatly extended. The false teacher should never be defended, whether he intentionally teaches false doctrine or has been deceived by the false doctrine himself.

**Eph. 4:15 “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”**

“but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Him, Who is the head, even Christ;” (ASV)

In verse fourteen, Christians are told not to be childish. Now they are specifically told to “**grow up,**” to reach that state of maturity which exists only in Christ. How do we accomplish this? By “**speaking the truth in love.**” But in order to speak the truth, one must know the truth. It is also not enough just to speak the truth — such must be done out of a spirit of love. A Christian must speak the truth of GOD’s Word because they love the truth and the One Who gave it. Further, love means that one will care enough about the soul of another, the eternal welfare of that soul, to tell him the truth he needs — even though that truth may hurt. This must be done, not because the Christian wants to hurt him, but because the truth is the only thing which can set him free from the shackles of sin (John 8:32). The truth and obedience to that truth is the only thing that can give him everlasting life in Heaven. Man is going to live an everlasting life somewhere (either Heaven or Hell). The Christian’s goal should be the same as his Lord’s, “**to seek and to save that which was lost**” (Luke 19:10).

Speaking the truth in love also emphasizes a contrast to those who lay in wait to deceive. They do not love the person they are trying to deceive — they only want to use and exploit

him. They do not really care if their false doctrines cause the one they teach to live eternally in a Devil’s Hell. On the other hand, a faithful Christian cares about only one thing — helping that person obtain eternal bliss — Heaven itself. **That is true love!** Further, “*It is not true love to allow a person to go to hell to avoid hurting his feelings*” (Fields, p. 130).

*“The mature Christian (child of God): (1) knows the truth; (b) speaks the truth; (c) does the truth; and thus (d) deals truly with all men in all things”* (Caldwell, p. 190).

Who is the greatest friend a person can have? It is the person who helps him know spiritual truth.

The headship of Christ is also re-emphasized here. From chapter one (vv. 21-23), one learns that Christ is the head of the church. It is He to whom one is to listen and to gain guidance, because He has all authority in religious matters (Matthew 28:18). As one’s head it is He who must be imitated; it is His steps which must be followed (1 Peter 2:21). As one strives to imitate the Lord, he becomes more like Him — he becomes mature in the faith. As he grows in maturity, the danger of being tossed about by every doctrine which comes along is being diminished. Deception becomes less and less a possibility.

**Eph. 4:16 “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”**

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

FITLY JOINED TOGETHER — συναρμολογέω — “*To lay systematically together*” (Young’s, p. 548); “*To join closely together; to frame together*” (Thayer, p. 601); “*To fit or frame together*”

(Zodhiates, p. 1338); *“To fit or frame together, is used metaphorically of the various parts of the church as a building...also of the members of the Church as the Body of Christ”* (Vine, p. 106).

COMPACTED — συμβιβάζω — *“To raise up together”* (Young’s, p. 193); *“To cause to coalesce, to join together, put together...to unite or knit together”* (Thayer, p. 595); *“To join or knit together, unite”* (Zodhiates, p. 1326).

SUPPLIETH — ἰπιχορηγία — *“A supply”* (Young’s, p. 947); *“To supply, furnish, present”* (Thayer, p. 246); *“To supply. A supply, aid, help”* (Zodhiates, p. 645); *“A full supply...by the supply of every joint”* (Vine, p. 95).

EFFECTUAL — ἰνέργεια — *“In working”* (Young’s, p. 288); *“Working, efficiency”* (Thayer, p. 215); *“A work, operative, active. Energy, the being at work, operation, efficiency, active power”* (Zodhiates, p. 589); *“To put forth power, be operative, to work”* (Vine, p. 19).

INCREASE — αυξησις — *“Increase”* (Young’s, p. 512); *“Increase, growth”* (Thayer, p. 84); *“Growth, increase”* (Zodhiates, p. 290); *“To grow or increase, of the growth of that which lives, naturally or spiritually”* (Vine).

EDIFYING — Same as verse twelve.

LOVE — Same as verse fifteen.

The whole body, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), is to be fitly joined together. This is the imagery of a building as it is being built. Each part is placed where it belongs in harmony with those around it, stabilizing them so that the whole becomes stronger with each addition. When compared to the human body, it can be seen that the human body is composed of many very different parts — eyes, feet, hands, nerves, et cetera. Yet, all of these very different parts with all of their various functions are necessary for the body to operate efficiently. For instance, consider the simple act of picking up a pencil. The hand is an amazing instrument suited to pick up a pencil or other

objects (among other functions), but what if there were no arm which allowed it to stretch toward the pencil? And what if the arm were not attached to a body transported by legs or feet which move to cross the room to the desk where the pencil lies (I think one can see the point of the necessity of diverse parts in order for the unity of the body to accomplish its task.)?

The members of the body are to be fitly joined together, but note that they are to also be compacted. The word **“compacted”** means *“To raise up together,” “To cause to coalesce, to join together, put together...to unite or knit together,” “To join or knit together, unite”* (see definitions above). This is not just the laying of two objects side by side. It is a melding of two objects together so that they become one — the same thing which should take place when two totally different people marry one another, becoming a single team for the better of the new unit. It may also be compared to the farmer who takes a branch from one apple tree and grafts it to another for the purpose of producing a better apple. The two branches become one. The text is speaking of the joining together of various Christians until they work in harmony to accomplish the will of the Lord for the church. Each one provides his part, his abilities, to cause the whole to prosper, to become stronger and more efficient. All do not have the same abilities, but if each one uses what he has in conjunction with the rest of the body, the Lord’s body can accomplish great things in His service.

What if a member of this body, the church, refuses to use whatever ability he has to benefit the whole? Does not that one become a detriment to the body’s ability to become what it should become? This being true, the one who refuses to use the ability he has — should he not become subject to discipline? Is that not part of the lesson concerning the one talent man of Matthew 25:14ff, who was called slothful (lazy) and was then cast into

outer darkness? Is such a one not being disobedient to the many commands of GOD for him to be involved actively in service to GOD through the church, but yet refuses?

In the time of the miraculous, each miraculous ability was needed to fortify the whole, to build up the whole, so that the church could function as the Lord desired. This was done until the Gospel was fully given in written form. In the non-miraculous age, each member must study that Word and use the abilities he has to help develop the whole. The body is thus strengthened when each does his part. It is edified — built up in the faith because of the love it has for its Creator and Sustainer. All become a healthy, vibrant body of workers in the kingdom. And that is exactly how the Lord wants His church to be.

*“The church builds itself up in love when every member is working to make the increase of the body. A church that is busy, and has its members working to win souls, usually has no time for quarreling. It builds itself up in love”* (Fields, p. 131).

*“The sum of the passage is that without the harmony of all parts the natural body cannot mature. The existence of all of the parts is not enough. They must function. But their function must be in complete harmony. So of the spiritual body, its organization may be perfect, every part may be there, but if love does not pervade it, the parts cannot synchronize in spiritual function”* (Wallace, p. 201).

**Eph. 4:17 “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,”**

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind,” (ASV)

VANITY — ματαιότης — *“Vanity...perverseness,*

*depravation”* (Thayer, p. 393); *“Vanity, futility, worthlessness...to show the emptiness of the present in contrast with the living fullness of the future”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness”* (Bauer, p. 495); *“The word ‘vanity’ in the Scriptures means more than mere emptiness. It denotes moral wrong, being applied usually to those who worshipped vain idols, and then those who were alienated from the true God”* (Barnes, p. 85); *“Vanity is that which is devoid of truth and appropriateness; that which is worthless, useless, and has no good about it”* (Fields, p. 135); *“Emptiness as to results”* (Vine, Vol. 4, p. 183).

Paul is now going to draw a contrast between what they had been (pagans) and what they had become (Christians). There is also a warning not to return to living as they had before they became Christians. Fields points out that it would have taken a great deal of courage for them to leave their former life style as pagans. They had the great temple of Diana in their city to which thousands of adherents flocked daily. They would have been turning their backs on the fellowship they had formerly had with their friends. They could no longer participate in these activities, and their friends would look at them as being strange and as being traitors to their former beliefs.

**“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of GOD. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you”** (1 Peter 4:1-4).

It takes a great deal of courage in any age to turn away from a former life of sin. Often it costs the person who turns to Christ his former friends, because he can no longer act as they act. Sometimes it will cost a person even more (His former friends and associates tried to kill Paul when he turned to Christ.).

To “**testify in the Lord**” is a declaration that Paul was speaking by the authority of the Lord. What did he tell them? They were no longer to walk as Gentiles. Since those to whom he wrote were Gentiles, this word must be used in this verse to signify those who had not become Christians. The word “**walk**” is present tense, which signifies a continuous action. In what were they to no longer walk? They were not to live as a non-converted person, one who lives a life of sin and rebellion to GOD. Note what Paul told the Romans.

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”** (Romans 6:3-6).

When a person becomes a Christian, a death takes place. The old man of sin is no longer to exist. Instead, the baptized believer is to live a new life from that day forward.

It would do one good to note the word “**walk**” in a good lexicon, for it is used a number of times to show how a Christian should walk (live) and how he should not walk (live). As an example, note the following lists.

*“He is to walk (1) after God’s commandments (2 John 2:6), (2) by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), (3) in Truth (2 John 4), (4) in wisdom (Col. 4:5), (5) in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), (6) in good works (Eph. 2:10); (7) after the spirit (Rom. 8:4, and (8) in honesty (Rom. 13:13, KJV)”* (Hackworth, p. 236).

*“Negatively, this walk is: (a) not after the flesh (Rom. 8:4); (b) not after the manner of men (1 Cor. 3:3); (c) not in craftiness (2 Cor. 4:2); (d) not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7); (e) not according to this world (Eph. 2:2); (f) not in vanity of mind (Eph. 4:17); and, (g) not disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6)”* (Caldwell, p. 194).

In what were the Ephesians (and all Christians) not to walk? “**The vanity of their mind.**” The mind is the seat of the intellect. One is not to walk (live) according to his own dictates, his own way of thinking. Why? Because to do such is empty or void of true fulfillment. No lasting joy can come from such a life. Without GOD in one’s life, his life is basically empty and without meaning — it has no true direction in attaining that which is valuable.

*“The intellect of the worldly man lacks true knowledge and sophistication. His power to comprehend provides no real contentment or peace of mind. His mental course leads to nothing worthwhile and ends only in disappointment. His life is wasted because he lacks understanding concerning spiritual truth and moral goodness (1 Pet. 1:18; Rom. 1:21; Jer. 2:5)”* (Caldwell, p. 195).

With obedience to GOD one finds goals worth striving for, contentment, satisfaction, peace, and a reward which cannot be taken away.

**Eph. 4:18 “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of**

**GOD through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"**

"being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of GOD, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;" (ASV)

DARKENED — σκοτίζω — "To cover with darkness, to darken; pass. to be covered with darkness, be darkened" (Thayer, p. 580); "To darken, deprive of light" (Zodhiates, CD); "Be or become dark, be darkened" (Bauer, p. 757).

BLINDNESS — πώρωσις — "The covering with a callus; trop. obtuseness of mental discernment, dulled perception" (Thayer, p. 559); "To harden, petrify, render insensitive. Used figuratively meaning hardness, callousness, blindness, insensitivity" (Zodhiates, CD); "Hardening, dulling...dullness, insensibility, obstinacy" (Bauer, p. 732).

Verses seventeen and eighteen show the steady downward progression of the Gentiles. Bristow summarizes their downward spiral as follows: "(1) Followed their own minds (2) Understanding darkened (3) Alienated from the life of GOD (4) Became ignorant (5) Hardened their hearts" (p. 29).

**"Having the understanding darkened."**

Nothing is said about a judicial hardening of their heart by GOD. Yet, their understanding had been covered to create a situation where light could not enter the heart.

**"If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).**

What causes darkening of understanding in spiritual matters? It is turning away from the truths GOD gives. This is true whether one speaks of the Christian dispensation or of the two which preceded it. If a person does not want to believe truth, Satan accommodates him. Further, if a person does not want to

believe the truth, GOD will not make him believe it in this life. The world today thinks that it is intellectual superiority to disbelieve in GOD, but the truth is that it is the one who is intellectually inferior.

**"For the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them; for GOD hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified Him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:18-22).**

Truly **"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no GOD" (Psalm 14:1).**

What happens when a person's understanding is darkened? He is alienated (separated) from GOD and the abundant life He can give. In ignorance he practices and stands opposed to the will of GOD.

**"Your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).**

**"And there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee: for Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities" (Isaiah 64:7).**

**“The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not”**  
(John 1:5).

When man turns away from GOD, there is nothing to look forward to except a darkening of his mind, a darkening of his ability to reason — which can only lead to eternal darkness if he continues to follow that course. Without life, there is only death — eternal death.

**“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”**  
(Matthew 25:30).

It should also be realized that that course of darkness can be reversed.

**“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up”** (Matthew 4:16).

Notice also that alienation from GOD comes through ignorance — wilful ignorance, to be sure. It was ignorance which murdered the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:17). Sadly, it is wilful ignorance that will destroy the soul of the majority of people.

**“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I will also forget thy children”** (Hosea 4:6).

Just as had happened with the Israelites, when man turns away from GOD, his knowledge also dissipates. This was brought home to this writer recently when an unfaithful member of the church asked him a Bible question which had easily been known by the man when he was younger. (I know because I taught that man when he was young.)

The term **“blindness”** as found in the KJV and NKJV is unfortunate. As the word definitions above show, this word would be better translated *“hardened”* or *“hardening”* as

found in the ASV. It comes from a Greek word which refers to a callus being formed, a hardening of the skin. When a callus forms on the hand, it does so because of the pressure against the skin through work and thus protects the hand. But when a person’s heart becomes calloused, it does not let the Gospel in and is thus extremely harmful to the soul.

*“Porosis comes from a word poros, which originally meant a stone harder than marble...Finally the word comes to mean the loss of all power of sensation...It describes something which has become so hardened, so petrified that it has no power to feel at all”* (Barclay, p. 180).

**Eph. 4:19 “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”**

*“who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”* (ASV)

BEING PAST FEELING — • παλγέω — *“To cease to feel pain or grief...to become callous, insensible to pain, apathetic”* (Thayer, p. 53); *“To grow or become insensible, void of or past feeling”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Become callous, languish”* (Bauer, p. 80); *“To cease to feel pain”* (Robertson, p. 476).

LASCIVIOUSNESS — • σέλγεια — *“Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence...wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females”* (Thayer, p. 79); *“Lasciviousness, license, debauchery, sexual excess, absence of restraint, insatiable desire for pleasure”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Licentiousness, debauchery, sensuality”* (Bauer, p. 114).

UNCLEANNES — • καθαρία — *“Uncleanness...in a moral sense, the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living”* (Thayer, p. 21); *“Uncleanness or filth in a natural or physical*

sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, incontinence in general; any kind of uncleanness different from whoredom; any unnatural pollution, whether acted out by oneself, or with another" (Zodhiates, CD); "Impurity, dirt" (Bauer, p. 28).

GREEDINESS — πλεονεξία — "Greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice" (Thayer, p. 516); "Covetousness, greediness" (Zodhiates, CD); "Greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness" (Bauer, p. 667).

**"Who being past feeling."** The word refers to those who have lost the ability to feel pain, who become calloused (v. 18). Does this refer to everyone who is not a Christian? Obviously not, because if all who are not Christians have no feeling, then none of them would ever be converted. The text speaks of those who have so involved themselves in sin that they have reached a point where they have hardened their hearts to all which is godly.

**"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"** (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

**"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children"** (2 Peter 2:14).

A seared conscience has no sensibility to chastisements which GOD might bring for the purpose of getting a person to consider His truths and become obedient to Him. Was not this the case with Pharaoh? Is there any hope for a person who sears his conscience? GOD said Pharaoh could not change. Is it possible that the old saying that "As long as a man has the breath of life in him he can become obedient to GOD" is false? Those to whom Paul spoke, i.e., the Gentiles who had

become Christians, were not like their Gentile neighbors who were **"past feeling."**

*"Continual rejection of Christ and his gospel can result in a conscience no longer able to function"* (Wilson Wallace, p. 205).

*"Why are these people lost forever? Paul says that they have become past feeling. The downward steps hardened their hearts until all feelings for God and things spiritual were gone"* (Bristow, p. 29).

**"Past feeling"** — *senseless, shameless, hopeless, with conscience seared: the ultimate result of a long process of 'hardening,' or habit of sin"* (JFB, p. 412).

*"Men who give themselves to sin come to the point of feeling no pain of conscience"* (Caldwell, p. 197).

In all of this, it should be carefully stressed that the person (through a process) makes himself **"past feeling,"** and then GOD declares him to be such.

When a person gets **"past feeling,"** he gives himself over, he releases himself from all restraining influences (GOD). This person purposely sets himself on a course contrary to the will of GOD. This person sets his heart on **"lasciviousness."** The first definition of this word in Thayer's Greek Lexicon is *"unbridled lust."* Lasciviousness is most commonly descriptive of sexual sins, immorality.

*"Based on God's instructions we conclude that lasciviousness becomes activated by: (a) immodest dress; (b) certain types of dancing; (c) indecent language; (d) body movements and touching between the sexes which is intended to produce inordinate desire; and (e) pornography"* (Caldwell, p. 198).

The word **"uncleanness"** refers to moral

uncleanness, and one of its definitions is “dirty.” Simply put, the one who gives himself over to lasciviousness then involves himself in that which is filthy. All immorality is simply that which is filthy in the sight of GOD. Isaiah said,

**“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”**

(Isaiah 5:20).

The lascivious man does not hesitate to call good that which GOD describes as evil. Nor does he hesitate to declare the man who would point out GOD’s decrees as being evil, uncaring, mean-spirited, harsh, ugly, un-American, et cetera. Such a person actively works for, and encourages the promotion of evil **in others and/or himself.**

**“Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”** (Romans 1:32).

What kind of attitude does such a person have? An attitude of **“greediness.”** Greediness is the desire for more and more, it is an attitude of selfishness. Such a one does not care what GOD wants but is rather self-absorbed in fulfilling his own desires, even if what he desires is harmful to the body and/or souls of himself or others. Sounds like the “me” way of thinking in America (2009).

**Eph. 4:20 “But ye have not so learned Christ;”**

“But ye did not so learn Christ;” (ASV)

Paul has just spoken of the lifestyle of unconverted Gentiles; now he shows that Christ has taught the converted Gentile a different course to follow. Because they follow Christ, they now live a different lifestyle than they did before. When one learns Christ, he discovers that it is more than intellectual knowledge which is attained — it is learning

and then applying what he has learned in living a new life. As one writer puts it, the difference between a non-Christian and a Christian is like the difference between day and night (Littrell, p. 432).

*“Those who followed Jesus were those who (1) sat at His feet and learned, (2) imbibed His spirit, and (3) imitated His example”* (Hackworth, p. 242).

*“To learn (emathete) is to increase one’s knowledge, to be taught, to master by inquiry, observation, practice, or experience, to acquire a custom or habit, to be caused to understand, comprehend, and to ascertain”* (Caldwell, p. 199).

It should be considered that this is the congregation the Lord accused of leaving its first love in Revelation 2:1-4.

**Eph. 4:21 “If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:”**

“if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus:” (ASV)

**“If so be that ye have heard Him.”** *“This is not a conditional but an idiomatic saying with the impact of ‘As surely as you have heard him’”* (Hendricksen, p. 212). They had **“heard”** Jesus, yet they had not personally heard Him. This shows that when one reads the Bible or hears a faithful proclamation of it, he hears Jesus teach — not literally, but figuratively. The same thing is stated in the next phrase (ASV says “were taught in Him”).

Notice a subtle truth taught here — Christianity is a TAUGHT religion. Truth is not something which one accidentally acquires, or acquires because his mother or father knew it. It requires effort on the part of the one who would know Christ, just as it takes effort to learn anything in this world. It takes time and effort to learn mathematics. Why then do so many seem to think a casual reading of the Bible provides them with all they need to

know? Why do so many concern themselves only with skimming the Scriptures? Why do so many think they can someone else can do their studying for them?

**“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper”** (Psalm 1:1-3, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15).

STUDY — σπουδάζω — *“To hasten, make haste...to exert one’s self, endeavor, give diligence”* (Thayer, p. 585); *“To be diligent, earnest, or eager”* (Zodhiates, CD).

**“As the truth is in Jesus.”** This phrase emphasizes that the only truth which will save man is found in Jesus. It is THE TRUTH which saves, an exclusive truth which came from only one source.

**“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”** (John 14:6, emphasis mine, RK).

**“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth”** (John 17:17, emphasis mine, RK).

When one rejects truth, he lives as a heathen

in his lust and the darkness of sin. When one rejects the truth, he condemns himself to eternity without GOD. When one accepts **the truth** he lives in holiness, in the light, with an eternity to look forward to with GOD. How does one live a holy life? He puts off the old man and replaces him with a new man.

**Eph. 4:22 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”**

*“that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit;”* (ASV)

PUT OFF — • ποτίθημι — *“To put off or aside; in the N.T. only mid. to put off from one’s self”* (Thayer, p. 69); *“Used in the NT only in the middle voice, apotithemai. To renounce, lay off or down”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Take off...lay aside, rid oneself...lay down, put away”* (Bauer, p. 101).

CORRUPT — φθείρω — *“To corrupt, to destroy”* (Thayer, p. 652); *“To corrupt, destroy. Trans. to destroy, punish with destruction, bring to a worse state. To corrupt, spoil, vitiate, in a moral or spiritual sense”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Destroy, ruin, corrupt, spoil”* (Bauer, p. 857).

DECEITFUL — • πᾶτη — *“Deceit, deceitfulness”* (Thayer, p. 55); *“Deceit, delusion”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Deception, deceitfulness”* (Bauer, p. 82).

*“The metaphor used here is ‘putting off’ as an old coat (the old man), and putting on Christ: ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new’ (2 Cor. 5:17). The Roman Christians were called upon to ‘be transformed by the renewing of your mind,’ (Rom. 12:2), and to: ‘cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light’ (Rom. 13:12)”* (Bristow, p. 30).

The contrast is of course the old man versus the new man. The old man represents what these Ephesians had been, and what

every Christian has been before he obeys the Gospel. When had they put off the old man, the sinful man?

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”** (Romans 6:3-6).

Note: the Bible says one is to **“walk in newness of life”** after he has been baptized into Christ. The old man is crucified (put to death) so that sin might be destroyed in his life.

It should be observed that the old man of sin is **“put off” immediately**, i.e., his sinful actions and thoughts — **not gradually**. The term **“put off”** is in *“the aor. tense”* and *“denotes a once and for all, definite, concluding action: the stripping off is to be done at once and for good”* (Barth, quoted by Hackworth, p. 243). Yet, the new man has to be nurtured like a baby to youth and finally to the full man. Too many think they can continue to sin in the growth process and that somehow such is acceptable to GOD. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, man will not be perfect; but from the time one obeys the Gospel, he is immediately to quit sinning — striving with all of his might to live the pure life of a Christian.

**“Conversation”** is manner of life. In this text, it refers to the former life of sin. Why should the former life of sin be put off? Because it **“corrupts.”** In noticing the above

definitions of the word **“corrupt,”** it is seen that this word cannot be separated from the idea of **“destroy.”** Since it is a present tense word, it shows a continuing action, i.e., the old man who does not have Christ is in a continuing state of corruption — he is not getting better; he is getting worse and worse. The sinner keeps on destroying himself. This is why no man outside of Christ can be considered truly good. His unrepented sin(s) is destroying him, causing him to be like a vegetable which becomes spoiled — decaying.

What causes a man to stay in this state of decay? **“Deceitful lusts.”** Satan does everything he can to make man feel that everything is all right — but it is all a delusion. One should stop and remind himself that the word **“lust”** in the Bible is not limited (as it is commonly limited today) to refer to sexual sins. The word **“lust”** simply means a strong desire and is used in the Bible to describe both good things and bad things. Satan deceives man (leaves a false impression with man) that his sins will leave him contented, happy and prosperous. But sin always destroys (corrupts)! This is why the old man of sin must be put off. If he does not put it off immediately, Satan will deceive him into believing he can continue in it, only to be destroyed ultimately. Sin is deceitful, because it does not show the consequences of a sinful life. How does one keep himself from being deceived by sin? By having his mind renewed.

**Eph. 4:23 “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”**

“and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind,” (ASV)

RENEW — *“To make like new: restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection”*(Webster, CD); *“To renew, make young”* (Zodhiates, CD).

**“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing**

**of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD”** (Romans 12:2).

Do not fashion yourself to be like the world around you.

**“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”** (Colossians 2:9-10).

What if one simply **“put off”** (v. 22) the old man but did not replace it with something? When a vacuum is created, something is going to take its place. This could be illustrated by sticking one’s hand into a bucket of water. As soon as the hand is withdrawn, the water around the hand will take the place of the hand. If man simply puts off the old man of sin and does not replace it with a man of righteousness, he will soon return to a sinful life. This is illustrated in Matthew 12:43-45.

**“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”**

Note: When the **“unclean spirit”** returned, he found **“his house”** empty and took up residence there again. If the mind is not renewed when the old man of sin is kicked out, the old man will return.

*“If heathen degradation is due to the futility of one’s mind, then righteousness depends on a constant*

*renewing of the mind”* (Johnson, p. 172).

**“The spirit of your mind.”** This deals with the moral direction man chooses for his life. He will now eagerly pursue the things of GOD, making them a continual pursuit of his thinking. The only way this renewing of the mind can take place is through an application of GOD’s Word.

**“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word”** (Psalm 119:9).

The Christian life is to be one of constant renewal of his mind.

**“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day”** (2 Corinthians 4:16).

**Eph. 4:24 “And that ye put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness.”**

*“and put on the new man, that after GOD hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.”* (ASV)

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**“Put on”** (to be clothed with) and **“new man”** are the opposites of **“put off”** and the **“old man”** of verse twenty-two. The purpose of creating a new man (new identity) is so that he can become holy and righteous like GOD. In considering this change which takes place, one is to look to Christ as the perfect example in every area. Obedience to Him demands that a change take place from one who lived in corruption according to deceitful desires, to one who lives in righteousness.

*“To put on Christ means to act as Christ would act, to live as Christ would live and to do what Christ would do”* (Sheerer, p. 832).

**“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts”** (Romans 13:14).

**Eph. 4:25 “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”**

“Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.” (ASV)

In the rest of this chapter, the Holy Spirit shows examples of what it means to put off the old man and put on the new man. The old man is characterized by deceit (v. 14) and lusts which deceive (v. 22).

The primary subject of this chapter is unity in Christ, unity in the body. That being the case, why does Paul give as an example the admonition not to lie to each other, i.e., fellow Christians (Lying should not be done to anyone, Christian or non-Christian.)? Lying (deception) is one of the most common sins among all of mankind, and lying can quickly destroy trust, peace and unity.

**“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”** (Colossians 3:9-10).

One of the interesting points to be observed in the rest of this chapter (vv. 25-32) regards practice. It is not enough to stop practicing that which is wrong. Wrong practices must be replaced with doing what is right.

GOD hates a lying tongue (Proverbs 6:16-19) and details where such a person given to such will live eternally.

**“All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”** (Revelation 21:8).

*“Few children of Adam ever attain the*

*divine model of truthfulness, and it requires constant admonition from God and watchfulness on the part of man to be truthful as he should be. I know of no church now to whom, were the Holy Spirit writing, that he would not feel the necessity of warning them to ‘put away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor’”* (Lipscomb, p. 89).

The church is portrayed as **“the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Timothy 3:15). That being the case, should not the church hate what GOD hates (lying, deception) and love what GOD loves (truth)? After all, it is the truth which makes man free (John 8:32). What greater lie could be told than for one to claim to be a Christian but not act like one?

**Eph. 4:26 “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:”**

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” (ASV)

ANGRY — ἰργίζω — *“To provoke, arouse to anger”* (Thayer, p. 452); *“Wrath”* (Zodhiates, CD).

WRATH — παροργισμός — *“Indignation, exasperation, wrath”* (Thayer, p. 490); *“To make angry, provoke to violent or bitter anger....Parorgismós signifies the kind of severe or violent anger which arises from direct provocation, an aroused anger or seething exasperation”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Angry mood, anger”* (Bauer, p. 629).

Is it always a sin to be angry? If it is, then Jesus Christ is not the Son of GOD, because the Bible states He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15); yet, on occasion He was angry and demonstrated His anger.

**“He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and**

his hand was restored whole as the other” (Mark 3:4-5).

**“The Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up”** (John 2:13-17).

Further, GOD is angry every day.

**“GOD judgeth the righteous, and GOD is angry with the wicked every day”** (Psalm 7:11).

Our convictions regarding GOD and His truths ought to be strong enough that at times strong emotions will well up within us. For example, when someone curses GOD or treats His Word or holy things as if they were a piece of trash, does it cause a Christian to become angry? Or when such is done, does a Christian treat such as matters of no consequence (apathy)? Show this writer a man who does not have enough conviction to have strong emotions and he will show you a wishy-washy man with little or no integrity. Anger, used properly, will cause a godly person to react against what GOD says is wrong and not sit passively by and allow it to continue unchecked. Eli should have become righteously angry over the sins of his sons, stopping those sins and even having his sons put to death for those sins.

*“Oftentimes the Christian is brought face to face with sin, corruption, and crime so iniquitous that it would be a*

*sin not to manifest indignation — a holy indignation”* (Lipscomb, p. 89).

**“Hate the evil, and love the good”** (Amos 5:15).

**“Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way”** (Psalm 119:104).

Does this passage justify anger over any cause, justify the person who gets angry over even the smallest of things? Absolutely not! Anger has its place, as demonstrated by the Lord, but uncontrolled anger never has a rightful place in the heart of man. In order to keep sin out of one's life, anger must be brought under control quickly. What happens if anger is allowed to remain and fester in one's heart?

*“If anger is held very long, it becomes malice, hatred, and resentment, and produces a desire for revenge. It gives a place (opportunity) to the devil to lead us into transgression and self-ruination”* (Fields, p. 142).

Example: Christians should get angry over the practice of abortion. Getting angry over such is not a sin! Anger over abortion should spur Christian's into action to try to stop such. But if that anger is allowed to translate itself into violence (killing the abortionist or blowing up abortion clinics), then righteous anger has overstepped its bounds and becomes sinful. Anger must be controlled so that it does not lead to sinful words or actions.

*“It seems one type is anger ‘in control’ and another type is anger ‘out of control’”* (Moffitt, p. 349).

**Eph. 4:27 “Neither give place to the Devil.”**  
*“neither give place to the Devil.”* (ASV)

GIVE — δίδωμι — *“To give something to someone...of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow, give as a gift”* (Thayer, p. 145); *“To give of one's own accord and with good will”* (Zodhiates, CD).

PLACE — τόπος — *“Any portion of space marked off, as it were, from surrounding space...the condition or station held by one in any company or assembly”* (Thayer, p. 628); *“Place. As occupied or filled by any person or thing, a spot, space, room”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Place, position, region”* (Bauer, p. 822).

Uncontrolled anger opens the door for one to commit many other sins. How many times have those who read these words become angry and said or done something which they later regretted and wished had never been said or done? The answer is simple — all have.

This verse tells one what happens when anger is retained in the heart and not vanquished before the **“sun go down.”** When one allows anger to remain, he gives the Devil room to operate in his heart — *“he provides a situation, an occasion, or an opportunity”* (Caldwell, p. 212) for Satan to take control of him. One can be assured that if the Devil can find a crack in the Christian’s defenses, he will exploit it.

Regarding anger and the Devil, it should be remembered that the Devil is a deceiver. One must be careful not to allow him to deceive us into believing that our anger is righteous indignation if it actually is not.

**“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”** (Proverbs 4:23).

**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”** (James 1:19).

**“Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment”** (Matthew 5:22).

Eph. 4:28 **“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”**

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let

him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.” (ASV)

NO MORE — μηκέτι — *“No longer; no more; not hereafter”* (Thayer, p. 412; Zodhiates, CD).

LABOR — κοπιᾶω — *“To grow weary, tired, exhausted...to labor with wearisome effort, to toil”* (Thayer, p. 355); *“To be worn out, weary, faint”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Become weary. tired...work hard, toil, strive, struggle”* (Bauer, p. 443).

**“Let him that stole steal no more.”**

There are several things to notice in the first part of this verse. First, the implication is that some of the Ephesians had been, may still have been, involved in theft. But let us ask the question, *“Who is a thief?”* The most common thought is that one who picks up something that belongs to another and keeps it as if it were his own property is a thief. But theft take many forms. A person is just as much a thief who embezzles, cheats on his taxes, or lazily steals his employer’s time. The admonition is if one were a thief, when he became a Christian, he must no longer continue being a thief. Instead, one who formerly stole will become one who helps those who cannot help themselves. It is not love for a neighbor as one loves himself (Matthew 22:39) when he steals from him in any way.

**“But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good.”** The Spirit says not to steal, but to replace stealing with honest labor. In fact, the Bible from beginning to end shows that GOD expects man to work while he is upon this earth. In the very beginning, GOD told Adam to dress and keep the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). Paul told the Thessalonian brethren they were to work with their own hands (1 Thessalonians 4:10-11). GOD further commands **“that if any would not work, neither should he eat”** (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Clearly the Scriptures teach that if a man can work, he MUST work. Man is not to be a sponge soaking up the

honest labor of others to support his laziness.

This text states that man is to labor, not just work a little bit, but to exhaust himself in labor (see definitions above). Further, the principle is shown that man should not labor just to get by, but rather so that he might have to help others.

In what should he labor? In **“the thing which is good.”** Christians have no right to make their living at a job which cheats others or provides that which is harmful to others. No Christian has the right to own a business which does not bring honor and glory to GOD. This writer recently heard of a “Christian” husband and wife in a town in Tennessee who bought a convenience store that, among good and useful products, sold tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Instead of eliminating these things from the store, they kept them in the store, because the majority of the profits came from the sale of these items. (They are considered members in good standing by the congregation they attend, to the shame of that congregation.) One of the areas where Christians are not very careful in the ownership of a business is the area of stocks. Those who own stocks should make sure the companies in which they invest are not purveyors of that which is not right in GOD’s sight.

Why should man be involved in exhausting work, in those areas of work which are good in GOD’s sight? Obviously he must work in order to supply the **“needs”** of his family.

**“If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”** (1 Timothy 5:8).

But the present text states another reason for working — to provide for the needs of those who cannot supply their own needs. A person’s inability to take care of his needs can come about in many ways — debilitating injury, sickness, old age, being orphaned, et cetera. These must be taken care of by

family, friends, and neighbors. American society has gravitated toward socialism since FDR (Franklin Delano Roosevelt), stating it is the government’s obligation to provide for all the needs of its citizens. Nowhere in the Bible is such taught. Instead, the Bible shows that each individual and the church have the obligation to provide for the needs of those who cannot help themselves. Shame on any society or government which promotes laziness in its citizens contrary to GOD’s Word.

**Eph. 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”**

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

CORRUPT — σαπρός — *“Rotten, putrid, corrupted by age and no longer fit for use, worn out, hence in general, of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless”* (Thayer, p. 568); *“Bad, rotten, putrid...Figuratively in a moral sense, corrupt, foul, referring to the spoken word”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Decayed, rotten...fig. bad, evil, unwholesome”* (Bauer, p. 742).

GOOD — •γαθός — *“Excelling in any respect, distinguished, good”* (Thayer, p. 2); *“Good, excellent, distinguished, best, of persons”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Fit, capable, useful”* (Bauer, p. 2).

EDIFYING — οἰκοδομή — *“(The act of) building, building up...In the New Testament metaph., edifying, edification, i.e., the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness”* (Thayer, p. 440); *“The act of building, building as a process, also that which is built, the building...edification, spiritual profit or advancement”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Building as a process, construction...fig., of spiritual strengthening”* (Bauer, p. 558).

MINISTER — δίδωμι — *“To give something to*

someone, of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow, give as a gift" (Thayer, p. 145); "To give of one's own accord and with good will" (Zodhiates, CD).

GRACE — χάρις — "That which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness" (Thayer, p. 665); "Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude. A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor" (Zodhiates, CD); "Graciousness, attractiveness...favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill" (Bauer, p. 877).

This verse speaks of the use of words. The word "**corrupt**" comes from the Greek word σαπρός, which means that which is rotten, decayed, putrid, and corrupted by age. This word is used in Matthew 7:17-18 to describe rotten and spoiled fruit. The word "**bad**" in Matthew 13:48 is the same word used here, and there it is used to describe worthless fish. It is this writer's belief that the word is used here to describe filthy language, not bad speech such as gossip, slander, unkind words, et cetera. There are many other passages which describe that kind of language, such as James 3:1-12. The apostle is describing the kind of base language which one today refers to as cursing, vulgarity or smut.

*"This verse is a protest against profanity, dirty jokes, and all kinds of smutty language" (Moffitt, p. 349).*

This kind of language is often found in the "lower classes" but today is becoming more and more common in the so-called "elite classes" (educated) of society. Such language actually marks one as being uneducated, since he cannot choose wholesome language to express himself!

**"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer**

**every man"** (Colossians 4:6).

Instead, a Christian's speech must be "**good**," i.e., excelling the common putrid language which is often used around him. What is good speech? Is it simply the refusal to use profanity in one's speech? It is the proclamation of that which can save a soul when it is heard, absorbed, and obeyed. It is GOD's Word, which is able to edify (build up) a soul. It has interested this writer that the word "**edify**" is often used as a sort of "*pat people on the back to make them feel good*" word. But GOD's Word, in order to be effective as edification, is far greater than that.

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works"** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

One should note that Paul shows that GOD's Word is sometimes to be used to correct and reprove, as well as give the instruction of righteousness to man. The purpose of edification is the same as found in the above passage in Timothy — to provide a man with the tools needed to be fully mature ("**perfect**") and do the good works assigned to him by GOD. One cannot reprove without seeing the fault in another and giving the information needed to correct whatever is found not in accordance with GOD's will.

How one talks indicates how he thinks, so if one's speech is filled with putrid and rotten language, it shows he has a putrid and rotten mind (heart).

**"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"** (Matthew 12:35).

*"Corrupt speech is useless except to erect ungodly images in the minds of those who hear. It suggests impure*

*thought in the mind of the speaker and transfers it to the mind of the hearer”* (Caldwell, p. 219).

True edification comes when Christians speak **“as the oracles of GOD”** (1 Peter 4:11).

There are those, like Sheerer who express the meaning of corrupt communication as *“Not only obscene vulgarity; it also includes slanderous and contemptuous talk. It is any talk which is harmful to the person with whom one is talking or to the person about whom he is speaking”* (Sheerer, p. 833).

**Eph. 4:30 “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of GOD, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”**

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of GOD, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.” (ASV)

GRIEVE — λυπέω — *“To make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow”* (Thayer, p. 383); *“To grieve, afflict with sorrow”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Grieve, pain...Irritate, offend, insult”* (Bauer, p. 481); *“To pain, make sad, grieve”* (Spicq, p. 417); *“The Greek syntax means either ‘cease grieving’ or ‘do not have the habit of grieving’”* (Robertson, p. 477).

SEALED — σφραγίζω — *“To set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal...in order to prove, confirm, or attest a thing; hence trop. to confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt”* (Thayer, p. 609); *“To seal, trans...Generally, to set a seal or mark upon a thing as a token of its authenticity or approvedness”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Seal...attest, certify, acknowledge”* (Bauer, p. 796).

REDEMPTION — • πολύτρωσις — *“A releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom”* (Thayer, p. 65); *“To let go free for a ransom”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Buying back a slave or captive, making him free by payment of a ransom”* (Bauer, p. 96).

**“And grieve not the Holy Spirit.”** A great commentary on what it means to grieve the Spirit of GOD is found in Hebrews 3:7-12.

**“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith,**

**To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living GOD.”**

One grieves the Spirit when he refuses to listen to the instruction given by the Spirit through the inspired men of the New Testament. If one refuses to listen to the instructions of the Spirit, he naturally refuses to obey Him. Let it be remembered that this is written to those who are Christians. Christians can reach a state where they refuse to listen to, and obey, the Spirit's instructions.

**“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart”** (Genesis 6:5-6).

**“Whereby ye are sealed.”** In observing the definitions above, a seal is a mark which guarantees something to be authentic or that it belongs to another. As long as the seal is intact, the object is considered to be genuine. As long as the Christian maintains his faith and demonstrates that faith through his obedience, he has the guarantee that he safely belongs to GOD and can look forward with anticipation to the eternal reward. Those who would pervert GOD's Word will take passages such as this and claim, *“See, the Bible says you cannot be lost.”* Question:

What if a document is sealed, but before it is delivered the seal is broken? Can the contents of the document be certified as being genuine? Obviously, man may decide at some point in time no longer to follow the instructions of the Spirit. This statement is shown to be true, otherwise there is no need for the warning in this passage not to grieve the Spirit of GOD. If man cannot fall, how can he grieve the Spirit of GOD? One offends the Spirit of GOD when he refuses to accept and apply the teachings of the Spirit found in the Word of GOD! When one sins and does not repent of that sin, he breaks the seal which guaranteed him safety on the day of redemption — judgment day.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD: And if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together”** (Romans 8:16-17).

Obviously, to grieve the Holy Spirit is bad, but notice some other ways in which people can sin against the Spirit of GOD.

*“They may lust against him (Gal. 5:16-17).*

*They may resist him (Acts 7:51).*

*They may lie to him (Acts 5:3).*

*They may try him (Acts 5:9).*

*They may insult him (do despite unto) (Heb. 10:29).*

*They may blaspheme against him (Mark 3:29).*

*They may ‘quench’ him (1 Thess. 5:19).”* (Coffman, p. 211).

**“Unto the day of redemption.”** This phrase speaks of the day of judgment. The finality of redemption is realized at that point. Surely one desires to stand before GOD with his seal unbroken!

**Eph. 4:31 “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be**

**put away from you, with all malice:”**

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice:” (ASV)

WRATH — θυμος — *“Passion, angry heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again, on the other hand, denotes indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled”* (Thayer, p. 293); *“To move impetuously, particularly as the air or wind, a violent motion or passion of the mind”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Anger, wrath, rage”* (Bauer, p. 365).

ANGER — ἰργή — *“Anger, wrath, indignation”* (Thayer, p. 452; Bauer, p. 578); *“Wrath, anger as a state of mind”* (Zodhiates, CD).

CLAMOUR — κραυγή — *“A crying, outcry, clamor”* (Thayer, p. 359); *“An outcry, usually for public information; of tumult or controversy, clamor; of sorrow, wailing”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Shouting of excited persons”* (Bauer, p. 449).

EVIL SPEAKING — βλασφημία — *“Railing, reviling; univ. slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name”* (Thayer, p. 102); *“Blasphemy, verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander mentioned in Matt. 15:19 with false witnesses; wounding someone’s reputation by evil reports, evil speaking”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Slander, defamation, blasphemy”* (Bauer, p. 143).

MALICE — κακία — *“Malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure...wickedness, depravity...evil, trouble”* (Thayer, p. 320); *“Wickedness as an evil habit of the mind”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Badness, faultiness...depravity, wickedness, vice...malice, ill-will, malignity”* (Bauer, p. 397).

What a list of evil this verse presents, evil which must not be allowed to exist in a Christian.

**“Bitterness”** springs from an attitude of resentment at life in general. It involves a negative and cynical view of life, often because of the perceived disappointments in life. This is the attitude which Naomi had when she came back from Moab husbandless

and sonless (Ruth 1:20-22). If one allows this attitude to remain in his heart very long, it can quickly become a way of life, becoming resentful and angry at the good fortune of others.

“**Wrath**” and “**anger**” are similar terms, yet with distinctions which need to be noted. Wrath deals with anger which boils up quickly, but just as quickly subsides. It is similar to a pan of water on the stove which quickly comes to a boil, but when the active heat is removed, quickly calms down and levels out. Wrath is “*an outburst of rage or uncontrolled passion and frustration*” (Walker, p. 260). Whereas wrath erupts quickly, anger is more settled in the mind. Anger continues to abide in the mind, growing ever more resentful toward those against whom it is felt. It often leads to thoughts of revenge.

“**Clamour**” originally meant “*to cry out*” but later came to mean the shouting of excited people. Considered in this context, it would describe people who are angry and growing louder in their speech by the minute. It is the outcry of angry men meant to top their opponents and at the same time let all around know of their complaints.

“**Evil speaking**” is often translated as “*blasphemy*” in other passages. Blasphemy involves speaking against another with the intent of destroying the other person’s good name in the eyes of all who hear these words. These are words which are designed to ruin the reputation of another, usually because of the desire to gain revenge motivated by anger or envy.

Why are Christians to put these things away from themselves? Because these things when exercised may hurt others, but their main damage is to the soul of the one involved in evil speaking.

“**Malice**” seems to be a summation of the results of harboring the above attitudes in the heart. When the above attitudes are allowed to go unchecked in the mind, they become “*an evil habit of the mind*” (Zodhiates). Malice

involves an active ill will toward others which may evolve into the physical harm of another. It is like a cancer which grows and if unchecked will eventually consume the one it inhabits. King Saul seems to be a perfect example of malice in his attitudes toward David.

**Eph. 4:32 “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”**

“and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as GOD also in Christ forgave you.” (ASV)

KIND — χρηστός — “*Fit for use, useful; virtuous, good*” (Thayer, p. 671); “*Profitable, fit, good for any use*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Useful, suitable, worthy, good*” (Bauer, p. 886).

TENDERHEARTED — εὐσπλαγχνος — “*Having strong bowels...compassionate, tender-hearted*” (Thayer, p. 262); “*Tender-hearted, full of compassion, pity*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Tenderhearted, compassionate*” (Bauer, p. 326).

FORGIVING — χαρίζομαι — “*To do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favor to, gratify*” (Thayer, p. 665); “*To show someone a favor, be kind to. To give or bestow a thing willingly...to forgive someone, be gracious to*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Give freely or graciously as a favor*” (Bauer, p. 876).

ONE ANOTHER — ἑαυτοῦ — “*Reflexive pronoun of the 3<sup>d</sup> person...to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same...reciprocally, mutually, one another*” (Thayer, p. 1445); “*3<sup>rd</sup> person. reflexive pron. Of himself, herself, or itself*” (Zodhiates, CD).

This verse is the opposite of verse thirty-one. To be “**kind**” is to be useful, profitable and good for use. It is the disposition which looks to be beneficial to another, not full of anger, vengeance, bitterness, et cetera. It is being concerned about the troubles, heartaches and sorrows of fellow Christians. This attitude will also spill over to those who

are not Christians, but this context deals with how one treats his fellow Christian.

“**Tenderhearted**” deals with being full of compassion and pity for another. Being compassionate with another means one can show sympathy for another; he does not ignore the suffering of another.

The word “**forgiving**” means to do a favor for another. It is the idea of being willing and able to give something of value freely to another. In this context it points to the ability to give forgiveness freely to one who has wronged another. More precisely, to forgive one who has sinned.

**“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”**  
(Matthew 6:14).

A failure to forgive means that that one’s sins will not be forgiven.

The subject of forgiveness is one which has often been misapplied. Many think that forgiveness must be given to anyone and everyone who has done something against them. With regard to this kind of thinking, notice the following thoughts of Walker with which this author fully agrees, because his position is what the Bible clearly teaches.

*“Should forgiveness be extended unconditionally? In other words, if one is unwilling to repent and ask for forgiveness, should we forgive anyway? Let us begin answering this question by asking another question: ‘Does God forgive unconditionally?’ The answer is, ‘No.’ Whether we speak of those outside of Christ, or of Christians who have transgressed, there are requirements or stipulations to be met. We would also ask, ‘How did God, for Christ’s sake, forgive us?’ Was it done freely, graciously, and without grudging? Certainly it was, yet not without conditions first being met.*

*So, too, our forgiving one another must be freely, graciously, and without grudging, when the conditions of forgiveness are met.*

*Notice what Jesus says concerning this matter: ‘Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him’ (Luke 17:3). Consider the following questions concerning the two parts of this verse: First, ‘If our brother does **not** trespass against us, should we rebuke him anyway?’ Such an idea, of course, is absurd. Then we ask, ‘If our brother does **not** repent, should we forgive him anyway?’ Which is just as absurd. Conditions must be fulfilled before the result can be obtained. If the conditions are not met, then the desired result will not be obtained.*

*Now, let us look at forgiveness from another angle. If my brother transgresses, I have certain responsibilities to fulfill (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20). If I simply forgive him unconditionally, how can I fulfill these responsibilities?*

*Those who say we should simply forgive, whether there is repentance or not, will go to passages such as Luke 23:34 where Jesus says, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ or Acts 7:60 when Stephen said, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’ Do these two verses teach what these people want them to teach? When was Christ’s request granted? Was it not in Acts 2 when the Jews who crucified Him repented and were baptized (i.e., when the conditions were met, Acts 2:38). Surely they were forgiven then and not before. The point of our passage is this: We must be forgiving people. We must desire to forgive, and when men repent, we will*

*forgive, freely, graciously, and without grudging*" (Walker, p. 262).

Why is the Christian so willing to forgive those who trespass GOD's laws? Because Christ forgave him — freely, graciously and without grudging when one met the conditions for forgiveness. His attitude toward sinful man was demonstrated on the cross.

**"This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you"** (John 15:12).

**"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love"** (John 15:9).

## **Ephesians — Chapter Five**

**Eph. 5:1 "Be ye therefore followers of GOD, as dear children;"**

"Be ye therefore imitators of GOD, as beloved children;" (ASV)

FOLLOWERS — μιμητής — *"An imitator"* (Thayer, p. 415, Zodhiates, CD); *"To imitate, 'to follow as an example, 'or 'to strive to resemble'"* (Music, p. 176); *"Impersonators"* (Caldwell, p. 226).

Because GOD has forgiven through Christ, those forgiven are to be imitators of GOD just as a small child imitates his earthly father. It is only by becoming like little children in their purity and humbleness that man can have eternal salvation.

**"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 18:3).

**"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 19:14).

**"As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"** (1 Peter 1:15-16).

**"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect"** (Matthew 5:48).

How should a Christian treat others? How does GOD treat him? Are "we" following His example?

It should always be remembered that one has GOD as his Father only in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 18:14). Further, those who imitate Him are **"dear children"** (favorite child). Why? Because of their obedience. Where is the model to be followed found?

**"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (1 Corinthians 11:1).

The model is the Christ whom GOD sent into the world for man's benefit.

**"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps"** (1 Peter 2:21).

**Eph. 5:2 "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweetsmelling savour."**

"and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for an odor of a sweet smell." (ASV)

**"Walk in love."** The only way one can walk in love, a continuous effort, is to walk according to GOD's commandments.

**"This is love, that we walk after His**

**commandments**” (2 John 6).

The love spoken of in this text is not simply an emotion; rather, it is an emotion which developed because of facts. Consider: **“We love Him, because He first loved us”** (1 John 4:19). He first loved us? When did He first love us? When we were His enemy, deeply involved in sin. What did He do? He gave His Son to die in our place. When we **learned** of the great sacrifice He made for us because of His love, it created the emotion of love for Him in us. But Biblical love is not simply an emotion. Emotions can ebb and flow at a moment’s notice. True love will cause one to stay the course through all of the difficulties faced in life.

Love is not simply an emotion nurtured and based on facts. Once the facts are learned and the emotion is stirred, then such will cause that person to act. How will he act, how will he love?

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John 13:34-35).

Once one has learned to love, he cannot help but sacrifice himself for the love of his life — whether one speaks of a physical partner or, more importantly, of his Heavenly Father. Note then that Biblical love involves the determination to love no matter what one may face.

The offering of Himself as a sacrifice for man is described as a **“sweetsmelling savour.”** Under the Old Testament, when man offered his sacrifices in an acceptable manner (right attitude, right action), the burning of that flesh and/or incense smelled sweet to GOD. In other words, it was acceptable and pleasing to Him. This language is used in this passage to show that what Christ did was pleasing to His Father in Heaven. Christ acted in obedience to His

Father’s commands because of His love. Such is always acceptable to GOD!

In offering Himself in death, let it be ever remembered that that death leads to life for the obedient.

When one truly becomes Christ-like, he will be able to love those who despise him and mistreat him — just as Christ did.

**“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:34).

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD”** (Romans 12:1-2).

Eph. 5:3 **“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;”**

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints;” (ASV)

FORNICATION — πορνεία — *“Illicit sexual intercourse in general”* (Thayer, p. 531); *“Fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse”* (Bauer, p. 693).

UNCLEANNES — • καθαρότητα — *“Uncleanness...in a moral sense, the impurity, luxurious, profligate living”* (Thayer, p. 21); *“Uncleanness or filth in a natural or physical sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, incontinence in general; any kind of uncleanness different from whoredom; any unnatural pollution, whether acted out by oneself, or with another”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Impurity, dirt...immorality, viciousness esp. of sexual sins”* (Bauer, p. 28).

COVETOUSNESS — πλεονεξία — “Greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice” (Thayer, p. 516); “Covetousness, greediness” (Zodhiates, CD); “Greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness” (Bauer, p. 667); “Consuming ambition, greed...Not only is *pleonexia* insatiable and excessive, it is also aggressive and does not hesitate to wrong a neighbor or gain his property through extortion” (Spicq, p. 117).

What do these three words have in common? They all signify a lack of self-control.

**“Fornication”** Quite commonly this word is thought to be sex between two unmarried people. But when one notices the definitions above, he sees that it is far more than that — including any sex which GOD declares to be forbidden. Note that the word includes prostitution, which in Paul’s day was considered normal behavior and was even encouraged by some religions. Many of the idolatrous religions used temple prostitutes (both male and female). American society more and more looks at fornication, not as something which should be kept from its conduct, but as something to be admired in others. The original word used in this text is the word from which our society gets the word “porno” and “pornography.” What does this then say about the enjoyment of pornography by either male or female?

**“Uncleanness”** In noticing the definitions of this word, one sees the close tie to fornication. Uncleanness is that which is filthy, dirty. It deals with any kind of immorality — even that which is engaged in by one’s self with no other person involved (notice Zodhiates above).

*“God considers unlawful sexual conduct to be filthy or dirty, regardless of the protests of those who wish to live in sin and retain social acceptance (Rom. 1:24; 6:19; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; Col. 3:5)”* (Caldwell, p. 231).

**“Covetousness”** Covetousness is simply greed — the desire for more and more. The

word “covet” can be used in a good sense as the following passages demonstrate.

**“Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way”** (1 Corinthians 12:31).

**“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues”** (1 Corinthians 14:39).

Should one earnestly covet a working knowledge of GOD’s Word. In the present context, to covet is to seek things which GOD declares as being destructive to one’s soul. It is the desire for more and more to the extent that one might harm someone else to get what he has or use any illegal means to obtain what he desires. In the present context, it seems to be tied particularly to sexual sins. Consider that Moses used this word in the decalogue:

**“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s”** (Exodus 20:17).

All **wrong covetousness** is sin, regardless of what the coveted object is.

**“Let it not be once named among you.”**

Does this mean these words are not to be said, or that the definitions and meanings of these words should not be given? If so, then Paul sinned, because his letters are full of the use of these words — and did not the Lord Himself warn of these things? What Paul is saying is that these things should never be rightly attributed to Christians, i.e., no Christian should be guilty of these things. Further, Christians should never speak of these things with even a hint that he desires to do these things or that it might be right to do them.

**“As becometh saints.”** A saint is one who is set aside for the service and in the service of GOD. Christians should build their thinking and actions upon that which is pure,

holy, and well-pleasing to GOD — not upon those things which make them dirty and filthy in GOD's eyes.

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the GOD of peace shall be with you”** (Philippians 4:8-9).

**“It is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** (1 Peter 1:16).

Eph. 5:4 **“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.”**

“nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks.” (ASV)

FILTHINESS — αἰσχρότης — “Baseness, dishonor” (Thayer, p. 17); “Impropriety, a summarizing improper conduct whether in action or word or even thought and intent; indecorum of any kind; conduct which when exposed by the light makes the person ashamed of himself; ugly, shameful conduct of any kind; conduct which is contrary to a person who follows after God” (Zodhiates, CD); “Ugliness, wickedness” (Bauer, p. 25).

JESTING — εὐτραπέλια — “Pleasantry, humor, facetiousness...in a bad sense, scurrility, ribaldry, low jesting” (Thayer, p. 263); “The turning of one's speech for the purpose of exciting mirth or laughter. Since, however, such persons can easily manipulate circumstances, they are apt to deteriorate into mischief-makers and clowns. Therefore, eutrápelos, a witty person, is sometimes used in a bad sense meaning a scoffer, a sneerer, or a coarse joker” (Zodhiates,

CD); “Coarse jesting, buffoonery” (Bauer, p. 327).

SCURRILITY — “An offensively rude or abusive remark” (Webster, CD).

RIBALDRY — “An instance of ribald language or humor...Characterized by or using coarse indecent humor” (Webster, CD).

The three sins mentioned here all seem to involve the use of the tongue. The Bible shows what an unruly and destructive creature the tongue can be.

**“The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”** (James 3:5-6).

“**Filthiness**” refers to that which is shameful. It may refer to an act or language. Here it may be used in both senses but seems to better fit the idea of language than actions in this context.

“**Foolish talking**” “*is that speech which results from a lack of proper thought concerning spiritual things. It is impious, silly, godless speech without forethought and wisdom which you might expect from one who is not spiritual*” (Caldwell, p. 232). Sometimes foolish talking involves talking about things which are not really needed and avoiding those things which should be said. When a Christian needs to be reminded of his duty to GOD or rebuked because of sin and all which is talked about is the weather, et cetera — is that not “foolish talking?”

“**Jesting**” Jesting refers to humor, but not all humor is sinful. It is certainly not wrong to have humor, to tell a joke which is **clean**. But jesting is a word which implies humor of a low class, humor which may have double meanings (one clean, the other dirty). It refers to joking which is debasing of GOD.

Such language as mentioned in this text is

**“not convenient”** (“not befitting” ASV, “not fitting” NKJV) to come out of the mouth of a Christian. Instead, the language which fits a Christian is that which shows a thankful nature. Thankful for what? The many blessings GOD has bestowed upon him. A heart which constantly keeps in mind the uncountable blessings which GOD has given is going to manifest that attitude in his speech, which then is profitable to others and self. A Christian will not speak in a filthy, foolish, or jesting manner.

**Eph. 5:5 “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of GOD.”**

“For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and GOD.” (ASV)

WHOREMONGER — πόρνος — “A man who prostitutes his body to another’s lust for hire, a male prostitute...a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator” (Thayer, p. 532); “A whoremonger or male prostitute” (Zodhiates, CD); “Fornicator, one who practices sexual immorality” (Bauer, p. 693).

UNCLEAN — •κάθαρος — “Not cleansed, unclean...in a moral sense, unclean in thought and life” (Thayer, p. 21); “Unclean” (Zodhiates, CD); “Impure, unclean...in the cultic sense, that which may not be brought into contact with the divinity” (Bauer, p. 29).

COVETOUS — πλεονέκτης — “One eager to have more, especially what belongs to others...greedy of gain, covetous” (Thayer, p. 516); “One who wants more, a person covetous of something that others have, a defrauder for gain” (Zodhiates, CD); “One who is greedy for gain, a covetous person” (Bauer, p. 667).

The word **“know”** in this passage is in the perfect tense, which shows a completed action, i.e., knowing something explicitly. It signifies knowing something of which there

can be no doubt. Interestingly, the thing they knew without doubt is a list of things which were basically dealt with in verse three. Repetition is a common way the Bible teaches and should be emulated by Christians in any era. It should also be remembered that these words are being written to Christians. It is possible for a Christian to allow himself to practice these things and thus forfeit eternal life with GOD. Paul was telling the Ephesians that the things he was talking about are not new to them. Thus, he is reminding them.

The list here uses the word **“whoremonger”** instead of **“fornication”** (v. 3). They are two different words in the Greek. The person guilty of fornication is guilty even if he has committed this sin one time and one time only. The word in this verse signifies one who makes fornication a common practice. As the definitions above show, he hires himself out for fornication. It might be suggested that one can hire himself out as a whoremonger for more than money — pleasure, power, popularity, et cetera.

The word **“unclean”** indicates those who are unclean in a moral sense. It does not matter which moral sin is considered, any one of them will keep a man from entering Heaven. Notice should be taken that any one of the sins mentioned in this text may be kept secret from one’s fellow human beings, but they are never hidden from GOD.

**“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”** (Hebrews 4:13).

A **“covetous”** man cannot enter Heaven. A covetous man is one who constantly seeks more, never satisfied with what he has. He is opposite of a man like Paul who **“learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”** (Philippians 4:11). Covetousness causes one to have a great desire for more, more of whatever others have. It is excessive desire for material things — greedy.

Covetousness though, is probably one of the hardest sins to detect in most people. Why? Because most people have been trained in American society to desire more and more and it is considered a virtue in society rather than a vice. Covetousness is involved with the idea of *“keeping up with the Jones’s.”* When is the last time you have ever heard of a Christian having fellowship withdrawn from him because he was covetous? Yet, it is a very common practice, and the Bible tells Christians **“not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous...”** (1 Corinthians 5:11, emphasis mine, RK).

**“The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth”** (Psalm 10:3).

When one considers the word **“idolater,”** he often visualizes someone bowing before or making an offering to a statue of some kind. But notice in the present text who is called an idolater. An idolater is someone who is a whoremonger. Why? Because an idolater places something in his life above GOD — it has more importance attached to it than pleasing GOD. A whoremonger places his own sensual pleasure above serving GOD. He serves the flesh, not the spirit. The unclean man is an idolater for the same reason and so is the covetous person. The Christian who might practice these things is not like or almost an idolater — he IS an idolater.

No **“inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of GOD”** can be hoped for by those who **continually** practice these sins nor any sin. Sin must be given up by those who hope to have that eternal home. The term **“kingdom of Christ”** is not speaking of the church, as the use of the word **“inheritance”** proves. Christians are not to walk as the old man of sin walked, but rather in newness of life.

**“We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was**

**raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:4).

**“There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life”** (Revelation 21:27).

**Eph. 5:6 “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience.”**

“Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the sons of disobedience.” (ASV)

DECEIVE — •πατάω — *“To cheat, deceive, beguile”* (Thayer, p. 55); *“To deceive, bring, or seduce into error”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Deceive, cheat, mislead someone with something”* (Bauer, p. 82).

VAIN — κενός — *“Empty”* (Thayer, p. 343); *“Empty, hollow”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Without content, without any basis, without truth, without power”* (Bauer, p. 427); *“Unreal words”* (JFB, p. 415).

DISOBEDIENCE — •πειθεια — *“Disobedience, obstinacy, and in the N.T. particularly obstinate opposition to the divine will”* (Thayer, p. 55); *“Disobedience, unwillingness to be persuaded, willful unbelief, obstinacy”* (Zodhiates, CD).

*“There was a religion known as Gnosticism which taught: ‘what the body does has no effect on the inner man’”* (Bristow, p. 37). The modern doctrine of “once saved always saved” is held by “modern Gnostics.” Since the “once saved always saved” doctrine teaches that one cannot be lost once saved, it does not matter what one does — just like the Gnostics claimed. When Paul speaks of **“empty words,”** he may have the Gnostics particularly in mind. Even if Paul’s words were not aimed at the Gnostics of that time, it

is obvious that some false teachers were saying that the sins he had previously mentioned would not harm them if they did them.

To “**deceive**” someone is to cheat him or mislead him in such a way as to bring loss to him. In this text, the deception comes through the use of words, words which are vain (empty, without truth or power). Paul warns the Ephesians that those who might teach that the sins mentioned will not harm them were in actuality trying to harm them.

Further, because of these sins, GOD’s wrath will be issued toward those who do such things. Some have taught through the years that the GOD of the Old Testament was a GOD of wrath and vengeance, whereas the GOD of the New Testament is a GOD of love. The implication of this doctrine is that GOD no longer exercises wrath toward the disobedient. It leaves the impression that no one will ever be punished for sin. WRONG! Note that this passage says GOD’s wrath would be exercised against Christians if they return to being children of disobedience.

**“If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them”** (2 Peter 2:20-21).

The GOD of the Old Testament is the same GOD of the New Testament. He has always been both a GOD of wrath and of love.

Upon whom will His wrath be bestowed at the judgment? Upon “**the children of disobedience.**” Notice the definitions above, where one learns that this word speaks of those who refuse to obey GOD and are obstinate in their refusal to obey Him. They

are those who cannot be persuaded that His commands are for their well-being, who cannot be persuaded that He means what He says. Why? Because they simply refuse to be persuaded. These are people who do not want an absolute authority in their lives, who are determined to selfishly do their own thing.

**“Even as they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge, GOD gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of GOD, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”** (Romans 1:28-32).

Children of disobedience have a father, but it is not GOD — it is the Devil, and they will do the works of their father.

Eph. 5:7 **“Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”**

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them;” (ASV)

PARTAKERS — *“Partaking together with one, a joint-partaker”* (Thayer, p. 596).

*“A partaker with a person is one who either actually joins with him in doing the same things, or who encourages him in it by friendship with him”* (Zerr, p. 109).

The argument is quite simple: If you join them in their sins, either by direct participation or encouragement in a sin, you will join them in

their punishment. Since GOD's judgements are severe for those who sin, why sin? Why join with those who do these sins?

*"When Paul said **be not partakers (summetochoi)**, he meant that we should not hold with, participate or share in, become partners or join association with, nor even support or abet evil things" (Caldwell, p. 236).*

**"If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20).**

**Eph. 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"**

*"For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (ASV)*

The Scriptures often use the words "**darkness**" and "**light**." Darkness is used to represent sin and evil, while light is used to represent righteousness and good. (Note that Paul did not say they were a part of darkness, he says they had been darkness, not in darkness but were themselves darkness.)

**"I am the light of the world...I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (John 8:12; 12:46).**

And note what Jesus said of His disciples:

**"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14).**

Christians are to be a light to the world to guide them out of the darkness of sin through the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. Every Christian has an obligation to personally seek the lost with this good news of salvation. Christians are not to leave this

work to someone else.

**"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For GOD, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).**

Our prayer should indeed mirror that of the Psalmist:

**"O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles" (Psalm 43:3).**

Beware of the implication here. If one can choose to walk as a child of light, one may also choose not to walk as a child of light. The power to choose light or darkness belongs to each individual. Each individual must be given the opportunity to choose darkness or light. Since Christians are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), it puts the responsibility of providing the Word of GOD to the world on Christians

**"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).**

**"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23).**

**Eph. 5:9 "(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)"**

*"(for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)," (ASV)*

It might be noticed that the ASV substitutes

the word “**light**” for “**Spirit**” in this verse. In looking at the Greek/English lexicons, there is no justification which can be found by this writer for rendering this word as “light.”

What causes one to be a child of light (v. 8)? In this context, the “**fruit of the Spirit**” seems to indicate the product which is produced from what the Spirit provides, i.e., the instructions provided in the New Testament by Him — the Word of GOD. As the Spirit of GOD is allowed to guide one through His Word, that man decides to become a child of light — a child of GOD. The Spirit has provided everything man needs to become a child of light.

**“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (2 Peter 1:20-21).

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration** (the very mouth) **of GOD”** (2 Timothy 3:16) and makes a man mature and furnishes him with what he needs to perform all good works.

*“The fruit of the Spirit is the manner of life produced by the truth of God’s mind revealed by the Holy Spirit”* (Caldwell, p. 239).

If one follows the instructions of the Spirit, he does not continuously walk in the darkness of sin.

**“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”** (Galatians 5:16).

Refusing to walk in darkness leaves only one alternative — walking in light. One who walks in light produces fruit.

**“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s**

**have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:22-25).

Since a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7:16-20), it can be known whether one is a follower of darkness or light — a servant of GOD or of Satan. What characteristics does a child of light have? Goodness, righteousness and truth.

*“The metaphor is a striking one, but literally correct, inasmuch as light is the necessary condition of that vegetative life which grows and yields fruit, while darkness is the destruction, if not of life, at any rate of fruit-bearing perfection”* (Lipscomb, p. 100).

The three concepts used here (goodness, righteousness, truth) perfectly describe the character of GOD Himself. Man, guided by the truth which GOD supplies through the Spirit, will develop the same characteristics.

**Eph. 5:10 “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”**

“proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord;” (ASV)

PROVING — δοκιμάζω — *“To test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not), as metals”* (Thayer, p. 154); *“To try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve. It has the notion of proving a thing whether it is worthy or not”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Put to the test, examine”* (Bauer, p. 202); *“To prove, test, verify, examine prior to approval, judge, evaluate, discern”* (Spicq, p. 353).

ACCEPTABLE — εὐάρεστος — *“Well-pleasing, acceptable”* (Thayer, p. 257; Zodhiates, CD).

Is GOD inviting man to test the things which GOD says are acceptable to Him, and thus prove that they are the things which truly benefit man? What pleases the Lord? Exact obedience on man’s part to His commands!

**“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing**

**of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD”** (Romans 12:2).

**“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

In order to test oneself to see if he is acceptable to the Lord, intense self-examination is required. A man may not be acceptable to other men, but his true value is found in whether he is acceptable to GOD. The apostle Paul asked, **“do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”** (Galatians 1:10). The apostle Paul told the Corinthians, **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves”** (2 Corinthians 13:5). When man puts to the test the things GOD approves in his life, he will see the benefit of obedience to GOD’s requirements — both in this life and for eternal life. Further, those with whom he comes in contact on a daily basis will see the good effects of such, and many times even those with whom he has casual contact will see the benefits of a life lived in GOD’s service, by GOD’s rules.

*“When a thoughtful and sincere person lives by the gospel, he is convinced that God’s will is right and good for us to follow; it is the best way of life possible”* (Winton, p. 89).

**Eph. 5:11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”**

“and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;” (ASV)

FELLOWSHIP — συκοινωνέω — *“To become a partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing”* (Thayer, p. 593); *“To participate in something with someone....To be a partaker or sharer together with others, a fellow or*

*joint partaker”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Participate in with someone, be connected with something”* (Bauer, p. 774).

Note the following thoughts on fellowship by various writers.

*“The phrase have fellowship with was an expression used by the Greeks to denote participation in their religious rites and mysteries. Paul wanted the disciples to have nothing in common with these”* (Fields, p. 155).

*“To have fellowship has the same meaning as being a partaker, which is commented upon at verse 7...”* (Zerr, p. 110).

*“A partaker with a person is one who either actually joins with him in doing the same things, or who encourages him in it by friendship with him”* (IBID, p. 109).

*“We are said to have fellowship in anything in which we delight and of which we partake. To have fellowship with the works of darkness, therefore, is to delight in them and to participate in them”* (Shepherd, p. 102).

REPROVE — ἰλέγχω — *“To convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted, of crime, fault, or error...To find fault with, correct”* (Thayer, p. 202); *“To shame, disgrace, but only in Class. Gr. In the NT, to convict, to prove one in the wrong and thus to shame him”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Bring to light, expose, set forth...convict or convince someone of something, point something out to someone...reprove, correct...punish, discipline”* (Bauer, p. 249).

Considering the comments above on fellowship, it is clear that one ought not to be jointly involved with anyone in any activity which is sinful. Especially is that true of any sinful activity with regard to religion (Notice Fields’ comments above.). How then can one

join with those involved in false worship in **any way** (including “*mere attendance*”) without sinning? **HE CANNOT!** It would be right to go to a false place of worship to teach those assembled that they are sinning. The apostles did this. Simply sitting with them in their worship gives, at the very least, the appearance of approving their false worship. The Bible says, “**Abstain from all appearance of evil**” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). No example of any New Testament Christian can be found of their participating in false religion with GOD’s approval.

Christians are to “**have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.**” The word “**unfruitful**” is defined as “*not yielding what it ought to...contributing nothing to the instruction, improvement, comfort, of others*” (Thayer, p. 21). False religion never yields good fruit, but only promotes error which destroys the soul of any man it has been allowed to contaminate. Further, there is no truth to the assertion that the denominational world has anything that Christians need! If any particular thing they teach is truth, the church does not need them to find the truth. The Bible has all the truth one needs. Christians should never give the world the appearance of evil in attending denominational services. Unfortunately, too many who are not strong enough to weed out the error have given too much attention to materials put out by the denominations. They think they are strong enough to avoid being entangled in religious error, but fall victim to it.

“**Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall**” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

What can be more evil than a system of religion which makes a person believe he is saved and has eternal salvation in hope, when in actuality that system will cause him to be lost? There is nothing more evil than denominationalism! The Holy Spirit told Paul to write, “**have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.**” This applies

to anything which is evil, whether it be murder, theft, false religion, et cetera. Do not participate in anything that is evil!

But further notice that the apostle Paul does not say Christians do not have anything to do except refuse to participate in the works of darkness (sin). The Pharisee who thought he was so much better than the tax collector, bragged about all of the evil things he did not do (Luke 18:11). But Jesus condemned him because he trusted in himself (Luke 18:9). Rather, the Holy Spirit directed Paul to say “**REPROVE THEM.**” “**Reprove**” is defined as “*To convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted, of crime, fault, or error...To find fault with, correct*”(Thayer, p. 202). Zodhiates states that in the New Testament it means “*to convict, to prove one in the wrong and thus to shame him*”(CD). Christians are commanded to shed light on the evil practices of man, not simply tolerate them. Christians must show the world how destructive sin is. But maybe therein lies the problem, if Christians do not really believe sin is destructive.

For argument’s sake **only**, assume for the moment that a person can attend a denominational worship service without being a joint participant of that false worship, and without his presence being interpreted as lending his approval to their actions (such cannot be done). How can such a Christian leave without rebuking them, and still follow the command of GOD which Paul relays here? The passage clearly teaches that one cannot simply refuse to have fellowship with error, but **MUST** rebuke all error in any form. It is sin to give the appearance of endorsement to any error — and silence that endorsement.

How can Christian parents teach their children that there is a difference between denominationalism and the church which belongs to Christ if they attend or allow their children to attend those services? How can one teach his children not to be a part of denominationalism and send his children to

Vacation Bible Schools held by them? The clear message children receive from such is that mom and dad are hypocrites. No wonder so many young people have been lost to the world and denominationalism over the years with parents like that.

Folks, one does not have to participate in adultery to learn that it is wrong and destructive. One does not have to attend a denominational worship service to know that it is wrong and destructive. One does not have to participate in adultery so that he can condemn it. Neither does one have to participate in a denominational worship service in order to condemn their works of darkness.

One is either a child of GOD or a child of the Devil — there is no middle ground! Denominationalists are children of the Devil, and there can be no neutrality between the sons of light and the sons of darkness.

The church needs to learn a lesson from Israel of old. The people of Israel were told to eradicate evil (sin) from their lives and from the land in which they lived. They were not to compromise with the evil of the land in any way. It was not long before they stopped being aggressive against evil. Then they compromised with the people of the land, and soon they participated in their evil and their evil worship. Then GOD had no choice but to punish them. Today GOD demands that Christians eradicate sin in their lives and from the church wherein they live.

One must not simply allow the world and the worldly in the church to walk blindly into Hell. If a Christian does not warn them of the danger by exposing the error, he will join them there. One cannot use as excuses for failure to rebuke sin that: *“They are our neighbors, we have to live beside them,” “We grew up with these people,” “We do not want to stir up the community.”* Could such thinking be the lukewarmness that the Lord spoke about — lukewarmness that would cause Him to spew them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:15-16)?

**“Take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”** (Ephesians 6:13).

**“For me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel”** (Ephesians 6:19).

Christians need to pray, *“Father, give us courage to stand for truth against **ALL ERROR**” no matter from whom it might come.*”

Eph. 5:12 **“For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”**

*“for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of.”* (ASV)

SHAME — αἰσχρὸς — *“Base, dishonorable”* (Thayer, p. 17); *“Shameful”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Ugly, shameful, base”* (Bauer, p. 25).

Does this verse mean that the sins of men should not be named or discussed in a way which may describe them? Obviously this is not what the apostle refers to in this statement, for he has just said to **“reprove them.”** How can one reprove something without stating what that person is doing? Further, if it is a sin to describe sin, then the apostle Paul was guilty of such in Romans chapter one. But such is not the case, for the Holy Spirit directed him to describe the sins of the Gentiles. If it were sin to name and describe sin, then the Holy Spirit sinned — **AND HE DID NOT SIN!**

That being the case, then what is the meaning of this passage? Considering its context, it would seem the idea is not to speak of these things in a frivolous way, or as common everyday conversation, or endorsing them. This is one of the great sins of the day, in that people constantly speak of sin (homosexuality, adultery, fornication, etc) as if it were normal behavior. Be it ever remembered that **all sin is shameful**, and it is

a shame that Christians should ever have to even name them. Yet, the Scriptures show that the sins must be named **and** pointed out as being the sinful actions that they are (v. 11).

Has it been considered why these shameful things are done in secret? Is it not because the ones doing them recognize that these things are wrong?

**“Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”** (Romans 1:32).

Has it been considered why those who are openly promoting such sins today as homosexuality plead for tolerance for all people until someone points out the Bible’s condemnation of such, and then they ballistically attack the one who stands for Bible truth as being intolerant. When one is accused of being intolerant for condemning such sins he should be given a medal — not scoffed at. Unfortunately, many in America have lost the ability to feel shame or blush over sin. Man must not forget that though he may not see the sins of others, or condone them — GOD is still watching, and He has not changed His judgment of such things.

**“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”** (Proverbs 15:3).

**“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”** (Hebrews 4:13).

Some believe this passage deals primarily with the practices of the mystery cults of that day, which were done in the inner sanctum of their temples. Notice the translation of Macknight on this present section of Scripture.

*“And have no fellowship with those who celebrate the heathen mysteries, which being transacted in the darkness of*

*night are really the unfruitful works of darkness, as they bring no fruit to the initiated, except eternal death: But rather reprove them. For the impure and wicked actions which are secretly done in the mysteries by the initiated, are so abominable, that it is base even to mention them”* (Macknight, p. 337).

**Ephesians 5:13 “But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.”**

“But all things when they are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light.” (ASV)

MANIFEST — φανερώ — *“To make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest”* (Thayer, p. 648); *“To make apparent, manifest, known, show openly”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Reveal, make known, show”* (Bauer, p. 852).

The text has been talking about the children of light and how they live and what they do in contrast to those who belong to the darkness of sin. That being the case, what does light do, i.e., what do the children of light do? They reprove wickedness and bring to light that which is evil; they expose evil and those involved in evil. Jesus said He was **“the light of the world”** (John 8:12) and told His disciples that they were to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). The light of the world makes visible the true nature of sin in all of its ugliness with the hope that such a revelation will cause men to repent and become children of light.

Is this not why those who promote evil try to ban the Bible and Christians from discussing GOD’s Word in schools, et cetera? Organizations such as the humanists and the ACLU are very anti-GOD and desire to destroy any influence He might have upon mankind. Why would they do such? Because they realize just how powerful GOD’s Word is.

**“The Word of GOD is quick, and**

**powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).**

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).**

Humanists and the ACLU do not want people to believe in GOD, for they are the tool of Satan. As tools of Satan, they desire the destruction of man. No matter how successful the efforts might be to hide from men the destructive ugliness and shamefulness of sin, it will always be brought to light (either now or in eternity).

**“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD” (John 3:19-21).**

Why do men hate the Bible? Because it exposes their sins. Why do men hate GOD’s righteous ones? For the same reason.

**Eph. 5:14 “Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”**

“Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” (ASV)

Sleep — Oh, how often man looks forward to sleep after a hard day. When asleep, one is insensible to all that is around him. His

house may be burning down around him, and unless something or someone wakes him, he will perish in the fire. The sinner, the one who walks in darkness, is asleep to the danger which faces his soul. But, these words were penned to Christians, Christians who had apparently fallen asleep at the wheel and were in danger of plunging over the cliff into the abyss of Hell itself. Awake! Awake! Before it is too late.

*“A man in sin is often like a man asleep while driving a car. Each is unaware that danger and death are about to encompass him...There is no deliverance for a sleeping man trying to drive a car until he wakes up” (Winton, p. 90).*

Christians are in danger of forgetting and leaving their first love (Revelation 2:4). There is the danger of becoming complacent and lethargic. To the church at Sardis the Lord wrote,

**“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before GOD. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:1-3).**

It is so easy to become complacent, sitting on the laurels of the past, not doing the work of the Lord now. *“What is that work?”* **“To seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). It is easy to fall into the trap of being “house-keepers” instead of being builders. It is so easy to deceive oneself into thinking he is one of the few who has not defiled himself through inactivity (Revelation 3:4). To believe oneself to be alive, yet doing nothing, to be dead.

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be**

**in the faith; prove your own selves”**  
(2 Corinthians 13:5).

*“Paul is exhorting the brethren to bestir themselves from their spiritual slumber, and arise from their spiritually-dead condition so as to be ready for the light that Christ offers”* (Zerr, p. 110).

*“The call was: Awake from your lethargy, the sleep of death, and Christ shall give you light”* (Lipscomb, p. 103).

It should be noted where the responsibility lies for those who are spiritually asleep. The text says those who are spiritually asleep are to **awake**. This takes nothing away from the responsibility of brethren to help one in his spiritual slumber awake from such. But ultimately, if one does not want to awake and arise, he will not — no one can force him to do such.

When called, if one chooses to awake (not simply rolling over, content with his present condition), Christ will provide the light he needs to accomplish the goals set for him by GOD. May GOD give the courage needed to truly examine oneself to see if he has fallen asleep at the wheel. If one has, may GOD give him the courage to admit such, to arise, and get to work instead of sleeping his life away.

**Eph. 5:15 “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,”**

*“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;”* (ASV)

CIRCUMSPECTLY — •κριβᾶς — *“Exactly, accurately, diligently”* (Thayer, p. 24; Zodhiates, CD); *“Accurately, carefully, well”* (Bauer, p. 33); *“Accurately, diligently, with careful precision, precisely”* (Littrell, p. 443).

The Spirit says one must walk (continuous action, making progress) carefully and exactly as a wise man. That wisdom can be acquired is seen in James 1:5-6.

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him**

**ask of GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”**

From where does spiritual wisdom, come? The Bible says from GOD. But notice, one must ask believing that GOD will give him the wisdom he needs. If he asks without believing, then he will receive nothing.

When one considers the Bible, there are basically two kinds of wisdom portrayed. There is earthly wisdom (man’s wisdom) and there is spiritual wisdom (GOD’s wisdom). A Christians’ wisdom **“should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD”** (1 Corinthians 2:5).

It is **“not in man that walketh to direct his steps”** (Jeremiah 10:23).

All men, including Christians, need instruction to walk righteous lives.

**“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not GOD made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”** (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

**“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with GOD. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain”** (1 Corinthians 3:18-20).

Who is a wise man? It is not the man who has a secular degree, though he may have

many of them. The one who listens to and applies GOD's Word in his life is the wise man. The wise man allows GOD to guide him through this world to the next life. The whole world is divided into two classes of people — the wise and the foolish.

**“Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (The rock - Matthew 16:15ff. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” – 1 Corinthians 3:11; RK) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24-27). (Sand — man's wisdom)**

Another thought with regard to **“walking circumspectly”** (carefully) is that the one walking carefully does not take any chances with his soul. The soul of each individual is the most important thing he possesses — nothing is more valuable. Yet, too many think they can walk close to sin, dabble in it occasionally, and walk away with no harm to their souls. Too many place their souls in danger by hanging around elements which have no regard for GOD at all. To put oneself in such a position simply declares him to be foolish — not wise.

**“Be not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals”** (1 Corinthians 15:33 - ASV).

Would the principle of First Corinthians 15:33 also speak to the evil companionship of books, television shows, et cetera — which

are filled with evil?

**“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul”** (Matthew 16:26).

**Eph. 5:16 “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”**

“redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (ASV)

REDEEMING — ἱξαγοράζω — *“To buy up, to buy up for one's self, for one's use...the meaning seems to be to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good”* (Thayer, p. 220); *“To buy out of, redeem from....The word generally means to buy up, to buy all that is anywhere to be bought, and not to allow the suitable moment to pass by unheeded but to make it one's own”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Buy, buy up something...make the most of the time”* (Bauer, p. 271).

Life in this world is at best but a brief span, a speck on the eternal time line.

**“Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”** (James 4:14).

**“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth”** (Proverbs 27:1).

**“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not”** (Job 14:1-2).

Since life is so short, one should take advantage of every moment he has. Particularly to do that which is good, that which is right in the sight of GOD. This passage seems to deal with opportunities which are so fleeting. In fact, the opportunity to do something may only come once — one

must seize the opportunity. As one looks back on his life, he can see so many opportunities which have been missed — time which could have been used to learn more of GOD’s will, opportunities to teach another GOD’s plan of salvation, opportunities to help strengthen another, opportunities to relieve a burden from another, opportunities to provide for another’s physical need, et cetera. Christians should not waste their time. One cannot buy back the past, but he can determine to take advantage of every moment he has now and in the future.

Why should Christians be careful to redeem the time? **“Because the days are evil.”** Evil abounds in this world, and if Christians are not diligently and wisely using their time, they can be drawn into the world of sin, thus losing their souls, the souls of their families or others with which they might have influence (*“An idle mind is the devils workshop”* -- Chimney corner scripture). An example of this would be Lot, who maintained his faith but lost his family. Jesus gave Himself for man to **“deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of GOD and our Father”** (Galatians 1:4).

*“When the danger is so great, when the days are pernicious, dangerous, wicked, or vicious, we must be all the more careful to examine our steps. The subtle enticement of ungodly recreation and amusement, materialism and self indulgence, lust and lasciviousness, or of greed and luxury abound on every hand (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 7:29; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 6:9-10)”* (Caldwell, p. 249).

**Eph. 5:17 “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”**

“Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (ASV)

UNWISE — —φρων — *“Without reason, senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly”* (Thayer, p. 90);

*“Unwise, imprudent, inconsiderate, foolish”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Foolish, ignorant”* (Bauer, p. 127).

One should note the work which is being demanded of man by GOD. The only way to be truly wise is to take GOD’s Word, study that Word, and apply it to one’s life. That is intense labor! It is each person’s responsibility to know GOD’s will for his life. Ultimately, one cannot blame someone else if he is lost. *“But he never taught me”* is no excuse for being lost, because each person has a responsibility to seek GOD, learn of Him and obey Him.

Note also that it is the individual’s choice as to whether he will be wise or foolish. Many think that an advanced education is what will make them wise. But it should be considered that some of the wisest men who ever walked the earth — the apostles, save one, were uneducated men.

**“When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus”** (Acts 4:13).

Why did they marvel at these men? Because of the wisdom which flowed from their mouths. From where had it come? Not the “universities” of the day but rather from their association with Jesus. Let one develop a close relationship with the Lord and be considered by Him as being wise. After all, that is the only opinion of one which matters. What I think of you or what you think of me will not determine our eternal destiny.

Notice also the implication that GOD’s will can be understood by all.

**“By revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)”** (Ephesians 3:3-4).

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).**

**“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).**

**Eph. 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”**

“And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;” (ASV)

DRUNK — μεθύσκω — *“To intoxicate, make drunk; passive to get drunk, become intoxicated”* (Thayer, p. 396).

INTOXICATED — “1 : POISON 2 a : to excite or stupefy by alcohol or a drug especially to the point where physical and mental control is markedly diminished” (Webster, CD). According to driving tests done by state police, one drink of alcohol markedly effects the physical and mental abilities of human beings.

There is no doubt that in this text, the word **“wine”** is used of that which has alcohol content. What does alcohol do to the brain and body? It diminishes physical and mental control. With one drink, a man diminishes his ability to reason correctly and carefully and stands in opposition to being filled with the Spirit. Alcohol is a drug which dulls the mind and destroys inhibitions, and such characteristics are far from being filled with the Spirit (filled with His Word).

Instead of filling one’s body with poison, Christians are to fill themselves with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to receive His Word in such a way that it influences one’s thoughts and actions.

*“To be **filled** with the Spirit is to be supplied liberally and fully with his guidance and direction through the words he has spoken”* (Caldwell, p.

252).

**Any Christian who drinks any amount of alcohol for non-medicinal purposes is sinning!**

**One drink is one drink drunk!** This is true even if one uses the false “legal” standard the world uses to declare someone to be either drunk or sober.

**Eph. 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”**

“speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;” (ASV)

SPEAKING — λαλέω — *“To utter a sound, to emit a voice, make one’s self heard; hence to utter a form of words with the mouth, to speak, having reference to the sound and pronunciation of the words and in general the form of what is uttered....to use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts; to speak”* (Thayer, p. 368); *“To talk at random”* (Zodhiates, CD).

YOURSELVES — ἑαυτοῦ — *“Reflexive pronoun of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. It is used of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural, to denote that the agent and the person acted on are one and the same...It is used frequently in the plural for the reciprocal pronoun, reciprocally, mutually, one another”* (Thayer, p. 163); *“Each other, one another as they said to each other”* (Bauer, p. 212).

PSALMS — ψαλμός — *“A striking, twanging, a striking the chords...a pious song, a psalm”* (Thayer, p. 675); *“Originally a touching, and then a touching of the harp or other stringed instruments with the finger or with the plectrum; later known as the instrument itself, and finally it became known as the song sung with musical accompaniment”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“In our literature only songs of praise, psalm, in accordance with OT usage”* (Bauer, p. 891).

HYMNS — ἕμνος — *“A song in praise of gods, heros, conquerors, but in the Scriptures of God; a*

sacred song, hymn” (Thayer, p. 637); “A song or hymn in honor of God” (Zodhiates, CD); “Hymn or song of praise” (Bauer, p. 836).

MELODY — ψάλλω — “To cause to vibrate by touching, to twang...to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings...to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp...to sing to the music of the harp; in the N.T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song” (Thayer, p. 675); “In our literature, in accordance with OT usage, sing, sing praise” (Bauer, p. 891).

This passage does not give the why of the command to sing. When one looks at Colossians 3:16, he sees what singing these songs accomplishes.

**“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”** (Emphasis mine, RK).

Both passages show that the songs are to be sung to the Lord, but they also show they are to be sung to each other. Why? To teach and admonish one another. Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are to be used to teach and admonish fellow Christians when they are gathered together. There is a mutual obligation (or command) to do this. A refusal to sing when one can is a refusal to teach and thus rebellion to GOD’s commands. Singing and speaking necessitate the use of words, in particular here it would designate the truths of the Word of GOD. One cannot speak one to another in such a manner as to teach them GOD’s Word by humming or vocal bands. Vocal noises that are not words do not fulfill the command to sing.

The types of songs Christians should sing when they are gathered together are designated as **“psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”** Given as a general category, one would simply say that “religious songs” or “sacred songs” are written specifically to honor GOD (see definitions of the Greek words above). It should also be

noted that these songs are to be sung reciprocally, i.e., sung to each other at the same time or possibly chanting back and forth. In modern times, something similar is done to chanting in four-part harmony.

**“Melody,”** not harmony, is to be produced through the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. There is a big difference between the two ideas. Webster tells us that melody is “a sweet or agreeable succession or arrangement of sounds: TUNEFULNESS 2 : a rhythmic succession of single tones organized as an aesthetic whole” (CD Version). Harmony, on the other hand, is “the combination of simultaneous musical notes in a chord b : the structure of music with respect to the composition and progression of chords c : the science of the structure, relation, and progression of chords 3 a : pleasing or congruent arrangement of parts” (Webster, CD). Melody speaks to an action, but upon what the action is directed could be anything. Note that GOD does not leave one to wonder where the melody is to be made — it is in the heart. Not on a mechanical instrument of any kind. A Christian does make melody on an instrument, but the instrument is not mechanical — it is his heart.

When Christians gather and speak to one another in songs they teach each other the truths of Scripture (Colossians 3:16). Notice that it is not to excite one another’s emotions. The songs are not directed to human beings as their audience, but to Christ. Since this is the case, it would not be out of line to examine why each song is sung. Is it because the singers really like it because it “moves them,” or are they thinking of how this song truly glorifies and magnifies GOD? In singing these songs to the Lord, there is the additional benefit of teaching one another, but again the singing is not directed to Christians — the Lord is the audience to be impressed. Note also from Colossians 3:16-17 that the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord is to be done **“in the name of the Lord**

**Jesus.”** To do something in the name of someone is to do it by his authority, i.e., according to his instructions—otherwise what is done does not please Him.

Final note: Those who would attempt to use either passage (Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16-17) to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music as part of their religious music are simply guilty of perverting the Scriptures. Note here a little interesting history, especially that part which deals with the quotes of men who are claimed to be the leaders or founders of different “Christian” religious groups.

*“Almost universally the encyclopedic references attribute the introduction of mechanical instruments into the worship of churches to Pope Vitalian I between the years 660 and 670 A.D. Erasmus, a contemporary of Martin Luther said, ‘The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled’ (Commentary, on 1 Corinthians 14:19). Luther himself said, ‘The organ in worship is the ensign of Baal.’ John Calvin said, ‘Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him’ (Commentary, on Psalm 33). John Wesley said, ‘I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels provided they are neither heard nor seen.’ Adam Clarke, from whom that*

*quotation is cited, declared himself, ‘I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity’ (Commentary 4:686).”*

**Eph. 5:20 “Giving thanks always for all things unto GOD and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”**

“giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to GOD, even the Father;” (ASV)

**“Giving thanks always for all things.”**

Does “all” mean “all?” What about those who mistreat us? Am I to give thanks for them? The apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to understand that he was to be thankful even for those who would abuse him.

**“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men”** (1 Timothy 2:1).

GOD has shown mercy toward all men, for all men nailed His Son to the cross. Whether they accept the mercy provided is their choice, but He keeps on providing for their needs.

Many times man fails to thank GOD when things are going badly in his life. He fails to realize that it could be much worse. Did GOD in His providence protect that one from an even worse disaster? Further, distress sometimes causes one to look deeply into his soul, seeing things and understanding things about himself and others that he never saw before. Distress can cause one to see his inadequacies more quickly than anything else and urge him to do better in the future. Maybe one forgets sometimes that when the apostles

were beaten for proclaiming the message of Christ, **“they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”** (Acts 5:21). What did Paul and Silas do after being beaten severely for simply being Christians? They **“prayed, and sang praises unto GOD”** (Acts 16:25). And James states that Christians should **“Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”** (James 1:2-4).

GOD knows what is best for man, and man should be thankful for the correction He gives so that his soul may abide with Him for eternity. A spanking is not pleasant for the child or the father, but sometimes it is necessary to correct and protect the child.

**“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons”** (Hebrews 12:6-8).

Whether it be in song, or prayer, or simply giving thanks, that thankfulness should be addressed to the Father. Jesus taught His disciples to address their prayers to GOD the Father.

**“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name”** (Matthew 6:9).

From the immediate context, it would seem that a key element in songs should be thanksgiving to GOD.

But notice that thanksgiving rendered to the Father is to come through Jesus Christ. Why would this be so? Because Christ is the one who has been given all authority by the

Father (Matthew 28:18). All thanksgiving should further be given through Christ, because He has been designated by the Father as the mediator for man.

**“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (1 Timothy 2:5).

As man’s mediator, Christ sits at the right hand of GOD, thus having instant access to Him. As Wallace states —

*“How ignorant and offensive it is for those who claim to be Christians to address their prayers to God the Father and give no reference to Jesus who sits enthroned at His right hand, Philippians 2:9-11; John 14:13”* (Wallace, p. 219).

Further, if it had not been for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, there would be no hope for mankind. All would remain in their damnable sins! Praying in the name of Christ is *“not just adding a phrase at the end of our prayers. It is a recognition that every prayer is through him, every direction is by his authority, and every blessing is made possible through him”* (Caldwell, p. 262).

Coffman makes the following comments which are truly food for thought regarding the thankfulness one renders to GOD.

*“When one is young, let him thank God for youth; when he is old, let him thank God that he has been permitted so long to live; in health, for strength and joy; in sickness, for the ministry of physician, nurse, loved ones and friends; in poverty, for the privilege of living ‘like Jesus;’ in wealth, for God’s endowments; in death itself, for the hope of eternal life, etc., etc.”* (Coffman, p. 222).

**Eph. 5:21 “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of GOD.”**

*“submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.”* (ASV)

SUBMITTING — βποτάσσω — *“To arrange under,*

to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection” (Thayer, p. 645); “To place under in an orderly fashion” (Zodhiates, CD); “Subject, subordinate...subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey” (Bauer, p. 848).

FEAR — φόβος — “Fear, dread, terror...reverence, respect” (Thayer, p. 656); “Fear, terror, reverence, respect, honor” (Zodhiates, CD); “The causing of fear...fear, alarm, fright” (Bauer, p. 863).

The ASV renders this passage, “*submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.*” Why it ends with the word “Christ” is anyone’s guess. The original word here is θεός, which simply translates into the word “GOD.” Since Christ is GOD, it may do no harm to use it here, but this author prefers the meaning of the original word.

To submit oneself to another means to put himself in a subordinate position to that person.

*“Submitting was originally a military word referring to the forming or lining up of troops for battle under a commanding officer. Every soldier was to recognize and keep his proper place in the ranks as instructed by his authoritative superior”* (Caldwell, p. 262).

Does this mean that one should be subject to every whim of another Christian? This is not what the context is speaking about. The context shows that Paul is speaking about subjecting oneself to specific positions he holds in life. Just because one is a Christian does not give him the right to flaunt authority over another who is not a Christian, or who holds a position under another’s authority who is a Christian.. Further, the context shows specific examples so that the meaning here cannot be misunderstood.

Why should one honor these positions and the authority of another? Because of his “**fear of GOD.**” One’s respect, reverence and fear of GOD should cause him to recognize the restrictions GOD has placed on him, as well

as the obligations GOD has placed for his dealings with his fellow man (whether Christian or non-Christian). The context of this verse next points out three areas as examples of what is being taught here in a general statement.

*“In yielding cheerful obedience to proper authority, in proper regard for GOD Who established it, we demonstrate another contrast with the behavior of the world”* (Colley, p. 283).

The enemy of submission is a thing called pride. Pride says, “*I am not under the authority of anyone, I do not have to obey anyone; I can do whatever I please.*”

**Eph. 5:22 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”**

*“Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”* (ASV)

SUBMIT — Same as submitting in verse twenty-one.

YOUR OWN — ἑῷος — “*Pertaining to one’s self, one’s own...what is one’s own as opposed to belonging to another*” (Thayer, p. 296); “*As pertaining to a private person and not to the public, private, particular, individual, as opposed to, public, open, and, common*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Belonging to an individual in contrast to what is public property of belongs to another: private, one’s own, peculiar to oneself*” (Bauer, p. 369).

The relationships which begin at this verse are compared to the Lord and the church. What does it mean for a wife to “**submit**” to her husband? Does this mean that she is inferior to him? No! Does it mean she is to be his slave and thus subject to his whims or abuse? Absolutely not! Remember, the husband must be in submission too — to the Lord.

**“I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is GOD”** (1 Corinthians 11:3).

If having a head (thus being in submission to that head) makes one inferior or a slave (in the bad sense of the word) to the one that is his head — what does that say about Christ?

The term “**submit**” is used in order to establish headship. Just as Christ is the head of the church, so is a wife to submit to her husband. Someone must make the final decision with regard to matters in a marriage relationship, just as Christ is the head and authority in the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 28:18). Unlike the church (where Christ is an absolute ruler with no input from the church as to what is to be done), in the marriage relationship a good husband will listen to his wife’s suggestions and counsel. The Scriptures teach that she is to be a “**help meet**” (helper – NKJV), not a slave to her husband (Genesis 2:18). How can she be a helper if she cannot give advice in decisions he has to make in their marriage? After having listened to her suggestions in any given matter, he must make a final decision as to the course of action to be pursued, and she must accept that decision — even if that decision proves to be wrong. It might be added that she must not comply to an unscriptural demand of his. As an example, if he decided that she should not attend worship services or should give up her faith she must not submit to him regarding those anti-scriptural decisions. This writer knows of a woman whose unbelieving husband did not want her to attend worship services or live the Christian life. She did not submit to his unscriptural desires in these matters. The end result was that eventually he obeyed the Gospel and in fact is now an elder in the church. If she had submitted to his unscriptural demands, he surely would not have obeyed the Gospel, become a preacher and elder, and she would have been in danger of losing her soul as well (consider also their children and possible future grandchildren).

With regard to a wife’s submission, Bristow

says there are three types of wives.

*“(1) Those that deny plain Bible teaching, They don’t want to submit, and therefore, they just reject His word.*

*(2) Those that believe the word, but fail to practice it. They would never suggest that God’s word is not binding.*

*(3) Those that believe the word and spend their lives practicing it” (p. 42).*

To whom is the wife to submit? To the one who pertains to herself (see definitions above). She is not to submit to anyone in public (What would this say about submitting to society’s ideas of how she should dress, talk, et cetera?) Is she to submit to any man who gives her direction? No! She is answerable to that which belongs to herself — her husband. She is not public property.

In all of this, it must be remembered that GOD is talking about order in the government of the home. Ideally, there must be a head to the home, and GOD has determined that man (a male) is to be that head — not the wife and certainly not their children. Let the reader remind himself that, in matters of faith, it is GOD through His Word which is to direct the woman and her husband. **No one** has the right to **demand** anything less or more in matters of faith and practice — that belongs to the headship of Christ. If a husband is Biblically what he should be, no wife will have any problem being submissive to him.

**“We ought to obey GOD rather than men”** (Acts 5:29).

It should also be remembered in all of this discussion that a woman should submit to the headship of her husband because he was not created for her — she was created for him.

**“The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man”** (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the**

Lord” (Colossians 3:18).

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of GOD of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in GOD, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement”** (1 Peter 3:1-6).

**Eph. 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body.”**

“For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, being Himself the Saviour of the body.” (ASV)

SAVIOUR — σωτήρ — “Savior, deliverer; preserver” (Thayer, p. 612); “A savior, deliverer, preserver, one who saves from danger or destruction and brings into a state of prosperity and happiness” (Zodhiates, CD).

*“Husbands are to be the responsible person; wives are to be helpers to their husbands”* (Perkins, p. 71).

**“The husband is the head of the wife.”**

Someone has to be in charge. GOD chose the male of the species to fulfill that role in the

home — in the family. He could have made the female the head, made them co-heads, or even made the children the head (as so many in American society have disastrously done). The people to whom Paul wrote were familiar with the idea of the male being the head of the family, as such was the common practice of that time — his word was law for the family. This is the exact point that Paul was trying to get across to the Ephesians. Like Jesus, he used an illustration they were familiar with in order to teach a greater and more important truth.

*“As Paul points out in 1 Timothy 2:9-15, this was put in place by the Lord God (Jehovah your Elohem), after the first man and woman sinned.*

*She was deceived and fell into transgression.*

*We find, in Genesis 3:1-19, the transgression Paul mentioned. This is God’s word to Eve, after she had sinned: ‘I will increase greatly your sorrow and your pregnancy; you shall bear children in sorrow and your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you.’*

*With this background information before us, it is easily seen that it is God’s will we are dealing with, and our only course of action is to accept his will and comply in humble obedience.*

*It is not a debatable matter. It has been settled for all people who love and obey him - for all time”* (Littrell, p. 448).

Note that a comparison is made regarding that headship. The headship of Christ is compared to the headship of a male in his family. There is a lesson to be learned regarding physical families, though the main emphasis of the text is on Christ’s being the head of the church (v. 32). What kind of head should a man be to his wife? Would Christ do anything to hurt His bride — the church? Because of His love for His bride, Christ was

more interested in her welfare than His own — thus He died on the cross for her. Thus, the text shows that, as the head of the church, He became her Savior. The word “**Savior**” shows that He not only delivers her from the bondage of sin but also preserves her in safety.

A husband who acts toward his wife the way Christ acts towards His bride will never abuse her and will always seek her happiness and safety. He will provide for her needs. He will protect her soul and help her reach the eternal abode of Heaven.

*“Christ is presented in two important capacities with reference to the church: **head** (kephale) and **savior** (soter). As head he is the one in authority, the one who leads and supports, the one whose word stands supreme. As savior, he is the protector and provider, the great sacrifice, and the mediator on our behalf” (Caldwell, p. 268).*

**Eph. 5:24 “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”**

“But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.” (ASV)

SUBJECT — υποτάσσω — *“To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection” (Thayer, p. 645); “To place under in an orderly fashion” (Zodhiates, CD); “Subject, subordinate—bring someone to subjection...subject oneself to someone” (Bauer, p. 848).*

EVERYTHING — π•ς — *“All, every” (Thayer, p. 491).*

The wife is to put herself in subjection to her husband. Does this mean that she is to make herself a slave to him? Absolutely not! The Bible says she is to be his helper (Genesis 2:18-20). She is to place herself under his authority and protection, trusting that he will make the right decisions in their family. Unlike the human relationship, in the spiritual relationship the husband (Christ)

never makes a mistake. The church is to recognize that Christ is its head and that He has all authority (Matthew 28:18). Having all authority, if the church loves Him, she will place herself under His authority and protection in every area of life and even in death (Revelation 2:10).

To what degree should the wife be in subjection to her husband? Is it a matter of whatever he says in any matter or wants her to do? Obviously she cannot violate GOD’s laws and expect eternal salvation. It is much like the example of Peter and the rest of the apostles when the council commanded them not to teach Christ anymore. They answered, **“We ought to obey GOD rather than men”** (Acts 5:29).

**“Whether it be right in the sight of GOD to hearken unto you more than unto GOD, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”** (Acts 4:19-20).

A wife cannot and must not disobey GOD in submitting herself to a husband’s sinful demands.

*“She is not just to submit in things that she likes, or in areas where she agrees, but **‘in everything’**” (Bristow, p. 43).*

It may be pointed out that the so-called “*women’s liberation movement*” is simply a refusal to obey GOD — it is rebellion to His authority. When the people of Samuel’s day rebelled against GOD in demanding a king, they were not rebelling against Samuel. They were rebelling against GOD (1 Samuel 8:7). When a woman refuses to be in subjection to her husband, she is not primarily rebelling against her husband. She is rebelling against GOD.

**“So let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”** To whom is the wife to be in subjection? To her **“own husband.”** She is not to submit herself to the wishes of another man. The church is to submit itself to her husband — Christ — and

no other. One must not submit to Moses, Buddha, Calvin, Muhammad, et cetera. Her desire must be complete submission to His will and none other. The church cannot submit itself to human leadership and be happy in the Lord. In all her decisions, the question must be, *“What does Christ want us to do?”*

**“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to GOD and the Father by Him...whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”** (Colossians 3:17, 23).

Wives need to ask themselves if they have placed themselves in submission to their husbands. If you have not — **you do not love him!** Further, you do not love GOD Who commanded you to submit.

Eph. 5:25 **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it;”**

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it;” (ASV)

“**Love**” and “**loved**” in this verse come from the same Greek word — •γαπάω. The way Christ loved the church is the same way a husband should love his wife. But what kind of love is •γαπάω love? In the Greek language there are several kinds of love. There is eros love, which is the romantic and highly emotional love. This passionate love, though necessary to begin a marriage, soon diminishes. According to Elaine Walster (Professor of Psychology and Sociology at the University of Wisconsin), this happens somewhere between six months and two and one-half years. If that is the only thing holding a marriage together, it will soon end. There is also philia love, which is companionship love. This is a friendship love. One’s wife should be his best friend, and the same is true of the wife to her husband. •γαπάω love is one that chooses to love another — warts and all. Is

this not the love Christ had for man?

**“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”** (Titus 2:14).

He took man’s place on the cross. The love He had for man was self-giving love — one which will pay a supreme price for the object of His love. When a wife is loved to this extent, she will have no problem submitting herself to the will of her husband! When the church recognizes the love Christ has for it, it will have no trouble submitting itself to His will in ALL things. Husband, if you are not willing to sacrifice for your wife, if you are not willing to take her place in death if you could — **you do not love her** as you should.

**“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”** (John 15:13-14).

Many divorces in this land occur, and the reason often given is that *“I just do not love him/her anymore.”* One of the things found in this passage is that •γαπάω (love) is in the present tense. This shows that it is an on-going love; it does not end when things go wrong or expectations are not met. Husbands must love their wives because GOD has commanded it. This requires constant work on the marriage and appreciation for GOD’s commands regarding the life-time commitment which has been made to the marriage partner.

Eph. 5:26 **“That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”**

“that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,” (ASV)

Why did Christ give Himself for the church (v. 25)? To sanctify and cleanse it. The word “**sanctify**” means to set apart or make holy (set apart for holy use). Further, this word is

in the aorist tense, which speaks of a past action having been accomplished. Note that it is Christ who “sanctified” His bride. How and when was this accomplished? First, there is the recognition that there could be no sanctification without the death of Christ on the cross (“**gave Himself for it,**” v. 25). Second, there is no church unless GOD sets it apart through His Son.

The second word noticed in this text is “**cleansed,**” which is the idea of freeing from filth. The third word to be noticed is the conjunction “**and,**” which draws “**sanctify**” and “**cleanse**” together and makes them of equal importance in the discussion. One cannot be cleansed without being sanctified, nor can he be sanctified without being cleansed. What was sanctified and cleansed? The church.

How was the setting apart and freeing from filth accomplished? By a “**washing of water.**” Almost every scholar admits that the “**washing of water**” in this passage is speaking about baptism, even those who advocate that baptism is not necessary for salvation. But who has salvation? Those who are set apart, made holy, freed from the filth of sin by GOD. That a washing is absolutely necessary for one to have his sins removed is a given, considering other texts on the subject. Sins are washed away by the blood of Christ.

**“Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”** (Revelation 1:5, emphasis mine, RK).

Since man does not literally have Christ’s blood to wash in, there must of necessity be a substitute which then figuratively accomplishes this washing in His blood. The sinner Saul was told how and where his sins would be washed away.

**“Why tarriest thou? arise, and be**

**baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”**  
(Acts 22:16, emphasis mine, RK).

Where are sins washed away? In the precious blood of Christ. Where are sins washed away? In the act of baptism. Washing in baptism and washing in Christ’s blood become synonymous terms with regard to having one’s sins removed.

This “**washing of water**” is triggered by something. How would one know that baptism removes sins without the Word of GOD explaining that to him? “**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD**” (Romans 10:17). The knowledge of GOD’s Word is essential in the process of one’s becoming sanctified and cleansed.

**“Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures”**  
(James 1:18).

**“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth”** (John 17:17).

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently”**  
(1 Peter 1:22).

Many would rather deny the truth of GOD so that they can hold on to a man-made doctrine which cannot save them but will cause them to be lost for eternity. They thus demonstrate that they have no real love for GOD or the truth which He has given man.

**“With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”** (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Jesus affirmed to Nicodemus that one cannot be born into His kingdom without being born of water (John 3:3-5). Now watch the process as affirmed by the Holy Spirit through

Peter.

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever”** (1 Peter 1:22-23, emphasis mine, RK).

For any honest student of GOD’s Word, the issue of whether baptism is essential to salvation is settled.

**Eph. 5:27 “That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”**

“that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (ASV)

PRESENT — παρίστημι — *“To place beside or near; to set at hand; to present; to proffer; to provide”* (Thayer, p. 489); *“To cause to stand near or before; intrans., to stand near or before, to be present”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Place beside, put at someone’s disposal”* (Bauer, p. 627).

GLORIOUS — ἑνδοξος — *“Held in good or in great esteem, of high repute; illustrious, honorable, esteemed”* (Thayer, p. 214); *“Glorious, splendid. Of persons, honored, respected, noble”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Honored, distinguished, eminent...glorious, splendid”* (Bauer, p. 263).

SPOT — σπιλώω — *“To defile, spot”* (Thayer, p. 584); *“To defile, spot, stain”* (Zodhiates, CD).

HOLY — ἅγιος — *“Properly reverend, worthy of veneration... set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his”* (Thayer, p. 7); *“Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. It has a common root, hág-, with hagnós, chaste, pure. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God’s purity and abstaining from earth’s defilement”*

(Zodhiates, CD); *“Dedicated to God, holy, sacred, i.e., reserved for God and his service...pure, perfect, worthy of God...consecrated to God”* (Bauer, p. 9).

BLEMISH — —μωμος — *“Without blemish, free from faultiness...Ethically, without blemish, faultless, unblameable”* (Thayer, p. 33); *“Spotless, without blemish. In Class. Gr., used as a technical word to designate the absence of something amiss in a sacrifice or something which would render it unworthy to be offered”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Unblemished of the absence of defects in sacrificial animals...presented himself as an offering without blemish to God (Hebrews 9:14).”* (Bauer, p. 47).

As this writer considers this text and begins stroking these keys, he is abundantly aware that many pages could be written about this verse. Hopefully what little is written will benefit all who read it.

The imagery continues of the church being the bride of Christ as compared to a physical bride and her husband. The first thing to consider is the word **“present.”** In American culture, it is generally the father of the bride who, at the place of marriage, presents the bride to her husband. But here it is stated that Christ will cause the bride to be placed beside Himself, to stand near Him.

In what condition will the bride be when He places her beside himself? She will be glorious, i.e., she will be held in great esteem because of her splendid and honorable nature. In a physical wedding, this is symbolized by the white dress she wears (Unfortunately, too many wear a dress on this occasion which they have no right to wear.). What man can forget how radiant his bride looked as she came down the isle in her wedding dress and how proud he was to be her husband (This writer still cannot forget that sight and feeling — she is mine! She prepared herself for me! She loves me!).

The bride on her wedding day was extremely conscious of making sure nothing soiled that dress, that it was ironed and displayed just right. The bride (church) which

Jesus will present to Himself must be without spot — pure and clean from all defilement. Let it be remembered that this text is talking about the time when the church is presented to Christ as His bride on the judgment day. All too often one tends to think of the church on earth, that which is visible to one's eye, as presently being the bride of Christ. Consider the following thoughts with regard to this.

The imagery here is to the customs of the time, probably primarily to Jewish customs, yet most of the world's customs regarding marriage in that time were very similar. Marriages were arranged by parents, particularly the father of the proposed groom. Likewise, has not the Father sought the bride for His Son? Did not He before the foundation of the world designate who Christ's bride would be?

**“Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved”** (Ephesians 1:3-6).

After the bride was chosen for the father's son, an agreement of betrothal was entered into. Under Jewish customs, this betrothal was as binding as a marriage. Marriage in all times is to be a life-time agreement **between a man and a woman**.

**“Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his**

**mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”**

(Genesis 2:23-24, emphasis mine, RK).

When the Jews of Jesus' day tried to justify divorce, Jesus showed them that GOD had never intended for them to marry someone, divorce her when they got tired of her, and marry whomever they wanted and as often as they wished.

**“Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so”** (Matthew 19:8, emphasis mine, RK).

In that same context, it should be noted that Jesus did give a reason why one could divorce his/her mate. Notice carefully that the only reason GOD gives for divorce is fornication, i.e., the mate does not maintain purity in faithfulness to him/her.

**“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery”** (Matthew 19:9).

Note, Jesus' law here was for both male and female.

**“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery”** (Mark 10:11-12).

Considering this, there is a warning to those who are betrothed to Christ, that unfaithfulness to Him will cause them to be put away for eternity. Consider Joseph in Matthew 1:19ff. Was Joseph married in the sense in which western society consider one to be married? Was he married according to Jewish custom? In verse twenty the **“angel of the Lord”** told him, **“fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.”** But note, in verse nineteen one is told Joseph was going **“to put**

**her away privily.”** The term **“put her away”** is equivalent to divorce in the language of today.

The church today is betrothed to Christ. Notice carefully what Paul said to the Corinthians, and of great importance is the fact that the Holy Spirit instructed this letter to be written to **Christians**.

**Paul said, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”** (2 Corinthians 11:2-3).

Notice two things in the above passage. First, the word **“espoused,”** a verb used to show a betrothal (an engagement in today’s society). Second, the phrase **“present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”** **“Virgin”** is the idea of being pure, not defiled when the marriage is consummated. As a faithful **Christian**, there will be a presenting of that one someday to the Groom in the marriage relationship as a chaste bride.

In human marriages of that time, a dowry was paid (sometimes called gifts) at the time of the betrothal. It should be considered that at the time of a Christian’s betrothal (when one agrees to accept Christ as his husband through obedience to the conditions set by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit), the dowry had already been paid in anticipation of the future bride.

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's”** (1 Corinthians 6:20).

**“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men”** (1 Corinthians 7:23).

**“Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”** (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Next, a period of time existed between the betrothal and the actual marriage. It would seem to this writer that this corresponds to the *“church age on earth.”* The betrothal was a time of preparation for the bride, who began preparing herself for her marriage day and the life she would live from that day forward. The church on earth is the time and place of preparation for the marriage to the Lamb of GOD. During this time, the bride-to-be prepares to meet her husband at the *“altar.”* She will do everything she can to make herself beautiful for that day. She will sever any relationships she may have had with others, preparing herself only for him. Once one becomes a Christian, he is to prepare himself to meet Christ so that the marriage may take place in beauty and purity.

On the day of the *“wedding,”* the groom would go to his espoused one’s house and bring his bride back to his own house. When they arrived a feast was held to celebrate the marriage and then they entered the marriage chamber. Christians are awaiting the day when Christ shall come again to take them to His house.

**“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”** (Revelation 19:7-9).

When this marriage takes place, the bride is

now able to enjoy the full blessings of a husband who cares for her, provides for her needs and protects her in his home. Oh, what a glorious day it will be when the marriage day comes at last for the bride of Christ.

**Eph. 5:28 “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”**

“Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself.” (ASV)

OUGHT — ἴφειλω — *“To owe...to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity, to do something”* (Thayer, p. 469); *“To owe, to be indebted”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Owe, be indebted”* (Bauer, p. 598).

What kind of love is Paul calling for here? It is a love which seeks the best for another — self-sacrificing love — the same kind of love Christ exhibited for the church. Whom is a man to love this way? His **“own wife”** (ASV & NKJV). True love sees the basic needs of the one loved and seeks to fulfill those needs.

*“Husbands and wives both have needs unique to themselves. The male of the species seems to have a greater need for ‘identity.’ He needs to feel important, successful and accomplished. Self-esteem is an important part of a man’s emotional health....Wives, on the other hand, have a greater need for ‘intimacy.’ They need to be shown love and tenderness. They need to be held and told they are beautiful”* (Knight, p. 206).

Further, note that the kind of love spoken of here is owed (**“ought,”** see above). A man owes his wife; he is obligated to love his wife as he loves himself. Why? Because they mutually agreed to become one flesh.

**“For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no**

**more twain, but one flesh. What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder”** (Matthew 19:5-6, see Genesis 2:24).

The Bible says it is a man’s binding obligation to love his wife as he loves his own body. He would not want harm to come to his own body, and he would want the necessities of life for that body. When a man says he has fallen out of love with his wife, he has made a conscious decision not to honor the obligation he has to her. This is not an obligation placed on him by society — it has been placed on him by GOD Himself! He fell in love with her before — he can do it again — IF he wants to. Take for an example Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis twenty-four. They had never met, but they were determined to love each other and they did.

*“Hendricksen says this does not mean ‘they should love their own wives just as they love their own bodies, but they should love their own wives, as being their own bodies’”* (Hendrickson quoted by Moore, p. 298).

If man wants to be happy in his marriage, he must follow GOD’s instructions for that marriage to be truly successful, a happy marriage of mutual respect and love for one another. *“In loving her, he is, after all, only loving himself”* (Coffman, p. 227).

*“All this illustrates Christ’s love for the church. He loved the body as himself because the church is his body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22-23)”* (Caldwell, p. 278).

**Eph. 5:29 “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:”**

“for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church;” (ASV)

NOURISHETH — ἰκτρέφω — *“To nourish up to maturity...to nurture, bring up”* (Thayer, p. 200); *“To nurture, rear, to bring up to maturity such as*

children” (Zodhiates, CD); “Nourish...rear, bring up” (Bauer, p. 246).

CHERISHETH — θάλπω — “To warm, keep warm...to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care” (Thayer, p. 282); “To make warm, heat. In the NT, used figuratively meaning to cherish, nourish” (Zodhiates, CD); “Keep warm; figuratively cherish, comfort” (Bauer, p. 350).

Why should a man love his wife? Verse twenty-eight says because he loves himself. The present verse says because Christ loves the church, and a man’s love for his wife is to be like that exhibited by the Lord for His church. It should be considered that Christ is the supreme example for mankind in all of his relationships: husband and wife, parent and child, boss and worker, neighbors, et cetera. This will be dealt with further in the next chapter.

The words “**nourisheth**” and “**cherisheth**” show the concern and care a man is to have for his wife. He will provide for his own needs and be just as concerned about his wife’s needs. This care is to include her spiritual, emotional and physical well being.

Hate is the opposite of love. Under normal conditions, one does not abuse himself unless he is mentally unstable. Yet, some will abuse their mates and, in doing such, fail to realize that they are manifesting hatred for themselves. Abuse basically comes in two forms: (1) Physical and (2) mental (psychological). A loving husband will not commit either against his wife.

*“Often in counseling a married couple, a minister will hear a pitiful confession from the wife that her husband is always downgrading her and making her feel small. He criticizes her cooking, her weight, her housework, and it’s no wonder she withers and love dies. Her mind becomes cluttered with anxiety and frustration, depression sets in, and a self-fulfilling prophecy comes to pass. Because she lacks the initiative to go on, or the confidence to*

*strive to improve, all of her husband’s accusations gain credibility. She is now on a downward spiral to ruination, and he gloats because he was a good judge of poor character. How foreign to sanctifying love such a scenario is. True love will always bless, beautify, and enrich the spirit of another”* (Knight, p. 205).

**Eph. 5:30 “For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”**

“because we are members of His body.” (ASV)

This verse is a quotation from Genesis 2:23. The creation account shows how man came into being contrary to the anti-GOD evolutionists. One remembers that the creation was brought before Adam, and he named all of the creatures. In doing this, he became very aware that there was no one for him, i.e., not another of his species. That is when GOD performed the first surgery by taking one of Adam’s ribs and making woman from it. Now Adam had a helpmeet who was suitable to him. It would seem that this verse is intended to show the extremely close relation between a husband and wife as they are melded into one flesh. In the spiritual realm, it also shows the extremely close relationship which is to exist between Christ and His church.

This should also cause one to see the uniqueness of the church. Just as marriage is to be between one woman and one man for life, so also is the relationship to be between Christ and the church. Each man is to have his own wife, and if he has any others, he is guilty of adultery (unfaithfulness to her). The church is to remain as faithful to the Lord as He is to the church. Involved in this is the implication that there is only one body — one church, a fact Paul had already brought out (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).

It should be noted that the American Standard Version leaves out the phrase “**of His flesh, and of His bones.**” This is

because some of the oldest manuscripts do not contain this phrase. Those who leave this phrase out believe that an early scribe inserted it to make this verse and the next fit the text of Genesis 2:23-24 more closely.

**Eph. 5:31 “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”**

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.” (ASV)

JOINED — προσκολλάω — *“To glue upon, glue to...to join one’s self to closely, cleave to, stick to”* (Thayer, p. 547); *“To glue one thing to another”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Adhere closely to, be faithfully devoted to, join someone”* (Bauer, p. 716).

The first thing to be noticed in this verse is the leaving. When two people marry, they are to leave behind the authority which had formerly existed between them and their parents. The man becomes the head of his house; his father is not the head of his son’s house. Similarly, the woman leaves behind the authority of her parents and places herself under the authority of her husband, becoming the queen of this new family. Many marriages are doomed by momma’s boys and daddy’s girls, who will not break the bond of parent/child. Among the Jews there was a tradition (and it may still be practiced), that when a child got married, a plate would be taken from his former home and shattered on the ground (which signified that the former relationship no longer existed). Yes, they are still parent and child, but the dependency of the child upon those parents is to cease, and the authority of the parent over the child is to cease.

The second thing to be noticed in this verse is that the husband and wife are to be glued together (“joined” — *“To glue upon...stick to”* — see definitions above). When a binding glue is used on two pieces of wood, the wood — if put under enough

pressure — will break, but not where the two pieces were glued together. Nothing but death must be allowed to divide a husband from his wife or a wife from her husband. That is how strong this union must be. The marriage must not be allowed to be destroyed by anything or anyone. If a man and a woman are truly committed to each other and determined that nothing will end their marriage short of death — nothing will. In today’s society of throw-away products, many seem to view their marriages that way and will quickly throw their marriages away for someone else or a moment’s pleasure. The permanency of marriage is not a new doctrine for Christianity.

**“Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder”** (Matthew 19:4-6).

GOD ordained the institution of marriage — not man. He ordained marriage for the mutual benefit of both parties. A marriage is to be composed of one male and one female. They are to establish a new home together under the authority of no other family. They are to become one flesh. Mankind, leave their marriage alone or prepare to answer to GOD if you destroy it!

*“To become one flesh outside marriage is totally sinful because it violates the very purpose of God and nature with regard to the creation of man and woman and the establishment of mating marriage between them (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15-20)”* (Caldwell, p. 282).

The only relationship which is to be greater than a husband with his wife is the relationship between an individual and Christ.

*“As the bride and groom leave their*

*parents to enter into the new marriage, so those who hear and obey the gospel leave behind their former spiritual ties and are joined to Christ in a new and heavenly bond. Each Christian breaks all spiritual ties when he enters into the body of Christ; he is to consider himself irrevocably united with the Lord, and forever separated from his former lifestyle” (Winton, p. 100).*

**Eph. 5:32 “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”**

“This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church.” (ASV)

What is the great mystery, i.e., that which was unknown until it was revealed in this context? The mystery is not something which cannot be known, but rather something which cannot be known without revelation from GOD. Man could not see this relationship until GOD revealed this information to him. Human marriage is set forth by GOD as the type of the anti-type of the spiritual marriage of Christ and His church.

*“The relationships between husbands and wives illustrate the church and its relationship to Christ” (Littrell, p. 451).*

*“The exalted view, both of marriage and of the church of Jesus Christ, shines forth in this text. The sacredness of marriage is seen in God’s design of it, from the very beginning, to be a figure of the union of Christ and his church; and the glorious importance of the church appears in the fact of its having been in the design of God from the very beginning” (Coffman, p. 229).*

*“The mystery is simply the use of the Christ-church and husband-wife comparison and analogy. This explanation suggests that the truth of verse 31 is utilized by Paul to describe*

*the intimate relationship between Christ and His church which was stressed in verse 30” (Moore, p. 301).*

Regarding the word “**mystery**,” Jerome, in his translation of the Latin Vulgate (ca. A.D. 395), translated the word “**mystery**” as “sacrament.” This led the Catholic church to declare marriage as a sacrament of the church, and thus gave them the power to control marriage. There is absolutely no justification for translating μυστήριον (“mystery”) as “sacrament.”

**Eph. 5:33 “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”**

“Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband.” (ASV)

REVERENCE — φοβέω — “*To put to flight by terrifying (to scare away)...to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience*” (Thayer, p. 656); “*To put in fear, terrify, frighten....Morally, to fear, reverence, honor*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Be afraid...(have) reverence, respect*” (Bauer, p. 862).

Regarding human marriages, there are two important aspects seen here — love and respect. When these two items are found in marriage, any obstacle which might have destroyed the marriage, or make it less than it should be, can be overcome. When GOD’s rules for love and respect (and every aspect of marriage) are followed, one will truly have a happy and fulfilling marriage.

The word “**reverence**” [also rendered “**fear**” (ASV) and “**respect**” (NKJV)] is dealing with authority. The wife must show the proper respect for the headship of her husband — he is appointed by GOD to be the head of the family, and she is to accept that fact and honor GOD’s direction.

**“Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt**

**bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee**” (Genesis 3:16).

**“I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is GOD”** (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Man must learn and accept the responsibility of being the head of his family. GOD did not set up a dual headship of husband and wife for the home, nor did He set up rule by committee, nor rule by immature children (as is seen so often in America). The church is not to be ruled by committee, or the immature children which occupy it (Christians).

It is pointed out that just as a wife is to show subjection and reverence for her husband, the church is to show subjection and reverence to its husband — Christ.

## **Ephesians — Chapter Six**

**Eph. 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” (ASV)

CHILDREN — τέκνον — “*Offspring; plur. Children*” (Thayer, p. 617); “*A child, male or female, son or daughter*”(Zodhiates, CD); “*Child*”(Bauer, p. 808).

OBEY — ὑπακούω — “*To listen, hearken; prop.: of one who on a knock at the door comes to listen who it is...to hearken to a command, i.e., to obey, be obedient unto, submit to*”(Thayer, p. 638); “*To hearken, obey. To listen to something, hearken with stealth, stillness, or attention in order to answer. To yield to a superior command or force (without necessarily being willing)*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Listen to...obey, follow, be subject to*” (Bauer, p. 837).

RIGHT — δίκαιος — “*Upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God*” (Thayer, p. 148); “*Righteous, just...that which is right, conformable to right, pertaining to right, that which is just*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Upright, just, righteous*” (Bauer, p. 195).

The last chapter ended with instructions regarding the home, specifically the relationship between husband and wife. Application was also made to the husband/wife relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. This chapter begins with another aspect of a husband-and-wife relationship. After creating Adam and Eve, the first commandment GOD gave them was “**Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it**” (NKJV).

What is the first commandment given to children? Obey your parents. Children are commanded to listen to their parents and then do what they are told to do. Why should this be the case? (1) Because children do not have the experience or judgment of their parents. (2) One of the laws of GOD is obedience to one who has authority over him. If a child does not learn to be obedient to his parents, if they do not teach him obedience, will he be obedient to civil authority or (more importantly) will that child be obedient to GOD? It is not likely that such would occur. (3) Learning obedience will cause a child to be happy and well adjusted. A child who is allowed to do whatever he wants without parental control has received a message that mom and dad do not really love him. It takes a lot of time and work to teach children to be obedient to authority. Quite simply, a child who is not taught obedience by his parents is likely headed for destruction, both in this world and in that which is to come.

“*A Chicago judge made a study of 1000 cases of juvenile delinquency. In 97% of the cases the mother exercises no discipline; the father exercises none in 98% of the cases*” (Gerstner as quoted by Fields, p. 179).

*“When the plant is young and tender, give it the proper direction, for as the twig is bent, the tree will grow. When the child is young, teach it the rules that will govern the adult”* (Wallace, p. 225).

How are children to obey their parents? **“In the Lord.”** What does this phrase in this context mean? Some say that the phrase **“in the Lord”** means that the children spoken of in this passage are Christians. This argument collapses from its own weight. Common sense suggests that if it means Christian children are to obey their parents, what about children who have not yet become Christians? It is this writer’s position that obeying parents in the Lord means that children should obey unless it causes them to be contrary to a law of GOD. It is the same picture seen in Acts chapter five, when civil authorities commanded the apostles not to teach by the authority of Christ. The apostles answered them, saying, **“We ought to obey GOD rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). No child is under any obligation to lie, steal, murder or anything else which is contrary to the Word of GOD because a parent told him to do it. If such a situation were to occur, the child must obey GOD and disobey his parents.

*“When one does the will of parents rather than obey the commands of God, or when he fails to do the commandments of God to please any earthly being, he shows that he loves that being more than he loves God. Whenever one fails to bear whatever cross stands in his way, he fails to obey God in order to save his life, he cannot be a disciple of the Lord”* (Lipscomb, p. 118).

**“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross,**

**and come after Me, cannot be My disciple”** (Luke 14:26-27).

One might also consider that Gentiles outside of Christ were condemned, among other things, because they had been disobedient to their parents (Romans 1:30). This is not a rule which is only for “Christian families;” it is a general rule for all of mankind, whether a Christian family or not. GOD has always demanded that children be obedient to their parents.

Consider that in order for the home, society and the church to operate orderly and in harmony — someone must be in charge. Society often advocates that no one is to be in charge, yet often places children in charge of the home. GOD says a man is to be in charge of his home. His wife is to be in submission to him, and children born into this family are to obey their parents. GOD’s way always works, and man’s way leads to destruction.

Why should children obey their parents? Common sense would dictate that they obey from a sense of gratitude for the care, protection and upbringing given to them by those parents. But above that — because GOD said it is **“right.”** This writer remembers a line his wife sometimes used when one of our children wanted to know why he/she had to do something. She would say, *“Because I said so.”* GOD has said that to obey is right, and that settles it. Though one often wishes GOD would explain some things, there are times when man simply needs to do what GOD says because GOD said it.

**Eph. 6:2 “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)”**

“Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise),” (ASV)

HONOR — τιμάω — *“To estimate, to fix the value; mid. to fix the value of something belonging to one’s self...to honor, to revere, venerate”* (Thayer, p. 624); *“To esteem, honor, reverence...To prize, to fix a value or price upon something”* (Zodhiates,

CD); “Set a price on, estimate, value...honor, revere someone” (Bauer, p. 817).

PROMISE — ἰπαγγέλλω — “To announce, to promise” (Thayer, p. 227); “Primarily a legal term denoting a summons or promise to do or give something” (Zodhiates, CD); “Announce, proclaim” (Bauer, p. 280).

**“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee”** (Exodus 20:12).

In considering the text and also the ten commandments from which it is quoted, one must realize that the ten commandments are basically divided into two sections. The first section (Exodus 20:1-11) deals with man’s relationship and obligations to GOD. The second section (Exodus 20:12-17) deals with man’s relationships to his fellow man. In dealing with man’s relationship to his fellow man, GOD gave a promise, but there is no specific promise made to any of the commands which followed that one. Thus, it was the first commandment (of that section) in which a specific promise was made.

What does it mean to “honor” one’s parents? Obviously, obeying them (v. 1) shows them honor; but if the obedience is a mere outward obedience and does not come because of love — is that honoring one’s parents? Lipscomb correctly states what honoring one’s parents entails.

*“To honor father and mother is to discharge faithfully the duties the child owes them — obedience in childhood, respect, reverence through life, tender care, and support in old age, and kindness and love at all times”* (p. 119).

The Jews of Jesus’ day tried to get around their obligation to care for their parents in their older age. Many times as parents age, much time and finances are required to care for them. Some of the Jews devised a method which they thought would excuse them in these areas — they called it “**Corban.**” Basically the idea of “**Corban**” was that a

promise had been made to give what could have been used to care for an aged parent to the Lord. Having made that promise, they thought their obligations to their parent had been negated. Consider how selfish that is based on the simple fact of how much time, money, and sacrifice had been spent to raise them. Such action was not placing the proper value on their parents which GOD had commanded. Second, in pretending to honor GOD by allocating these funds to GOD, they were actually dishonoring Him because they were violating His command with regard to the care of their parent.

Question: How many people today fail to honor their parents with the respect and care they OWE them by turning them over to the government to care for them? Many times this is done to let the government pay for their care in “sub-standard” institutions in order to avoid direct responsibilities and the drain of their own finances. It should be hastily stated that special care for their needs which would require a special institution is not under consideration here.

**Eph. 6:3 “That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”**

“that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” (ASV)

WELL — εἶ — “To be well off, fare well, prosper” (Thayer, p. 256); “Well, good. Particularly with verbs, ‘that it may be well with thee,’ that you may be prosperous” (Zodhiates, CD).

What promise is attached to honoring one’s father and mother? Prosperity and long life. Is prosperity necessarily physical prosperity? It would seem obvious that that is not always the case. John wrote Gaius, telling him, “**I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth**” (3 John 2). This may be a clue that, in terms of physical prosperity he did not have much. Can one say he is prospering if he has good health? Is one prospering who has friends to stand beside him in even the most difficult times? If all one

has in this life is his faith, is he prospering?

A child who listens to and obeys godly parents will have fewer of the heartaches and troubles which a rebellious child will have.

*“The child who learns to obey and honor his parents will develop the wholesome character traits that under normal circumstances promote long life and certainly quality of life”* (Knight, p. 212).

*“This promise also has a fulfillment in the present times. The child who obeys will probably have better health, safer habits, wiser ways, and certainly the blessing of God to lengthen and enrich his life”* (Fields, p.180).

**“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck”** (Proverbs 1:8-9).

**“My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee”** (Proverbs 6:20-22).

**Eph. 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”**

*“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.”* (ASV)

PROVOKE — παροργίζω — *“To rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger”* (Thayer, p. 490); *“To provoke to anger, irritation or resentment”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Make angry”* (Bauer, p. 629).

BRING UP — ἰκτρέφω — *“To nourish up to maturity...to nurture, bring up”* (Thayer, p. 200); *“To nurture, rear, to bring up to maturity such as children...In the sense of to train or educate”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Nourish...rear, bring up”* (Bauer, p. 246).

NUTURE — παιδεία — *“The whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment)”* (Thayer, p. 473); *“Originally instruction of children. It evolved to mean chastening because all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, correction”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Upbringing, training, instruction, in our literature chiefly as it is attained by discipline, correction”* (Bauer, p. 603).

ADMONITION — νουθεσία — *“Admonition, exhortation”* (Thayer, p. 429); *“Admonition, warning, exhortation. Nouthesía is any word of encouragement or reproof which leads to correct behavior”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Admonition, instruction, warning”* (Bauer, p. 544).

The former verses spoke of the obligation of children toward parents. This verse deals with parents' obligations to their children.

Why does the passage not say, *“And, ye fathers and mothers?”* Because it is the father's obligation to rule his family with his wife in submission and his children in subjection. He is responsible to see that their training is such as to promote children who will be faithful to GOD. A father who does not accept his responsibility to rule his house will not be a good example for his children in other areas as well. Because **“children are an heritage of the LORD”** (Psalm 127:3), it places a tremendous obligation on fathers to train them as GOD would have them trained. It should further be observed that religious training should start in the home. Parents who expect the Bible school to teach their children the truths of GOD's Word without spending time at home teaching them these truths have failed in their responsibilities not

only to their children but also to GOD Himself.

**“Provoke not your children to wrath.”**

The idea of **“provoke”** is causing one to become angry because of the things done to him by the provoker. When a child is disciplined, he will sometimes resent it and even may become angry, but that is not what this passage is speaking about. The Bible commands parents to discipline their children as a means of correcting bad behavior, especially with regard to that which is needed to keep them from violating GOD’s will in both the present and future.

**“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”** (Proverbs 22:15).

**“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die”** (Proverbs 23:13).

**“He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly”**(Proverbs 13:24, NKJV).

With time, a child will understand correct and just discipline and will accept such without resentment or anger. This is accomplished by parents who show their punishment was not out of anger but rather was for the child’s own good. It should be remembered that the High Priest Eli was condemned by GOD because he did not restrain his children (1 Samuel 3:13).

*“Most children soon learn to appreciate the loving restraint of parental discipline. It makes them feel secure, and it assures them of the parent’s love and concern”* (Littrell, p. 453).

Any parent who punishes his children out of anger or when he is angry over what the child has done will probably go beyond the kind of correction of which GOD would approve. That would then be abuse. As Winton correctly

points out, *“Improper treatment can make a dog vicious and dangerous. The same can be done to children if they are abused”* (p. 102).

How then can and do parents **“provoke”** their **“children to wrath?”** By unjust punishment, i.e., punishment which is not deserved. This idea would carry over into excessive punishment which includes abuse whether one speaks of verbal or physical abuse. If a parent does not discipline out of love, how can that child be expected to understand that GOD chastises out of love for the eternal benefit of the one He loves?

**“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not son”** (Hebrews 12:5-8).

How does one keep from provoking his children to wrath? By bringing **“them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”** The word **“nurture”** deals with the overall training. Godly parents will not only train their children in spiritual matters, but they will also train them in secular matters. They are interested in their growth to maturity in every aspect of their lives. **“Admonition”** deals with words which are designed to encourage or reprove, whichever is needed at the time. People often forget, this writer included, how harmful the wrong words can be to another. James reminds his readers of this truth.

**“The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”** (James 3:6).

Notice the controlling factor for what has been said, both negatively and positively — **“of the Lord.”** All dealings a father has with his child are to be done according as the Lord directs. This is true whether one speaks of discipline, nurture or admonition.

These instructions regarding the rights of a parent (v. 1) or a child (v. 4) are for all time and all people. In the days of the apostle Paul, outside of Judaism, wives, children and slaves had no rights at all. The present text and context deals with the fact that all have GOD-given rights which are to be respected by man. The great Historian Durant gives a picture of how children were generally treated in the Roman world about the time when this Scripture was written.

*“The power of the father was nearly absolute, as if the family had been organized as a unit of an army always at war. He alone of the family had any rights before the law in the early Republic; he alone could buy, hold, or sell property, or make contracts; even his wife’s dowry, in this period, belonged to him. If his wife was accused of a crime she was committed to him for judgment and punishment; he could condemn her to death for infidelity or for stealing the keys to his wine. Over his children he had the power of life, and sale into slavery. All that the son acquired became legally his father’s property; nor could he marry without his father’s consent. A married daughter remained under her father’s power, unless he allowed her to marry *cum manu* — gave her into the hand or power of her husband”* (Durant, p. 57).

**Eph. 6:5 “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;”**

“Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with

fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;” (ASV)

SERVANT — δούλος — “A slave, bondman, man of servile condition...one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will” (Thayer, p. 158); “A slave, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other...Generally one serving, bound to serve, in bondage” (Zodhiates, CD); “Slave” (Bauer, p. 205).

FEAR — φόβος — “Fear, dread, terror...reverence, respect” (Thayer, p. 656); “Fear, terror, reverence, respect, honor” (Zodhiates, CD); “Fear, alarm, fright” (Bauer, p. 863).

TREMBLING — τρόμος — “A trembling, quaking with fear” (Thayer, p. 630); “A trembling from fear, terror” (Zodhiates, CD); “Trembling, quivering from fear” (Bauer, p. 827).

SINGLENESSE — •πλότης — “Singleness, simplicity, sincerity, mental honesty; the virtue of one who is free from pretence and dissimulation” (Thayer, p. 57); “Simplicity, purity, sincerity, faithfulness, plenitude. In the NT used only in a moral sense as the opposite of duplicity meaning sincerity, faithfulness toward others, manifest in helpfulness and giving assistance to others” (Zodhiates, CD); “Simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, frankness” (Bauer, p. 85).

Perkins states that there were an estimated sixty million slaves in the Roman empire in the first century (p. 74). That there were slaves was a fact of life which needed to be addressed. To the Roman mind, a slave was simply an object which belonged to him and to which he could do anything he desired. How should one who became a Christian feel about and deal with one who was his master? How should a Christian master deal with those who were his slaves? Further, what relationship should exist if both the master and slave were Christians? Since civilized societies today do not have slaves, does this passage have any applicable instruction for Christians today?

Does the Gospel command that institutions such as slavery be abolished?

*“The Gospel did not attack the established institutions of society. It does forbid abuses, and such teaching would lead eventually to the abolition of slavery in the western world...Paul sent the runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his master, Philemon, but with the urgent request that the slave be forgiven and treated as a brother in Christ”* (Wallace, p. 226).

*“He (Christ, RK) recognized the relationship, regulated it, and put in operation principles that in their workings would so mold public sentiment as to break down all evil relations and sinful institutions. Slavery was so treated”* (Lipscomb, p. 121).

The Gospel never promotes physical social upheaval. Certainly the death of GOD’s servants through persecution is contrary to His will, yet armed conflict is never advocated to overthrow a government which does such evil. This would apply to a government which advocates abortion, homosexuality, or any other crime against GOD.

**“Servants, be obedient to them that are your master according to the flesh.”** Servants are to be obedient, i.e., follow the instructions which their masters may impose upon them. The only limitation to this would be if the master’s requirement violated GOD’s Word. Why should a servant (employee) obey his master (employer)? Paul answers that in First Timothy 6:1.

**“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of GOD and His doctrine be not blasphemed.”**

If a slave/employee acted in rebellion to his master/employer, such would cause the employer to think like this: *“Christianity is not a religion I can favor because look how those*

*who follow it act.”* A rebellious slave/employee would refuse to do the work assigned, be lazy in his work, and might even seek to inflict harm on him (materially or physically). Thus, a master/employer would speak against GOD and the doctrine GOD has given man.

Note the words **“according to the flesh.”** The implication in the context is that those who were slaves/employees had two masters — one physical and one spiritual. The spiritual master (GOD) is to be obeyed above all else. The physical master is to be obeyed in all things not in conflict with GOD’s commands.

How is the service of a slave/employee to be rendered to his master/employer? This text gives three attitudes which are to be exhibited — **“fear,” “trembling,”** and **“singleness of heart.”** **“Fear”** deals with the proper reverence and respect for the position of the master.

**“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour”** (Romans 13:7).

**“Trembling”** deals with being afraid of bringing the displeasure of his master/employer upon him because of disobedience. **“Singleness of heart”** deals with sincerity, honesty and without pretense. It refers to doing the best one can simply because it is right to do so. This kind of service is going to be rendered no matter how one’s master/employer treats him.

**“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward GOD endure grief, suffering wrongfully”** (1 Peter 2:18-19).

In modern times, if an employer treats his employees badly, the employee can seek other employment. But, as long as he is employed by that bad employer, he will do his

job to the best of his ability, seeking only the best for that employer. A good example of this would be the slave girl in Second Kings chapter five. A Syrian army had invaded her homeland, either stealing her from her family or possibly killing her family. She was made a slave of the wife of the commander of these armies. Every indication is that she served her new mistress with honor, doing whatever was required of her. Instead of thinking her master deserved what he had (leprosy) as punishment for what he had done, she instead looked out for his best interest. She caused him to go to Israel where he could be healed of this dreaded disease.

Why should one serve a physical master/employer with fear, trembling and singleness of heart? Because in all things he must remember to do them as if he were doing it to Christ — because he is. As Coffman states this principle, *“Every piece of work a Christian does must be good enough for God to see”* (p. 235). Such a one will not pretend to obey while mentally being in rebellion. Such a slave/employee will be the best he can be, do the best he can do, and will possibly be able to influence his master/employer to become a Christian as well. A slave/employee who always gives his best to his master/employer will be a valuable asset to him. This is well illustrated in Joseph, who did his very best no matter where he was (house of Potiphar, imprisoned, or second in command to Pharaoh). Because he did his very best, he rose in prominence in each situation.

**Eph. 6:6 “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of GOD from the heart;”**

“not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of GOD from the heart;” (ASV)

**EYESERVICE** — Ἰφθαλμο-δουλεία — *“Eyeservice, implying either service rendered only when one is being scrutinized or service*

*rendered only for appearance sake”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Eyeservice, i.e., service that is performed only to attract attention, not for its own sake nor to please God or one’s own conscience”* (Bauer, p. 599).

**MENPLEASERS** — •νθρωπι-άρεσκος — *“Studying to please men, courting the favor of men”* (Thayer, p. 46); *“To try to please men and not God. Denotes one who endeavors to please all”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“One who seeks to please men at the sacrifice of principle, a men-pleaser”* (Bauer, p. 67).

How is one not to serve his master/employer? **“Not with eyeservice.”** Such a person is one who will do his work one way when he is being watched and another way (an inferior way) when he is not being watched. Again, one is pointed back to Second Kings chapter five to see an example of the kind of person who renders *“eyeservice.”* Elisha had a servant named Gehazi who apparently served him well. Naaman had offered to pay Elisha for his healing. Such had been refused by Elisha. Gehazi then chased after Naaman, lied to him, and gained material goods for himself. From this it can be seen that one who serves in eyeservice is one who really serves only himself — what he considers to be his own best interests. Gehazi acted in a selfish way when he thought Elisha could not see him.

*“They are bound to perform their duty with as much fidelity as though the eye of the employer was always upon them, remembering that though the eye of man may be turned away, that of God never is”* (Barnes, p. 121).

Consider that one who serves in eye-service is a liar. *“An acted lie is as dishonorable as a spoken one”* (Lipscomb, p. 122).

How is one not to serve his master/employer? Not **“as men-pleasers.”** A **“men-pleaser”** is one whose main object is to be pleasing to men, to gain their approval first and foremost. Paul addressed that

problem in Galatians 1:10.

**“For do I now persuade men, or GOD? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”**

If one’s goal is simply to please men, he will go along with anything they advocate. He will be as fickle as the Galatians who, in Paul’s presence, obeyed and served GOD, but when he was no longer in their presence, followed the false teachers and their perverted gospel. Men-pleasers will compromise integrity in a moment to gain the approval of whomever they are with at the moment. Integrity will be thrown under the bus to please a human being.

How are Christians to serve their master/employers? **“As the servants of Christ, doing the will of GOD from the heart.”** From where does acceptable service to the Lord come? From the heart! Anything less is unacceptable. When such service is rendered, it will open doors for the most important work of a Christian — finding souls which will obey GOD’s commands. If a master/employer had a lazy servant who only worked when he had to, who was dishonest, would he not want to investigate why after becoming a Christian this one became an excellent worker?

The main goal of a Christian is to please GOD. Everything one does in this life should be that of which he is not ashamed for GOD to see. It does not matter if no one else sees what he is doing or has done — GOD sees and renders judgment on what he has done. It does not matter whether one speaks of recreation, the job, worship or any other category which may be named. Christians do the very best they can in all situations because they are trying to please GOD — not men.

**Eph. 6:7 “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:”**

“with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men:” (ASV)

SERVICE — δουλεύω — *“To be a slave, serve, do service”* (Thayer, p. 157); *“To be in the position of a servant and act accordingly; to be subject and serve in subjection or bondage. Used of actions which are directed by others”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Of relationship be a slave, be subjected...of action or conduct perform the duties of a slave, serve, obey”* (Bauer, p. 205).

This verse is similar to the last and continues to show that how one lives and works reveals whether he is living the Christian life. In this context particular emphasis is on how one fulfills his responsibilities to a master/employer.

*“Paul reminded slaves that by their diligent and sincere service they were doing much more than simply satisfying their masters; they were also serving God and gaining the approval of the One Who mattered most”* (Weir, p. 314).

*“We preach sermons by how we live. If we try to teach them the gospel and do not show them the spiritual ethics of Christ in our work, we defeat our own most cherished desires to help them to become Christians”* (Caldwell, p. 301).

*“My question should not be whether the master is doing me right, but am I doing right by him”* (Caldwell, p. 302).

This verse clearly shows that whatever one’s endeavor may be in life, he does not work for men — he works for GOD. No matter where a Christian works, if asked, his “employer” should be able to say, *“That person is one of my best employees.”*

**“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest”** (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

**Eph. 6:8 “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or**

**free.”**

“knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” (ASV)

This verse is a reminder that the Lord is watching and sees everything that is done by His people. As long as a Christian acts in every area of his life as a Christian, he is going to be rewarded by GOD. In this life he may not be rewarded for his physical labor, but in that which is to come he will be. One may be treated badly by a master/employer, but if the servant/employee continues to do that which is right, he will be rewarded in Heaven. Thus, the social position one has in this world does not matter in the next. Wrong done to a Christian is not to beget wrong from him. Christians must remember for Whom they work!

**“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of GOD our Saviour in all things”** (Titus 2:9-10).

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”** (2 Corinthians 5:10).

**“Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Galatians 6:7).

**Eph. 6:9 “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in Heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him.”**

“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that He Who is both their Master and yours is in Heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him.” (ASV)

RESPECT OF PERSONS — προσωποληψία — *“Respect of persons, partiality, the fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts”* (Thayer, p. 551); *“A respecting of persons, partiality, favoritism”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Partiality”* (Bauer, p. 720).

**“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven”** (Colossians 4:1).

Masters are to **“do the same thing,”** i.e., they are to carefully consider their relationship with others — but especially their relationship to their Master. Thus, they will treat a slave/employee with respect, dignity and fairness.

The idea of **“forbearing threatening”** seems to involve abuse of a slave/employee. If he will not use fear to intimidate his servant to perform the required task, he will not use more drastic measures. It should be stated that this does not suggest that he will not punish the slave/employee if the need calls for it. But such will be done if needed simply based upon what is right.

**“Neither is there respect of persons with Him.”** In the church, **“there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all”** (Colossians 3:11). On the day of judgment, men must remember that GOD will not judge man based on his social position while upon the earth. That day will be a day of judgment based on whether one has loved and obeyed GOD. Has he done what GOD has directed him to do? Has he treated his fellow man as GOD has directed he be treated? **“For there**

**is no respect of persons with GOD”**  
(Romans 2:11).

This writer enjoyed and appreciated the summary of verses one through nine by Weir, which he now offers for the reader’s consideration.

*“When one obeys the Gospel and becomes a Christian, he contracts duties and responsibilities that are uniquely his. Children have a twofold obligation to their parents. First, they are to obey their parents because God says such obedience is right. Second, children are to respect their parents and honor them by giving them support in time of need. Fathers will be especially accountable for providing spiritual training and leadership in the home.*

*All relationships are special ‘in Christ.’ A Christian employee will be faithful in discharging his duties, and a Christian employer will be kind and considerate to his employees. All Christians must realize that they exist on this earth for one primary purpose — to glorify the Creator (Isa. 43:7).*

*May we all see that the things we do in this life we are to do ‘as unto the Lord’” (Weir, p. 317).*

**Eph. 6:10 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”**

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.” (ASV)

FINALLY — λοιπός — *“For the rest, besides, moreover, forming a transition to other things, to which the attention of the hearer or reader is directed” (Thayer, p. 382); “As to the rest, finally” (Zodhiates, CD); “From now on, in the future” (Bauer, p. 480).*

POWER — κράτος — *“Force, strength. Power, might...dominion” (Thayer, p. 359); “Strength or might, more especially manifested power, dominion...Denotes the presence and significance of force or strength rather than its exercise”*

(Zodhiates, CD); *“Power, might...strength, intensity...power, rule, sovereignty” (Bauer, p. 449).*

MIGHT — ἰσχύς — *“Ability, force, strength, might” (Thayer, p. 309); “Physical strength, mental or moral power as an endowment...Generally meaning power, potency, preeminence” (Zodhiates, CD); “Strength, power, might” (Bauer, p. 383).*

In the previous sections, instructions had been given regarding specific relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and employers and slaves and employees. Now he will give instructions to all classes of Christians for the battles which they were presently facing and would face in the future. These battles are against all that is evil, specifically against the Devil and his forces.

From where does a Christian’s strength originate? It is found **“In the Lord.”** This involves one’s faith in the Lord. If that faith is solid, it will be because of a dependence on GOD’s Word to withstand Satan and all of his attacks. That is the formula used by the Lord Himself when tempted by the Devil — **“It is written”** (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). It is the choice of each individual as to whether he is strong or weak in the Lord.

**“When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”**  
(Hebrews 5:12-14).

It should be clearly stated and accepted that Christians are in a deadly war as the following passages declare by showing the

defensive armor Christians are to put on and the offensive weapon they are to use against their enemy — the Devil. Considering that fact, one should note the many times the Bible speaks of a Christian's warfare and the military terms which are used to describe his obligations. Note the following passages:

**“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare”** (1 Timothy 1:18).

**“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses”** (1 Timothy 6:12).

**“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong”** (1 Corinthians 16:13).

**“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier”** (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

**“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing”** (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

**“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (James 4:7).

**Eph. 6:11 “Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against**

### **the wiles of the devil.”**

“Put on the whole armor of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (ASV)

PUT ON — ενδύω — “see ενδύνω — (*prop. to envelop in, to hide in*), to put on: in a literal sense, to put on, clothe with a garment” (Thayer, p. 214); “To put on as a garment, to cause to get into a garment, to clothe, dress” (Zodhiates, CD); “Dress, clothe...clothe oneself in, put on, wear” (Bauer, p. 264).

WHOLE ARMOUR — πανοπλία — “Wholly armed, in full armour...full armour, complete armour” (Thayer, p. 476); “Panoply, complete armor, offensive and defensive” (Zodhiates, CD); “Full armor of a heavy-armed soldier, panoply” (Bauer, p. 607).

TO STAND — ἵστημι — “To be of a steadfast mind...in a fig., of one who vanquishes his adversaries and holds the ground” (Thayer, p. 308); “To cause to stand, to set or place” (Zodhiates, CD); “Stand still, stop” (Bauer, p. 382).

WILES — μεθοδεία — “Cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery” (Thayer, p. 396); “Method, the following or pursuing of an orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. In the NT, connected with evil doing, a device, artifice, art, artificial method, craft or wile” (Zodhiates, CD); “Scheming, craftiness, in deceit scheming” (Bauer, p. 499).

DEVIL — διάβολος — “A calumniator, false accuser, slanderer” (Thayer, p. 135); “A false accuser” (Zodhiates, CD); “Slandorous” (Bauer, p. 182).

The first thing noticed about this passage is the fact that GOD does not clothe one in this armor. Paul says **“put on,”** which states it is the Christian's obligation and responsibility to clothe himself in order to be able to withstand the armor. GOD provides the armor man needs, but if man will not accept his responsibility to put it on when his enemy (Satan) attacks, he will be defenseless.

What is GOD's soldier to put on? The **“WHOLE armour of GOD”** (Emphasis mine,

RK). The words “**whole armour**” are from the Greek word πανοπλία, which speak of everything needed, every piece of armor provided — both defensive and offensive. Why must all of it be put on? Because any part which is missing provides a weak place which Satan will exploit. Take away any single defensive bit of armor, and that is where Satan’s “**fiery darts**” will be hurled. Take away “**the sword of the Spirit,**” and Satan can continue to attack with the Christian having no power to repel him.

The armor GOD provides, when put on by His soldier, gives him the ability to “**stand.**” The alternative is to flee and be overcome by Satan. That is why Christians are told to “**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**” (James 4:7). One cannot keep his soul who flees in terror from Satan’s attacks because GOD has not provided anything to protect the cowardly soldier. GOD expects his soldiers to fully trust in the armor He has given them to repel and vanquish the Devil. The Christian who fully trusts GOD for the victory, not his own strength, will hold the ground of truth and keep his faith.

*“In other passages we are told to flee sin (1 Corinthians 6:18). We should flee from temptations to do wrong, but stand fast in doing what is right”* (Fields, p. 187).

What kind of tactics does Satan use against man? They are called “**wiles**” in this text. He uses cunning craftiness, deceit and trickery. He schemes to overcome his enemy in such a way that he does not realize he is under attack until it is too late. He is like a “*sapper*” who crawls on his belly to avoid detection until he is upon his target and then attacks. This shows us the cowardly reality of Satan. He does not attack face to face in open combat, for he knows he cannot win that kind of warfare. Instead, he suddenly attacks from ambush. This also shows that man must be constantly ready to do battle with him and his cohorts. The armor which GOD supplies

cannot ever be taken off, because he does not know when or from what direction the attack will come. One thing the Christian soldier knows is that he will be attacked — just not when. Note the following thoughts of Sheerer on the devil's devices.

*“(1) Mixing error with just enough truth to make it appear plausible (Genesis 3:4, 5, 22); (2) Misquoting Scriptures (Matthew 4:6); (3) Masquerading as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14); (4) Causing his ‘ministers’ to masquerade so that they fashion themselves as apostles of God (2 Corinthians 11:13); (5) Pretending to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, 9); (6) Strengthening people in their belief that God does not exist (Acts 20:22); (7) Entering places where he is not expected to enter (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4); and (8) promising people good can be obtained through wrongdoing (Luke 4:6-7)”* (Sheerer, p. 840).

**Eph. 6:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”**

*“For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (ASV)

WRESTLE — πάλη — *“Wrestling ( a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to prostrate his antagonist, i.e., hold him down with his hand upon his neck”* (Thayer, p. 474); *“A wrestling, struggle or hand-to-hand combat. It was used of the wrestling of athletes and the of the hand-to-hand combat of soldiers both of which required deftness and speed. It denoted the struggle between individual combatants in distinction from an entire military campaign”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Struggle, lit.*

wrestling” (Bauer, p. 606).

PRINCIPALITIES — αρχή — “The first place, principality, rule, magistracy...Hence the term is transferred by Paul to angels and demons holding dominions entrusted to them in the order of things” (Thayer, p. 77); “Spoken of dignity, meaning the first place, power, dominion. In the sense of preeminence, precedence, rulership. By metonymy meaning rulers, magistrates, princes, i.e., persons of influence and authority such as civil rulers. Spoken of the princes or chiefs among angels; among demons; the powers of the other world” (Zodhiates, CD).

POWERS — ἰξουσία — “The leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates” (Thayer, p. 225); “Permission, authority, right, liberty, power to do something. As *éxesti* denies the presence of a hindrance, it may be used either of the capability or the right to do a certain action. The words *éxesti* and *exousía* combine the two ideas of right and might. As far as right, authority, or capability is concerned, it involves ability, power, strength” (Zodhiates, CD); “Ability to do something, capability, might, power...the power exercised by rulers or others in high positions by virtue of their office” (Bauer, p. 278).

RULERS — κοσμοκράτωρ — “Lord of the world, prince of this age” (Thayer, p. 356); “Used in the NT of Satan as the prince of this world, i.e., of worldly men” (Zodhiates, CD); “World-ruler” (Bauer, p. 445).

DARKNESS — σκότος — “Metaphor of ignorance respecting divine things and human duties, and the accompanying ungodliness and immorality, together with their consequent misery” (Thayer, p. 580); “Spiritual darkness, implying ignorance or error; eternal misery and damnation; sin and misery, as well as persons in such a state; the works of darkness, such works as are usually practiced by men in darkness or secretly” (Zodhiates, CD); “Darkness, gloom...of religious and moral darkness, of darkening by sin, of the state of unbelievers and of the godless” (Bauer, p. 757).

SPIRITUAL — πνευματικός — “Belonging to a spirit, or a being higher than man but inferior to God” (Thayer, p. 523); “Pertaining to the spirit, spiritual...pertaining to (evil) spirits” (Bauer, p. 678).

WICKEDNESS — πονηρία — “Depravity, iniquity, wickedness” (Thayer, p. 530); “Evil nature, badness...In the NT, only in a moral sense, evil disposition, wickedness, malice” (Zodhiates, CD); “Only in the ethical sense wickedness, baseness, maliciousness, sinfulness” (Bauer, p. 690).

HIGH PLACES — ἠπουράνιος — “The lower heavens, or the heaven of the clouds” (Thayer, p. 247); “Of the lower heavens, the sky or air as the seat of evil spirits” (Zodhiates, CD); “To the heaven in which the sun, moon, and stars are located” (Bauer, p. 306).

The idea obtained from wrestling is the individual. It is not the whole army gathered and ganging up on the enemy. It is portrayed by this word (“**wrestling**”) as the individual effort it is. Each person is responsible for fighting the individual battles he must fight on a daily basis.

**“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”** (Luke 9:23).

He cannot use as an excuse for neglect of duty that there was no one else to fight with him. In and of itself to say such a thing would be a lie, for Deity will help him stand through the appropriation of all the armor spoken of in the rest of this chapter. Each person will be judged, not by what the community of believers does, but rather by what he has individually done.

**“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD”** (Romans 14:12, emphasis mine, RK).

The overall idea being expressed is of the battle one must fight against the Devil and his hosts. It is a battle for life or death. If one lets Satan win, he will die. Withstanding the Devil gives one the only life which matters.

**“What is a man profited, if he shall**

**gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul”** (Matthew 16:26).

The second thing to notice is that the warfare a Christian fights is not with physical weapons; it is not a carnal warfare.

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of GOD, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”** (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

This could be further illustrated by the scene in the garden of Gethsemane when Peter drew his sword and attacked Malchus (John 18:10-11). Notice what Jesus said to Peter when he did this.

**“Behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels”** (Matthew 26:51-53).

Further, when standing before Pilate, who had asked if He were a king, Jesus made this telling statement which shows His kingdom is not a physical one.

**“My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from**

**hence”** (John 18:36).

Rather, a Christian's warfare is a spiritual warfare against the forces of Satan. This warfare must be fought by a Christian whenever and wherever Satan attacks.

When it is considered that the Christian's warfare is not physical, it must be considered that even though it may be a human being who is advocating the error — the battle is not against the man himself. The battle is against the sin which the man promotes or in which he is engaged. Thus, one can love the sinner and hate the sin in which he participates.

The list given here of those a Christian fights (**“principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”**) does not refer to human authorities. The proof of this is seen in two phrases: (1) **“We wrestle not against flesh and blood,”** and (2) **“spiritual wickedness.”** This writer leaves it to the investigation of each reader as to the exact meaning of the terms used to describe the Christian's combatant (cf. definitions above). Two things which should be observed are that these opponents ultimately derive their power from Satan and that they are powerful. One should never underestimate the power of his spiritual opponents.

Eph. 6:13 **“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

“Wherefore take up the whole armor of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.” (ASV)

TAKE UNTO YOU ---• ναλαμβάνω — *“To take up (a thing in order to carry or use it)”* (Thayer, p. 39); *“To take up with the accessory idea of bearing”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Take up in order to carry”* (Bauer, p. 56).

TO WITHSTAND — • νθίστημι — *“To set against...to set one's self against, to withstand,*

resist, oppose” (Thayer, p. 45); “To stand against, resist, whether in deed or word” (Zodhiates, CD); “Set against; the forms occurring in our literature have the middle sense set oneself against, oppose, resist, withstand” (Bauer, p. 67).

EVIL — πονηρός — “Full of labors, annoyances, hardships; pressed and harassed by labors...bringing toils, annoyances, perils” (Thayer, p. 530); “Evil in a moral or spiritual sense, wicked, malicious, mischievous...In an act. sense, evil which corrupts others, evil-disposed, malevolent, malignant, wicked” (Zodhiates, CD); “Painful, virulent, serious...in the ethical sense wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate” (Bauer, p. 690).

HAVING DONE — κατεργάζομαι — “To perform, accomplish, achieve...having gone through every struggle of the fight” (Thayer, p. 339); “To work out; trans. to bring about, accomplish, to carry out a task until it is finished...To work up, make an end of, vanquish” (Zodhiates, CD); “Achieve, accomplish, do something...bring about, produce, create...overpower, subdue, conquer” (Bauer, p. 421).

The word “**wherefore**” is pointing back and carries the idea that because something is true, here is what one is supposed to do. In this case, it refers to the destructive forces which are determined to undermine and destroy the Christian. “So, Christian, start with putting on the armour GOD has supplied you so that you might survive the conflict.”

“**Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD.**” This is a repetition of the first part of verse eleven and thus becomes a strong emphasis for taking up this armor — a necessity. The word “**whole**” signifies all of the armor, not a few pieces of it, or most of it. To leave any part of the armor off is to give the Devil a place to strike and defeat a Christian.

The original word translated “**armour**” here has been transliterated into the English language as “panoply.” It means a FULL suit of armor.

*“The armor of the Roman soldier*

*included the shield, helmet, sword, lance, greaves (shin and calf guards for the legs), and the breastplate. Paul omits the lance or spear, suggesting that the sword is enough” (Caldwell, p. 311).*

The particular armor a Christian is to have is not physical armor, as indicated by the fact it comes from GOD. GOD has supplied what every Christian needs to protect himself against Satan’s attacks.

Why should Christians put on all the armor GOD has supplied for them? To make it possible for them to “**withstand in the evil day.**” It is not an “if you need it someday” but a “when you need it.” No Christian is going to escape the attacks of Satan. “**All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**” (2 Timothy 3:12). To “**withstand**” is to stand up to and resist.

When is a Christian to stand up and resist? “**In the evil day.**” This is not speaking about some specific day in history. Nor is it referring to the last day of time, for if one waits that long, it will be too late. Any day when man is tempted by Satan or attacked by Satan and his hosts is “**the evil day.**” One should remind himself that Satan is not going to announce ahead of time that on such-and-such a day and at such-and-such a time I is going to attack. The Christian has to be ready to withstand the attacks of Satan all the time. He never knows when he is going to attack. Therefore, after putting the armor on it cannot be taken off — it becomes his constant companion.

“**Having done all, to stand.**” The margin of my Bible says “*overcome*” in place of the word “**done.**” When the Christian armor has been put on and the foe is met and withstood, at the end of the battle the Christian is “**to stand.**” Here are two ideas which should be considered with regard to standing. (1) After fighting a battle with Satan and having successfully resisted and repelled his attacks, the Christian must continue to be on guard

because Satan is not going to give up. The Bible says that when he tempted Jesus and was repelled by Him, the Devil left Him **“for a season”** (Luke 4:13). This means he left Him alone for a little while, but he did not give up — after a time he returned to try again. Since this was true of his attempts to get the Son of GOD to fall, how much more is it true of weak and fallible man? (2) The primary idea in the present passage is the idea that, having fought and withstood the attacks of Satan, after the battle the Christian is still standing. He has been successful; he has been victorious. Each success makes the Christian stronger, more skillful in overcoming Satan’s attacks in the future — be assured they will come as long as one lives in this world.

**Eph. 6:14 “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”**

“Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,” (ASV)

STAND — ἕστημι — *“To stand ready or prepared”* (Thayer, p. 308); *“When used trans., the verb means to cause to stand, to place. When used intrans., it means to stand”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Stand still, stop”* (Bauer, p. 382).

LOINS — ἰσφύς — *“The hip (loin), as that part of the body where the ζώνη (girdle, belt, RK) was worn”* (Thayer, p. 457); *“Loin, the lower region of the back, the lumbar region, the hips as opposed to the shoulders and thighs, the organs of reproduction”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Waist, loins as the place where a belt or girdle is worn”* (Bauer, p. 587).

GIRT — περιζωννύω — *“To gird around; to fasten garments with a girdle...with truth as a girdle, figuratively i.q., to equip one’s self with knowledge of the truth”* (Thayer, p. 503); *“To gird or wrap around. In the NT, used only in the mid. or pass. meaning to wrap oneself around, to be wrapped around, spoken in reference to the long flowing garments of the Orientals which were pulled up and knotted at the waist for freedom of*

*movement”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Gird oneself...of the thing girded about one, gird oneself with something, bind something about oneself”* (Bauer, p. 647).

TRUTH — •λήθεια — *“What is true in any matter under consideration”* (Thayer, p. 26); *“Truth, reality; the unveiled reality lying at the basis of and agreeing with an appearance; the manifested, the veritable essence of matter”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Truthfulness, dependability, uprightness in thought and deed”* (Bauer, p. 35).

BREASTPLATE — θώραξ — *“The breast, the part of the body from the neck to the navel, where the ribs end...a breastplate or corselet consisting of two parts and protecting the body on both sides from the neck to the middle”* (Thayer, p. 294); *“A breastplate or armor covering the body from the neck to the thighs. It consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other the back”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Breastplate...the part of the body covered by the breastplate, the chest”* (Bauer, p. 367).

RIGHTEOUSNESS — δικαιοσύνη — *“Integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correction in thinking, feeling, and acting”* (Thayer, p. 149); *“Justice, righteousness”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Righteousness, uprightness”* (Bauer, p. 196).

Again the admonition is to **“stand”** (see verses 11 and 13). Three times in four verses the word **“stand”** is used to show the necessity of standing — not lying down in a lazy pose, not sitting in relaxation — but standing (prepared and ready). In other words, now that you have put the armor on — **MAKE YOUR STAND!**

**“Having your loins girt about with truth.”** Fields gives the following picture of a Roman soldier’s clothing to help us understand the significance of having the **“loins girt about.”**

*“The Roman soldier wore a military belt (Greek, zoster or zone; Latin, balteus). This secured the body armour at the waist and sometimes served as a sword belt. More often the sword was*

supported by a *baldric* over the left shoulder” (p. 190).

*“The belt was an essential part of the soldier’s equipment. Passing around his loins, it was of special use in keeping other parts of the armour in place and in securing the proper soldierly attitude and freedom of movement”* (Shepherd, p. 130).

This belt then seems to have the function of holding everything else in its place. What is it then that holds the Christian armor together? The truth. Pilate asked, **“What is truth?”** (John 18:38), and his question is a good one. There is only one answer to his question with regard to religion (spiritual matters). Truth is whatever GOD says about any matter. He is the only absolute source of truth.

**“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth”** (John 17:17).

Without the truth which comes from GOD, the rest of the armor described has no value. Thus, it is again pointed out that the Christian is to put this truth on, i.e., he is to learn the truth himself. It is not something someone else can do for him, neither does GOD put the belt of truth on him. It is something he must attain through diligent study.

*“No passage in all the Bible any more dramatically teaches the absolute necessity of the Christian’s thorough knowledge of the word of God. Not having it, he is naked, barefooted, bareheaded and helpless before the enemy”* (Coffman, p. 242).

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”** (Acts 20:32).

**“And having on the breastplate of righteousness.”** What is righteousness?

Righteousness is simply doing that which is right — not right according to a human standard, but right according to the standard GOD has given man. This concept is illustrated in the words of Luke 1:6, which speak about the parents of the forerunner of Christ — John.

**“They were both righteous before GOD, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”**

What made them righteous? They walked according (they lived by) to all the commandments and ordinances of GOD. Today when one strives to the best of his ability to walk according to the commands of the New Testament, GOD considers that one righteous.

**“All Thy commandments are righteousness”** (Psalm 119:172).

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”** (Matthew 5:6).

The basic concept of the breastplate is body armor which protects the vital organs of the soldier.

*“Some years ago King Alexander of Yugoslavia made an official visit to France. Before leaving his ship, he put on the full uniform of a navy admiral. However, his tunic did not fit neatly over the bulletproof vest, so he took off the vest. Thus, within a matter of minutes an assassin’s bullet pierced the king’s gorgeous uniform and the king was dead. His protection had been left behind. How many Christians are spiritually dead today because they left off the breastplate of righteousness (cf. 2 Peter 2:20-22)”* (McClish, p. 324).

When a Christian walks the walk of a disciple of Christ, he is protecting his heart from the assaults of Satan. As long as he involves himself in doing what GOD commands, he protects himself. It is when he stops doing

what GOD has commanded that he becomes vulnerable to losing his soul. When a Christian tries to live in two worlds, i.e., a part-time Christian, he is like a man who only puts on half of the body armor. This breastplate of righteousness is something the Christian must never take off.

**Eph. 6:15 “And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace;”**

“and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace;” (ASV)

SHOD — βποδέω — *“To under-band; mostly in the middle to bind under one’s self, bind on”* (Thayer, p. 643); *“To bind under, as sandals under the feet, to put on sandals, slippers, shoes”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Tie or bind beneath, put on”* (Bauer, p. 844).

PREPARATION — ετοιμασία — *“The act of preparing...the condition of a person or thing so far forth as prepared, preparedness, readiness”* (Thayer, p. 255); *“Preparation or a basis, foundation, firm footing as the noun is applied by the Septuagint...This intimates the firm and solid knowledge of the gospel in which the believer may stand firm and unmoved like soldiers in their military duty”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Readiness, preparation”* (Bauer, p. 316).

PEACE — ειρήνη — *“The tranquil state of soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is”* (Thayer, p. 182); *“Peace. Particularly in a single sense, the opposite of war and dissension...By implication, a state of peace, tranquility...Peace, meaning health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good”* (Zodhiates, CD).

**“And your feet shod.”** Using the example of the soldier, the Spirit directs Paul to speak of the feet. The feet of a soldier are very important to his ability to stand and fight an enemy. The boots of a modern soldier are made of materials and cleated in such a way as to allow his feet to have a good grip on the ground. He does not want his footing to be unsure in the time of battle. Just so, a

Christian must have full confidence in his footing when it comes time to fight his spiritual enemy. An important point to remember here is that when feet are **“shod”** that person is immediately ready to move when the need arises.

With what are the Christian’s feet to be shod? **“With the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”** Note the word **“preparation”** — the getting ready for the action GOD has commanded of His people. How does he get ready to fight Satan? It is the diligent study of GOD’s Word, the Gospel, which provides the foundation upon which a Christian may stand against all evil. Feet are used to allow one to advance, and so it is that GOD expects His people to advance — **GOspel**.

**“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”** (1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16).

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15).

With what kind of **GOspel** is a Christian’s feet to be shod? It is the **GOspel** of peace. Is it not interesting that peace is mentioned in connection with the attire of a soldier? A true soldier seeks peace, but prepares himself for war in the event peace cannot be attained through other methods. In the case of a Christian, it is not a matter of “if” war will break out, for the Devil will never give up against Christians. The attacks from him are going to come — it is simply a matter of “when.” Why does a Christian fight? To maintain peace between himself and GOD. He also fights in order to provide peace for the souls of anyone

who might listen to the Gospel he proclaims and obey it.

**“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy GOD reigneth”** (Isaiah 52:7).

There is also a peace within one who is **“strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”** and has withstood in the evil day. It is a peace which exists even in the midst of battle.

**“The peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:7).

*“The gospel is described here as ‘the gospel of peace.’ It was developed by the God of peace, given by the Prince of peace, it gives peace to the believer, creates peace among all its adherents, and leads to eternal peace in heaven”* (Winton, p. 109).

Eph. 6:16 **“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”**

“withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.” (ASV)

FAITH — πίστις — *“Conviction of the truth of anything, belief...in the N.T. of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it”* (Thayer, p. 512); *“Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively meaning that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Faith, trust. That which causes trust and faith...trust, confidence, faith in the active sense”* (Bauer, p. 662).

TO QUENCH — σβέννυμι — *“To extinguish, quench”* (Thayer, p. 572); *“To quench, extinguish...Figuratively to dampen, hinder, repress”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Extinguish, put out something”* (Bauer, p. 745).

FIERY — πυρόω — *“Made to glow...full of fire; fiery, ignited: darts filled with inflammable substances and set on fire”* (Thayer, p. 558); *“To ignite, set on fire”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Set on fire, burn up”* (Bauer, p. 731).

DART — βέλος — *“A missile, a dart, javelin, arrow”* (Thayer, p. 100); *“A missile weapon, e.g., a dart, arrow”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Arrow, flaming arrows”* (Bauer, p. 139).

WICKED — πονηρός — *“Bad, of a bad nature or condition...in an ethical sense, evil, wicked, bad, etc.”* (Thayer, p. 530); *“Evil in a moral or spiritual sense, wicked, malicious, mischievous”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Wicked or evil-intentioned person, evildoer”* (Bauer, p. 691).

**“Above all, taking the shield of faith.”**

Bristow states that there were basically two kinds of shields in the days of Paul. One was a small shield, and the other was a long shield (p. 53). This long shield would cover most of the body. In studying Roman military weapons, it is learned that these long shields were designed so that they could be interlocked with each other, thus creating a temporary wall against an enemy. A shield provides an extra layer of protection — a first line of defense, so to speak. Below, a more detailed description of the shield is given by Fields (p. 191).

*“The legionary’s shield was large and oblong, approximately 2 ½ feet by 4 feet...It was curved to fit the body...The shields were sometimes made of metal, and sometimes of wood covered on the outside with thick leather, which not only deadened the shock of the missile, but protected the frame of the shield from fire-tipped darts.”*

In the warfare of that time, it was not uncommon for arrows or darts to be launched

at an enemy which had pitch or some other item on the front of the weapon. This pitch was lit with the purpose of catching the soldier or his equipment on fire and causing intense pain.

One of the things pointed out by Litrell and which is quite important regarding this text is that *“All the Greek manuscripts have ‘the faith’ – tes pisteos. ‘The faith’ is the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9; Jude 3; Romans 3:27-31)”* (p. 457). Thus, as important as each individual’s faith is in protecting him against the assaults of the Devil, that is not what is under consideration here. It is the system of faith — GOD’s Word — which protects a Christian against Satan’s attacks. In other words, we are to take up GOD’s Word and use it as a shield against Satan’s attacks. This was clearly demonstrated by Jesus in Matthew chapter four when He was tempted by the Devil. Each attack in that case was thwarted by a **“It is written.”** It should always be remembered that true faith **only** comes through hearing the Word of GOD.

**“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD”**  
(Romans 10:17).

One of the things mentioned above by this writer is the fact that these shields could be linked together, creating a wall behind which a number of troops could be protected. It would seem that most of the time Satan’s attacks are upon the individual. But sometimes he attacks the whole body of believers, at which time the believers may lock their shields together for mutual protection (Examples: attacks of evolution, big bang theories, etc.).

Another thought with regard to this shield of the faith — note that the text says **all** of the armor GOD provides is to be put on to protect GOD’s soldier from Satan’s attacks. It is not enough to hold the shield of the faith. Even though this text is talking about GOD’s Word, the principle of it is a condemnation of the “faith only” doctrine.

**“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him”** (Psalm 28:7).

**“O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: He is their help and their shield”** (Psalm 115:9).

**“Every Word of GOD is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him”** (Proverbs 30:5).

It should be noted that some believe the faith spoken of here is each individual’s faith. It is this writer’s belief that since the context is speaking about the armor given by GOD to defend His people, it is His Word which must be taken up as a shield. Nevertheless it is also true that a Christian must develop his individual faith in order to withstand Satan.

**“Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”** (Hebrews 11:6).

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins”** (John 8:24).

**“Whatsoever is born of GOD overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”** (1 John 5:4).

Eph. 6:17 **“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD:”**

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD:”  
(ASV)

**SWORD — μάχαιρα — “A small sword, distinguished from the large sword...the**

**sword with which the Spirit subdues the impulses to sin and proves its own power and efficacy”** (Thayer, p. 393); **“A knife, slaughter-knife, a sword for cutting”** (Zodhiates, CD); **“Sword, saber”** (Bauer, p. 496).

*“The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament”* (Barnes, p. 131).

Regarding the helmet of soldiers, Fields gives the following information:

*“Helmets were of many styles. Some Greek helmets even had metal coverings over the face, leaving only the eyes exposed. Greek helmets were sometimes adorned with elegant plumes of horsehair.*

*The Roman legionary’s helmet had reinforcing bars crossing one another at the crown of the head. At the crossing of the bars there was a ring to support the crest. Most Roman helmets had hinged cheek guards. The helmets of officers had plumes of feathers or other materials”* (Fields, p. 190).

The helmet, of course, protects the head which is the seat of the mind which controls the entire body. A soldier whose brain was damaged would not be of much value to a commander in warfare. Just so, GOD has provided protection for the mind of His soldiers which is the promise of eternal salvation.

**“Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation”** (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

As long as a Christian keeps his mind firmly on GOD and the work GOD has assigned him to do, that man’s hope will get him to Heaven. It is when the mind is damaged by the attacks of Satan to think about ungodly things that

hope can disappear and the soldier be destroyed.

Considering the idea of hope, without hope there is no motivation to continue any warfare, whether one speaks of carnal or spiritual warfare. Where there is no hope there can be no victory. Without hope there is no reason to struggle against Satan. Hope is the anchor of the soul.

**“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil”** (Hebrews 6:19).

This hope, coupled with faith, gives Christians the ability to withstand, and no tribulation can overcome them. Such a soldier will not give up, compromise, or leave the Lord. For Christ **“will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”** (Hebrews 13:5).

*“The assurance of salvation, the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal salvation keep the Christian going when he is tempted and tried”* (Sheerer, p. 841).

**“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD.”** Fields gives the following description of a Roman sword:

*“In its heyday the Roman sword was about twenty-two inches long, double-edged, and perfectly straight, the point at quite an obtuse angle. It was worn on the right side, usually hanging from a sword belt (or baldric). Roman swords were made in Spain”* (p. 191).

Barnes, among other things, said this about the Roman sword:

*“The ancient sword was short, and usually two-edged, and resembled very much a dagger”* (p. 132).

This sword was designed so that, no matter which way it was used against an enemy, it would do damage. It would cut coming or going and could stab as well.

There is no way to get around the idea that a sword is primarily used as an offensive weapon. Yes. GOD has given man a weapon

to be used aggressively against a foe — Satan and all who are his allies. While not carnal, it is extremely powerful — the most powerful weapon in the world.

**“The Word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”** (Hebrews 4:12).

In point of fact, GOD’s Word is more powerful than any weapon which has or ever will be devised by man. Physical weapons may be used to subjugate people, but words are able to change their minds from being an enemy to being a fellow soldier or companion. It is words by which GOD draws men to Himself. The Word delivered by His Son and confirmed by the Spirit of GOD.

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”** (Romans 1:16-17).

**“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of GOD”** (1 Corinthians 1:18).

One of the things which should be learned regarding the provision of a sword is that it is not enough to stand in a defensive position. That would be like the one-talent man who did not use what he had and was condemned for not using it (Matthew 25:24ff). In 2010, there are far too many Christians who want to stand and do nothing, far too many elderships which simply “keep house” instead of trying to advance the cause of GOD’s kingdom on earth with **“the sword of the Spirit.”**

This spiritual sword, like a physical sword,

cannot be used effectively (with skill) without practice. It is not simply something one “holds in his hand” as the battle rages all around him. To be effective, it must be put into practice in one’s life and wielded against all sin. Such a weapon is able to open the hearts of mankind and cut away **“the sin which doth so easily beset”** him (Hebrews 12:1). Christians are to hunger after GOD’s Word in order to grow stronger themselves and then use it to convert the sinner and withstand the Devil.

**“Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”** (1 Peter 2:2).

When the sword GOD provides His people is used, nothing can stand in its way; nothing can overcome it. Is that not part of the point of Matthew chapter four when Satan was defeated by the Lord when He simply used GOD’s Word? Even Satan cannot overcome GOD’s Word, and that is why, when it was used effectively against him, he left Jesus for a season (Luke 4:13). When Christians do not successfully resist temptations, it is simply because they have not used GOD’s Word against that temptation.

*“All her (the church, RK) triumphs over sin and error have been accomplished through the word of God. So long as she uses this and relies on this alone, she goes forward conquering; but when she turns aside to reason, science, tradition, or the doctrines and commandments of men, then she is at the mercy of the adversary — the devil”* (Lipscomb, p. 134).

*“Sin will keep us from the Bible; but the Bible can keep us from sin”* (Whitlock, p. 328).

Another thought, as presented by Sheerer, is that for one to become a Christian, he must hear GOD’s Word (Romans 10:17). After he becomes a Christian, he must continue to listen to it and share it with others (Matthew 28:18-20).

**Eph. 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”**

“with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,” (ASV)

SUPPLICATION — δέησις — “A seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty; in the N.T. requests addressed by men to God” (Thayer, p. 126); “Want, need. In the NT, supplication or prayer for particular benefits, petition for oneself” (Zodhiates, CD); “Entreaty” (Bauer, p. 171).

WATCHING — ἀγρυπνέω — “To be sleepless, keep awake, watch...to be circumspect, attentive, ready...to be intent upon a thing” (Thayer, p. 9); “To abstain totally from sleep, to watch, wake, be awake. Spiritually, to be watchful and attentive to spiritual things” (Zodhiates, CD); “Keep oneself awake, be awake...keep watch over something = guard, care for it” (Bauer, p. 14).

One of the things to be noticed is that it is not enough to have the armor on which GOD supplies. Once the armor has been put on, the Christian must involve himself in prayer, watching, and perseverance. It does little by way of protection to put the armor on if that person then lays down to sleep.

Praying is basically communication which man makes to GOD. GOD has spoken to man today through His Word; He expects man to speak in return to him.

**“Pray without ceasing”** (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Why are men to pray to GOD on a continuing basis? Because there is power in prayer.

**“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** (James 5:16).

Prayer is basically an understanding that one cannot be victorious in spiritual matters without GOD’s help. Thus, it is an act of humility to approach GOD, because it is the bowing of a heart in the presence of a superior. One cannot accomplish the task by

himself; he needs GOD’s help.

**“Supplication”** is the aspect of prayer which more particularly deals with pleading, especially for that which is needed. One might say it is the earnest begging of GOD to supply those needs. Paul told the Philippian brethren, **“In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto GOD”** (4:6, ASV). When Satan attacks, and he will, there might be times when one will wonder if he can defeat Satan, if he can overcome his onslaughts. In the passage above, it is learned that through prayer, supplications and thanksgivings GOD will provide everything one needs, so there is no reason to fret over these things. Therefore, Christians should ask without doubting, in nothing wavering (James 1:6).

**“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting”** (1 Timothy 2:8).

**“My GOD shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:19).

Are there people whose prayers GOD will not hear?

**“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear”** (Psalm 66:18).

**“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination”** (Proverbs 28:9).

**“Now we know that GOD heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of GOD, and doeth His will, him He heareth”** (John 9:31).

Prayer and supplications are to be **“in the Spirit.”** There are at least two possible meanings for this phrase. (1) Some believe this is talking about the individual’s spirit, which would mean that they are to come from the heart. (2) Others believe (this writer

included) that this means relying on the help of the Spirit and in accordance with the Scriptures which He gave man for guidance in all things, including prayer.

**“This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us”** (1 John 5:14).

**“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”** (Romans 8:26).

The word **“watching”** means *“to be sleepless,”* which refers to someone who is attentive with regard to those things around him — he is on guard. He is a soldier in the Lord’s army, and vigilance is absolutely necessary against the surprise attacks launched by his enemy — Satan.

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (1 Peter 5:8).

How shall the Christian’s prayer life and vigilance be accomplished? With *“perseverance.”* Perseverance is steadfastness, continuing on, never giving up no matter the difficulties which he will face. He will carefully guard his soul on a constant basis, ever ready to fight the battles.

The faithful soldier will also make **“supplication for all saints.”** He will not be selfish. He will recognize his own needs and pray for them to be met, but he also recognizes his fellow soldiers have needs as well. None are perfect; all need the help that GOD can supply.

Why should one pray for his fellow Christian? (1) Because they are brethren. (2) Because all sin and need GOD’s forgiveness. (3) Because knowing others are praying for him in times of trial helps one to remain strong. (4) Because some are struggling,

possibly even dying.

*“We pray for forgiveness, for safety, for strength, for health, for support in times of grief and loss, for physical blessings and prosperity, and for many other wonderful favors from God”* (Caldwell, p. 319).

Eph. 6:19 **“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel,”**

*“And on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel,”* (ASV)

**UTTERANCE — λόγος — “A collecting, collection, and that, as well as those things which are put together in thought, as of those which, having been thought, i.e., gathered together in the mind, are expressed in words”** (Thayer, p. 380); **“Intelligence, word as the expression of that intelligence, discourse, saying, thing”** (Zodhiates, CD).

**BOLDLY — παρρησία — “Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech...openly, frankly, i.e., without concealment: without ambiguity or circumlocution...free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance”** (Thayer, p. 491); **“Freedom or frankness in speaking. NT meanings: freedom in speaking all that one thinks or pleases; confidence or boldness, particularly in speaking; plainness or exactness of speech; openness, speaking publicly; freedom, liberty; being in the public eye rather than being concealed”** (Zodhiates, CD); **“Outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing... ‘Openness’ something develops into openness to the public, before whom speaking and actions take place...courage,**

**confidence, boldness, fearlessness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank” (Bauer, p. 630).**

Note that Paul asked for the prayers of his brethren. But, also notice that he did not ask for them to pray for his well-being, though one may be assured he coveted those kinds of prayers as well.

*“It is noteworthy that this man in prison does not request prayers for his release, good food, a better bed, or other such things” (Whitlock, p. 332).*

What was most important to him was having the opportunity to teach the Gospel and that he might boldly take advantage of whatever opportunity was afforded him. This should be what every Christian desires — the opportunity, privilege and boldness to proclaim the salvation needed by all of mankind. It should be remembered that at this time Paul was a prisoner in Rome simply because he was a Christian (Colossians 4:3). This fact alone would require boldness to keep preaching the Gospel of Christ.

**“Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of GOD with boldness” (Acts 4:29-31).**

Lipscomb made the following pertinent remarks about Paul:

*“He prayed to be strengthened and guarded against the weaknesses and dangers that beset him” (p. 135).*

Paul was a man, a mortal man like any other, who had weaknesses, fears and failings. From his life it is seen that he was a brave man in the face of many dangers. Yet, even

the strongest men are susceptible to failure under the attacks of Satan. Paul had many enemies and faced much adversity in his life, and sometimes those who endure such give up the fight. The temptation is ever before GOD’s people to weaken their stance in order to be politically correct or to avoid any kind of conflict. Take for example Elijah in First Kings chapter nineteen, when his faith became weak and he fled from Jezebel. Or, what about Peter on the night the Lord was tried before the Jewish leaders, when he denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26), even though previously he had said he would die with the Lord.

**“Peter said unto him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all the disciples” (Matthew 26:35).**

**“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).**

Like Paul, all need to pray often for the ability to see the opportunities before them, the strength to overcome the many weaknesses one has, and the boldness to proclaim the truth **“in season, out of season”** (2 Timothy 4:2).

*“Men now as often fail to preach the whole truth of God with boldness and fullness, because it is unpopular and excites opposition of the public, as it did in apostolic days from fear of imprisonment and death. Courage to preach boldly and fully the whole truth of God is the crying need of preachers and teachers of God’s Word” (Lipscomb, p. 136).*

**“Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. But the**

**Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3).**

**Eph. 6:20 “For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”**

“for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (ASV)

AMBASSADOR — πρεσβεύω — *“To be older, prior by birth or in age, to be an ambassador, act as an ambassador”* (Thayer, p. 535); *“To be aged, elderly. In the NT, to be or act as an ambassador”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Be an ambassador or envoy, travel or work as an ambassador”* (Bauer, p. 699).

Ambassador — *“An official envoy; especially: a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment”* (Webster, CD).

BONDS — — λυσίς — *“A chain, bond, by which the body, or any part of it (the hands, feet), is bound”* (Thayer, p. 29); *“Chains for the hands or feet, manacles, shackles... Figuratively, meaning bonds, imprisonment, state of custody... may allude to the custom of the Romans who usually (as we learn from Josephus, Seneca, and Athenaeus) confined prisoners not only by shutting them up in prison, but also by chaining their right arm to the left arm of a soldier who guarded them”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“Chain...imprisonment”* (Bauer, p. 41).

One of the things this writer would like to comment on here is the fact that some speak of Christians today as being “ambassadors for Christ.” Let it be clearly stated that Christians today are not ambassadors for Christ! The apostles were the ambassadors of Christ, having been chosen personally to fulfill a role which no other Christian could fulfill and sent forth with power (Acts 2) to accomplish their assigned mission. Yes, Christians have also

been given a mission to perform, but like a regular diplomat who has been given a mission, their authority is limited and does not attain the level of an ambassador. The “average” Christian was not told, **“Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven”** (Matthew 18:18). That specific authority was given only to the ambassadors of Christ — the apostles of Christ.

*“An ambassador is a representative of a reigning sovereign or head of state, who personally receives and delivers the messages of the sovereign”* (Wallace, p. 230).

It should also be pointed out that this word is found only twice in the New Testament, here and in Second Corinthians 5:20. In both cases it refers to the apostles and no others.

An ambassador has special privileges which allow him freedom to come and go. He represents a nation at its highest level, and to be badly treated by the host nation is an insult to the ruler and nation he represents. It is unthinkable for an ambassador to be placed in prison or put in bonds. Yet, here is one of the ambassadors of Christ, sovereign king of the universe, chained and made a prisoner.

The word **“bonds”** comes from the Greek word which means specifically *“chains”* and figuratively means imprisonment. We know that Paul was allowed to have his own house and the freedom to speak to whomever he desired.

**“Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him”** (Acts 28:30).

Thus, it is likely he was chained to a soldier, as was the Roman custom in such cases. It is similar to the modern adaptation of this, where a person is confined to house arrest with a monitor attached to his ankle.

**“For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the**

**hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20).**

Those who were chained in this manner had their right wrist chained to a Roman soldier’s left wrist. Fields states, *“The chain was of such length that the two could walk together with ease, wherever the apostle’s affairs called him”* (p. 199).

Here is an interesting question to consider. Since Paul was probably chained to a soldier twenty-four hours a day, and since these soldiers were rotated every four or six hours, who was the real prisoner here? Talk about a captive audience! Since Paul was a prisoner on at least two occasions for two years (Acts 24:27; 28:30), how many soldiers would he have been able to teach? Consider how many may have obeyed the Gospel and then taken it to their families, other posts, et cetera. Even in the worst of places and conditions, the Gospel can and must be proclaimed. Consider the case of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16).

What did Paul want the brethren to do? Pray that he might boldly speak the Gospel of Christ, i.e., speak forth openly without constraint. This is needful in every circumstance. Christians ought to speak out, not being afraid to proclaim GOD’s message when people like it and when they do not. No matter what threat may be rendered toward one, his responsibility is to be faithful to the Lord; thus, boldly proclaim His truths. After all, what can man do to Christians?

**“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:27-28).

One of the greatest needs in every generation is for GOD’s people, all of GOD’s people, not to be afraid to proclaim GOD’s Word to a lost and dying world. Not to speak out is a sin!

GOD’s people must remember that it ultimately does not matter what people think of them — all that truly matters is what GOD thinks of them!

The word **“ought”** should also be considered in this request. It indicates an obligation with regard to what is necessary. Paul’s interest was in the souls of others. If those souls were to be saved, he had to speak what was necessary to accomplish that end.

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

“But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.” (ASV)

Who was Tychicus? Paul describes him in two ways. (1) A beloved brother, and (2) A faithful minister in the Lord. It is obvious from this that he and Paul had spent time together, and his affection had grown for Tychicus. Considering Paul’s great love for the Lord, it is of little wonder that he would feel this way about Tychicus. This is the way Christians should feel about their fellow laborers in the Lord’s kingdom anytime that laborer shows the kind of faithfulness Tychicus had. That he was greatly trusted by Paul is known from other references found in the Scriptures. In this text he was entrusted with carrying this letter to the Ephesian brethren. From Acts 20:4, it is known that Tychicus was originally from Asia; thus, it is fitting that he would deliver this letter to the city which was the capital of this province. It is also known that he was entrusted to carry the letter to the Colossians (4:7). From Titus 3:12, it is seen

that he might have been sent by Paul to replace Titus in Crete, so that Titus could come to him at Nicopolis.

This letter to Ephesus was a teaching letter. Since Tychicus was delivering it, and since he had been a close companion of Paul, he would be able to give them a first-hand account of Paul and how he was fairing as a prisoner. At this point, remember the last time the Christians had seen Paul (Acts 20:17-38). Paul had called for the elders of Ephesus to come to him. He gave them instructions regarding the church for which they were to care, and then gave them the news that he would not see them again in this world. That text ends with, **“they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more”** (vv. 37-38). It is obvious from that text that Paul was greatly loved among them. Thus, it would be natural that, when they heard he had been imprisoned, they would have been greatly grieved and concerned for his well-being. Tychicus was to relieve their anxieties on his behalf by telling them how Paul was doing and what he was doing.

Why would Tychicus report these things? So that their hearts would be comforted. He did not want them to be worried about him, but rather to know that he was busy in the Lord's work. Paul was not throwing a pity party for himself because he had been imprisoned. Instead, he was busy doing the work of the Lord, teaching as many people as he could (Acts 28:23-24, 30-31). He also wrote a number of what are called his “prison epistles” to the brethren, which GOD saw fit to be handed down as instruction for all generations, Ephesians being one of those letters.

**Eph. 6:23 “Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from GOD the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

“Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith,  
from GOD the Father and the Lord Jesus

Christ.” (ASV)

In his closing remarks, Paul mentions his four favorite words: **“peace,” “love,” “faith,”** and **“grace.”** His letter thus ends in simple encouragement for them to “keep on keeping on.” Never, never give up the Christian life of faith, peace, love and accept the grace GOD offers. Just as it did with Paul, these things will see us through to the end.

*“The peace that passes all understanding, the love that is the greatest of the three greatest, and the faith that overcomes the world, these three precious treasures are given away to anyone who sincerely requests them of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Hendriksen, p. 286).

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