

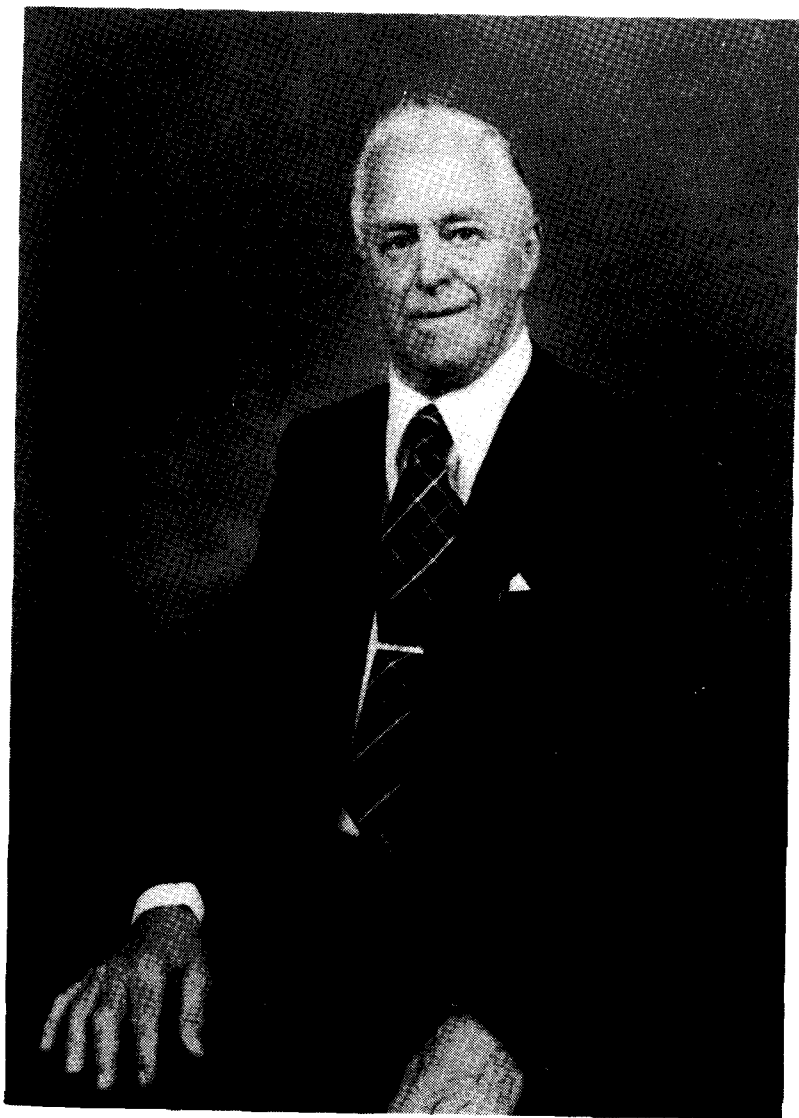
**THE
COLLECTED
WRITINGS
OF
J.B. HEWITT**

Volume 2

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J.B. HEWITT

A brief account of the life and work of J.B. Hewitt
appears in volume one.

Publishers Note

It was Don Roberts of Cardiff who requested we make available the writings of J.B. Hewitt. He also obtained the MSS from various sources and this came to us in different forms: magazine articles, booklets, typewritten notes, and notes transcribed from tapes. Some of this has been difficult to transfer into print.

There is much of interest and profit in Mr. Hewitt's written ministry and we believe that many readers, old and new, with different tastes will all enjoy and value at least some of the variety which includes expository, devotional, prophetic and practical articles with outlines and alliteration.

Although much editing has been done the publishers are aware that the work is still imperfect.

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The assistance offered by so many has been beyond my expectations.

Don Roberts

Outline of John's Gospel

Writer: Apostle John. **Date:** AD 90-95. **Plan:** "to give eternal life."

Purpose: ch.20:30-31.

1. THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON DECLARED, chs.1-4.
The Features of Life—His Deity.
 2. THE GREATNESS OF HIS POWER DISPLAYED, chs.5-12.
The Fulness of Light—His Authority.
 3. THE GENEROSITY OF HIS PROVISION DISCERNED, chs.13-17.
The Fellowship of Loyalty—His Jealousy.
 4. THE GRACE OF HIS PASSION DESCRIBED, chs.18-21.
The Fidelity of Love—His Sufficiency.
-

A. THE FEATURES OF LIFE chs.1-4 "His Deity Exhibited"
The prologue ch.1:1-18—"Life eternal".

The Divine Revelation of the Word vs.1-5

Absolute eternity, intimate equality, distinct personality, definite parity
v.2
dynamic power v.3
divine prerogative v.4
declared presence v.5.

The Historic Manifestation vs.6-13

The light of the world vs.6-9
provision of light v.6
purpose of it v.7
preparation of it v.8
perfection of it v.9.
the lover of men vs.10-13
He is revealed v.10
rejected v.11
received vs.12-13.

The Human Apprehension vs.17-18

The Lord of glory vs.14-15
Incarnation v.14a

presentation v.14b
 recognition v.15
 appreciation v.16
 declaration vs.17-18.

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“His Life Expressed”

The testimony of John ch.1:19-34
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 superiority vs.25-28
 sufficiency vs.29-34.
 testimony of followers vs.34-51
 The Lord attractive vs.35-40
 appreciated vs.41-44
 acknowledged vs.45-51.

The triumph of the Lord, ch.2

“Life Exhibited”

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 His ministry of transformation in public life vs.13-17
 His ministry of purification in national life vs.18-25
 His ministry of revelation v.22.

The teaching of the Lord ch.3

“Life Explained”

The Instructor of supernatural knowledge vs.1-13
 The Interpreter of celestial love vs.14-21
 The Imparter of spiritual truth vs.22-36.

Testing by the Lord, ch.4

“Life Experienced”

The preparation is useful vs.1-6
 Conversion is helpful vs.7-14
 Emmulation is hurtful vs.15-18
 Adoration is spiritual vs.19-28
 Declaration is effectual vs.29-30
 Instruction is beneficial vs.31-38
 Verification is personal vs.39-42
 Illumination is vital vs.43-54.

B. THE FULNESS OF LIGHT chs.5-12 “His Authority Disputed”

The Lord energising a weak man, ch.5

“Light essential”

The sign at the pool vs.1-9
 The man's infirmity, expectancy, liberty and testimony.
 The sin of the people vs.10-18
 critical v.16

contentious v.12
 callous v.16
 cruel v.18
 The sermon preached vs.19-47.
 The work of the Father vs.19-30
 Equality in power v.21
 honour v.23
 life v.26.
 The witness of the trustworthy vs.32-46
 of the Spirit v.30.
 The Father v.37
 The scriptures vs.39-44
 Moses vs.45-47.

The Lord enriching needy souls ch.6

“Light its evidence”

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 The perishing world vs.1-5
 The powerless disciples vs.7-9
 The perfect Saviour vs.10-14.
 The Saviour of saints vs.15-25
 caring v.15
 worrying vs.17-18
 controlling vs.19-20
 assuring v.21.
 The significant message vs.26-59
 discourse vs.26-28
 discussion vs.29-40
 dissatisfaction vs.41-51
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 During the feast vs.14-36
 Closing the feast vs.37-52.
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 Antagonism exposed vs.19-29
 Arresting the mind vs.30-36

Attracting the heart vs.37-39
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 The curious public vs.8-12
 The cowardly people vs.13-22
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 The callous mistreatment v.34.
 The comforting revelation vs.35-38.
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 Approved by God vs.27-34
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 By the presence of the Spirit vs.15-17
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 Provides them with help vs.7-15
 Perceives their perplexity vs.16-23
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“His Propitiation”
 “Love envisaged”

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 Abandoned by Peter vs.15-25
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“Behold the man”

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“His pastoral ministry”

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 Evidential vs.11-18
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Lord of my labour vs.1-6
 of light v.9
 of supply vs.10-14
 of love vs.15-17
 of my life vs.18-19
 of my will vs.20-25.

John

Christ is All and in All in John 1

v.1 Equal with God	v.33 Baptizer with the Spirit
vs.3,10 Creator of Universe	vs.36,43 Magnet of Saints
vs.4,5,9 Illuminator of men	v.39 Centre of attraction
v.11 Stranger among his own	v.42 Transformer of lives
v.12 Giver of Life	vs.47,48 Discerner of Character
v.16 Dispenser of Grace	v.50 Encourager of Faith
v.29 Remover of Sin	v.52 Ladder of Communication

Notes on John 2

We see here that Christ acts like God and thus reveals His Deity in a threefold way:

1. The Bringer of Joy, vs.1-12. Revealing His Unlimited Power.
 2. The Searcher of Hearts, vs.13-22. Revealing His Uncompromising Righteousness.
 3. The Reader of Thoughts vs.23-25. Revealing His Unerring Insight.
- He is sufficient for our Social life, vs.1-12. He Demonstrates His Power. He is supreme in our Religious life, vs.13-22. He Demands Purity. His supremacy over our Intellectual life, vs.23-25. He Detects Pretence. As the Messiah we have here His first public miracle and manifestation. And He found this enslaved nation, God's people: Socially Barren, vs.1-11; Ecclesiastically Formal, vs.13-22; Morally Weak, vs.23-25.

And so they failed to see His glory, reject His claims, and lose His blessing.

“If Any Man”

1. SALVATION	“enter in” John 10:9
2. SAFETY	“any man sin” 1 John 2:1-2
3. SEPARATION	“love the world” 1 John 2:15-16
4. SWEET FELLOWSHIP	“hear my voice” Rev. 3:20
5. SATISFACTION	“thirst” John 7:37
6. SELF SACRIFICE	“take up his cross” Matt. 16:24
7. SERVICE	“serve Me” John 12:24-26

John 3:22 to 36

The witness of John the Baptist vs.25 to 30

- a. the *association* of John. Not as a rival, but in preparation.
 - b. the *temptation* of John i.e. to exalt himself, but, He must increase.
 - c. the *incarceration* of John v.24.
-
- a. John's *consciousness* v.27, the impotence and ignorance of man apart from divine aid.
 - b. John's *consistent* testimony v.28
 - c. John's *complete* joy
 - i. *recognition* the bridegroom
 - ii. *association* friend
He arranged the wedding, took out the invitations, presided at the wedding, brought bride and groom together.
 - iii. *satisfaction* joy fulfilled
 - iv. *consecration* he fades into obscurity

The reflection of the evangelist vs.31 to 36

His *illuminating* testimony to:

the deity of Christ.

the Lord's *incarnation* 'cometh from above'

immeasurable superiority 'is above all'

infallibility 'God is true'

infinite union with God 'Father loveth the Son'

invincibility 'all things into His hand'

imparting of life 'hath everlasting life'

infliction of punishment 'the wrath of God'

John 4:35

Missionary Work

'Lift up your eyes'

1. The **inward** look of Missionary **Preparation** 'Behold, I say unto you'
2. The **upward** look of Missionary **Intercession** 'Lift up your eyes'
3. The **outward** look of Missionary **Operation** 'Look on the fields'

John 13-17

His Priestly Ministry of Love

Ch.13 Love Exemplified in Christ

ACKNOWLEDGE HIM

- Relationship is sweet v.1
- Resources are sufficient v.3
- Revealed service vs.4-12
- Response to the Saviour vs.13-17
- Revelation is searching vs.18-30
- Recognised by saints vs.31-35

Ch.14 Love Enriched by Communion

AFFECTION FOR HIM

- Prospect of glory vs.1-3
- Privilege of access vs.4-11
- Prayer in His Name vs.12-14
- Presence of the Spirit vs.15-17
- Promises of the Lord vs.18-24
- Provision of truth vs.25-26
- Peace for our hearts vs.27-31

Ch.15 Love Exhibited in Conduct

ABIDE IN HIM

- Abiding in the vine* vs.1-8
- Association v.1
- Condition v.4
- Production v.8
- Rejoicing in His love* vs.9-11
- Enjoyed v.9
- Enriched v.11
- Loving one another* vs.12-17
- Commanded v.12
- Exhibited v.13
- Expected
- Suffering for the Lord* vs.18-24
- Hated v.18
- Persecuted v.20
- Rejected v.24

Witnessing for the Master vs.25-27

Power v.26

Privilege v.27

Ch.16 Love Encouraged by Communication

ASSOCIATE WITH HIM

Prepares them for persecution vs.1-2

Trouble within v.1

Terror without v.2

Provides them with help vs.7-15

Reproving vs.8-10

Revealing vs.13-15

Perceives their perplexity vs.16-24

Separation vs.16-17

Sorrow vs.20-21

Satisfaction vs.22-24

Promises them protection vs.25-33

Confirming v.27

Cheering vs.28-29

Conquering v.33

Ch.17 Love Established in Consecration

ADORE HIM

Revelation vs.1-5

His claims vs.1,3

His control v.2

His completion v.4

Preservation vs.6-16

Provision vs.6-8

Plea vs.9-11

Purpose vs.11,13

Power vs.12,14,15

Sanctification vs.17-19

The means v.17

The mission v.18

The model v.19

Unification vs.20-22

Desired v.20

Design v.21

Displayed v.22

Glorification vs.24-26

Requested v.24

Realised v.26

John 16

In John 13 The saints are *encouraged*.

John 14 *enriched*.

John 15 *educated*.

John 16 *enabled and equipped* by the Holy Spirit coming to them.

There are seven aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in this chapter.

1. *vs. 1 to 4* The Spirit's **enabling** power for **courage** and for **conflict**.

They will need all the power that the Spirit gives, thinking of such examples as Stephen.

2. *vs. 5 to 9* The Spirit's **enriching** power for **comfort**.

I am going away, you are going to be distressed, you will have much grief, and sorrow will fill your heart. But remember that my going away will be mean the sending of the Holy Spirit, and He will make good to you all that I have been to you while I have been here. And you will not only be encouraged, but you will, in all circumstances and under every difficulty, know something of the comfort and cheer that the Holy Spirit brings. Now that is the relation of the Spirit to the saint.

3. *vs. 8 to 11* The Spirit's **exposing** power of **conviction**.

Here is His work in the world. In that work, He reminds us of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, for the Devil will be judged. In these three things the Holy Spirit will stress the *character, courage and conquest* of the Lord Jesus over the Devil. So the sinner is exposed and convicted in that self-same ministry. The righteousness of the Lord Jesus will be confirmed, the sin that they have committed will be conveyed to them, and lead either to disaster or repentance. The victory over the Devil will be guaranteed in a coming day, and we will be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.

4. *vs. 12 to 15* The Spirit's **enlightening** power for the **comprehension** of truth.

The truth of God has to be *explained* to us by the Holy Spirit. There are six things in these verses that we will look at later relative to the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. *vs. 15 to 22* The Spirit's **engaging** our hearts with **Christ**.

He reminds them that He is going away. He speaks of the little while, a

little while of lamentation. It will be victory as far as the world is concerned, the death, or rather the murder of the Lord Jesus by the men of the world will bring their terrible desolation. Now that little while takes in the death, the burial, and I believe the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Then, there is another little while, and He reminds them that their joy will be full. That is the little while of satisfaction. I think that takes in the resurrection ministry of the Lord Jesus, and the present ministry of the Holy Spirit for the saints, for the child of God, and for the servant of God.

He will not speak of Himself, but what He receives He will communicate to you, and will show all things that are embodied in Christ, and expressed in His teaching, once He has returned to the Father.

6. *vs.23 to 27* The Spirit's **interceding** power for **confidence**.

Their prayers will be answered (v.23). The truth of God will be revealed (v.24). Their joy will be full, and there are other things that follow reminding us of the interceding power of the Lord Jesus and of the Holy Spirit that will bring them confidence.

7. *vs.28 to 33* The Spirit's **overcoming** power for **conquest**.

Almost His last words are these: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. In verse 28, which is part of His message, the Lord makes a tremendous statement when He utters these four things:

- a. I came forth from the Father That is John 1 vs.1 to 18 and refers to the advent of Christ by His incarnation. He came into this world. The *eternal* Christ. This is John 1:20 to the end of ch.12.
- b. I leave the world The teaching of ch.13 to almost the close of ch.20. I go to the Father is emphasised in chs.20 and 21.
- c. I am not alone Ascended to the Father, and seated at His right hand.
- d. I have overcome the world Speaking of the cross q.v. Jn.12 vs.31 to 33.

The four items relative to the work of the Holy Spirit are:

- a. *prepares* them for persecution.

He tells them the truth. He reminds them of the error that will be in the world, and the evil that they will have to face, and gives them courage to suffer like the Lord Jesus Himself.

- b. *provides* them with help.

He assures them of the coming of the Holy Spirit after His departure to the Father; all that the Spirit will do relative to the sinner, relative to the saint, and relative to the scriptures. So He provides them with abundant help.

c. *perceives* their perplexities.

They can't understand 'this little while', going away, and then coming again. He goes on to explain that a woman with child has sorrow and joy that a man is born into the world. He then reminds them that with all the persecution they will pass through, there will be a day of jubilation and satisfaction through the resurrection ministry and His priestly ministry at God's right hand.

d. *promises* them protection.

This is by His going to the Father, revealing to them who He is. They appreciate that and understand that He came from God. That must have delighted His heart.

Firstly, He prepares them for persecution and reminds them that they will be tested.

vs. 1 and 2 He encourages them.

vs. 3 and 4 He establishes them.

vs. 5 and 6 He enriches them.

He reminds them, they will put you out of the synagogues. The time cometh when they think by killing the saints, they are doing the will of God. That was demonstrated in the life and activity of Saul of Tarsus. You will be exposed to the hatred, the animosity, and the opposition that marks the world, because they don't know Me, and they don't know my Father. Now, He says, I have been with you from the beginning, and because of that I have told you these things. But now I go away, and none of you asked me, 'whither goest Thou?'.

So, there is going to be trouble without from the world, and it is from the religious world in the early days of the Acts of the Apostles, and then it is from the political world, as seen in the opposition of Rome, to Peter and to Paul and the other apostles. So, here is trouble from within: they are perplexed, distressed, depressed. They are afraid to look into the future. So, He reminds them they have nothing to fear, everything is in God's hands. I am sending to you the Holy Spirit, who will *encourage* you, *establish* you, and *enrich* you.

So, He prepares them for the trouble that will lie ahead and for persecution. What they did to John the Baptist, and what they did to others through the animosity of the religious leaders of that day, they used Saul more or less to bring havoc and desolation and destruction to the church. They lost sight of one thing at least; if God be for us, who can be successfully against us. One with God is always a majority. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. We are not fighting *for* victory; that was achieved by the death and the resurrection of Christ. We are now fighting *from* victory. We can say with Paul; thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, how are we provided with help? We refer back to the ministry of the

Spirit. Now, the Gospel of John is peculiar in this respect, relative to the others Gospel, as to the ministry of the Spirit. There are four aspects of His work in this Gospel:

ch. 3 The *incoming* Spirit, which effects the regeneration of our lives.

ch. 4 The *indwelling* Spirit, v. 14 also in Romans and Ephesians.

ch. 7 The *outflowing* Spirit, vs. 38 and 39.

ch. 16 The *witnessing* Spirit.

Now what does the Holy Spirit do in relation to the saved in these chapters?

ch. 14 It is a *reminding* ministry. 'He will bring all things to your remembrance.'

ch. 15 It is a *witnessing* ministry, to the world.

ch. 16 It is a *teaching* ministry, to the saints.

So there He sets before them their encouragement, and provides them with every help. Now, how is this possible?

The Holy Spirit cannot come until I go back to My Father. So, there must be humanity passing into heaven, before the Holy Spirit can descend upon humanity. So, there is a man who has carried humanity to the throne of God, our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of Man; and He sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all those who believe. So, reminding them of His *departure*, then of their *depression*, here is the Spirit's *descent*.

v. 7 The first thing He reminds them there, regarding the Holy Spirit, is this; He is an ambassador to represent Me in the world, and in your life. He is sent as an ambassador by the Father and the Lord Jesus for the saints.

v. 8 In relation to the world, He is a reprove of sin. To convict, or reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

v. 13 In relation to the saints, He will guide you into all truth, and show you things to come. He is going to be a Servant to help them to live as well as understand the truth of God.

v. 14 Here, He is the teacher; He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you.

v. 15 He will be a friend who will remain with you.

So, the Holy Spirit comes as an ambassador, as a reprove, as a guide, as a servant, as a teacher, and as a friend.

Here is the *character* of the Spirit: He is the Spirit of truth. What are the characteristics of His ministry? He will do these three things:

1. *uncover* sin

2. *unveil* the Lord Jesus

3. *unfold* the truth of God

v. 11 The title, the prince of this world, is used of the Devil. We are reminded in this verse that he is the prince of the *political* world.

In 2 Corinthians he is the prince of the *religious* world.

He will be the prince of the *material* world.

The prince of this world is judged. This is not something He is doing

today, that took place when He died on the cross, and was raised again for our justification. So the Devil is a defeated foe. His designs have all been destroyed. He will have his day, possibly, during the tribulation period when the church is gone. But at the end of that period, we are reminded in Revelation 20 that he will be locked up for a thousand years. So, whether it is the Devil in ch. 16, whether it be the flesh in ch. 13 and 14, we have power by the indwelling Spirit, we have power by the intercession of Christ, and the victory achieved at Calvary is the guarantee of victory all along the way. Everyday we can be victorious Christians, if we are living in touch with our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 10 'Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more'.

This is the *character* of Christ; He is the holy one of God.

Here is the *conquest* of Christ; The prince of this world is judged.

Here is His *claim* as the Son of God. I go to My Father.

The Lord Jesus will be victorious; God will be vindicated.

vs. 16 to 22. Here, the Lord Jesus sees their perplexity. The 'little while' refers to the death and the burial of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then He says: 'a little while, and ye shall see Me'. I believe that is the priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus in resurrection, and on ten occasions He appeared to different individuals to bring them:

comfort

companionship as seen on the road to Emmaus. He walked with them.

commission as seen in Matthew 28. 'Go ye into all the world . . .'

confidence He conveys to them His power, not only in resurrection, but eventually by His going to the Father's right hand.

Now that brings them perplexity. Separation is indicated: 'I am going away'. You will feel lost, you will be lonely. But, remember what I taught: look to me at God's right hand, and I will bring you through. So, here is a new revelation in resurrection: I will come to you. Now, some interpret that, in the light of the teaching of the Holy Spirit as seen in ch. 14 that we have a glimpse here of the resurrection ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All things are to *comfort* them

consolidate them

cheer them

be their *companion*

commission them in His service.

convince them that they are winning, and victorious.

Wherever you go, wherever this message is preached, God will honour it by the work of the Holy Spirit, and men and women will be saved, and churches will be established, and the saints will be enriched. So there is an aspect of the Lord Jesus coming to them in resurrection.

v. 22 "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and

your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” I love these words: ‘I will see you again’. How cheering, how comforting! Here is the wealth of the ministry of the Lord Jesus in resurrection, and it will give them a joy that no man can take away from them. Happiness depends upon life’s circumstances; joy depends upon communion with my Lord Jesus Christ. Whether I am passing through tribulation, or deep sorrow, that joy can fill my heart, if I can engage with the Man at God’s right hand. We must keep looking up, for God is still on the throne. Everything is in the hands of the Lord Jesus. Then we must keep looking in at the holy Word of God, and find there guidance and encouragement that will bring us peace, and joy.

v.23 Now one of the encouragements in that day is that, ‘ye shall ask me nothing. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you’. So what do we have in the present day in the absence of the Lord Jesus?

We have a clear knowledge of truth

The Holy Spirit not only *inspires* the Word, but only the Spirit can *interpret* the Word of God. Books give *information*, but the Holy Spirit gives *revelation*. The Holy Spirit is given to us individually, and collectively that we might interpret the Word of God.

We shall have answered prayer

v.26 ‘At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say unto you that I will pray the Father for you’.

We shall have richer love

v.27 ‘For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.

Notice how He officiates then. ‘The Father Himself loveth you’. That’s not taught in the Old Testament. That’s not taught in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. It is the exclusive teaching of the Spirit’s ministry as seen here in the Gospel of John, later on in the Acts, and in the epistles.

‘Ye have loved me’. The first thing in v.27 would emphasise:

Relationship A new revelation. God is your Father.

Fellowship Because ye have loved Me.

Stewardship Have believed that I came out from God.

v.28 This is the Lord Jesus in His eternal state, coming into incarnation. I came forth from the Father. That is His pre-existence in glory, that is the emphasis of the deity of Christ. And the first 18 verses of John ch.1 make very clear that He is essentially and eternally God’s co-equal, and He is the Son of God.

I came forth from the Father—His essential deity.

and am come into the world—His sinless humanity q.v. Phil.2

These together establish two other things:

The absolute *supremacy* and the absolute *sufficiency* of Christ.

The marriage in ch.2, the woman in ch.4, the lame man of ch.5, the hungry of ch.6, the blind man of ch.9 all show His absolute supremacy and His

sufficiency for every occasion. We have lost sight of these two things: the Lord Jesus is all supreme, and the Lord Jesus is all sufficient. God shall supply *all* your need. Mental need, natural need, spiritual need, ecclesiastical need.

Nowhere in the New Testament will you find that anything comes through Jesus. Now mark that. There never was an occasion when any apostle addressed Him as Jesus. The only epistle that devotes its teaching, more or less, to the Lord Jesus as Jesus, is the Hebrew letter. And it is used there on every occasion to stress that the Man that was here in human flesh was their Messiah. He is the Son of God, He became the great high priest, He would cancel out all the offerings, and all the tabernacle, and He will be all sufficient.

Then He says: 'again, I leave the world'. Not only His *deity* and *humanity*, but now His *ministry*. It takes in His death, His resurrection, and His priestly ministry now at God's right hand. It is not the Son of Man here, but the Son of God in all His dignity. He has fulfilled the work that God gave Him to do. Having completed that work, He has the right to go back to heaven. And in the glory of deity, and the majesty of the perfection of His humanity, He is welcomed by God, the Father, to His right hand q.v. Hebrews ch.1.

Again, I leave the world, by way of death, burial, and resurrection, and go to the Father, and that is the glory of Christ. That emphasises His ascension, His present ministry now in heaven, and His eventual return to take His saints (q.v. 1 Thess.4, and 1 Cor.15).

So, here is the deity

humanity

ministry (from ch.13 to ch.19)

glory (ch.20 and ch.21)

What does it all mean? It means these four things.

1. He is the *eternal* Christ q.v. John 1:1 to 3.
2. He is the *expressive* Christ q.v. John 1:14; 3:16.
3. He is the *expiated* Christ. He died on the cross.
4. He is the *exalted* Christ. Now at God's right hand.

v. 27 Here He is affirming their faith, and this is the revelation He gives to them:

His *association* with the Father.

His *atonement* at the cross.

His *acceptance* now at God's right hand.

vs. 28 and 29 Then we have His communication of the truth, "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." They are convinced at last that He is the Son of God, that He is the Messiah of Israel. So their hearts, and their faith is confirmed, and the Lord must have been encouraged by what they said.

v. 30 "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things." He is not only the omnipotent Christ, He is the omniscient Christ.

"And needest not that any man should ask Thee." Here is the eternal wisdom and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God.

"By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." At last they are convinced of the incarnation by His unfolding of the future, His recalling of the past, and reminding them of all that He was, and all that He did, and what He would do at God's right hand.

So, they confessed the authority
sufficiency
incarnation
omniscience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 31 Now He challenges them. Do ye now believe? Are you really convinced that I am the Son of God, and accepted by My Father. He must have been encouraged when He heard their response.

v. 32 Looking into the future He reminds them: "The hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." The Lord said don't worry about my going away, and you being scattered, I have a deep sense of the presence of My Father, and we cannot be separated. Here is the consciousness of the help and cheer, and companionship of His Father in this world.

John 16:28

22 words of wealth

His essential deity. 'I came forth **from the Father**'

The pre-existent one 'I **came**'

The condescending one 'and am **come into the world**'

The departing one 'I **leave** the world'

The ascending one 'and **go to the Father**'

The twofold movement of the Son of God.

Descent from, and ascent to Heaven.

Pictures of the Tabernacle in John 17

INTRODUCTION

Matthew is the gospel of Teaching—the Authority of Christ.

Mark, the gospel of Toil—the Activity and Loyalty of Christ.

Luke, the gospel of the Temple—the Sympathy of Christ.

John, the gospel of the Tabernacle—the Sufficiency of Christ.

In John ch.10 we enter the Door of the Tabernacle. In ch.11 we meet the sympathetic High Priest. In ch.12 the Table of communion is spread. In ch.13 the Laver for cleansing. In ch.14 manifestations of Christ in the Holy Place. In ch.15 the Lampstand of truth and testimony. In ch.16 Oil for the Lamp—the Holy Spirit. In ch.17 the High Priest at the Golden Altar. In ch.18 the Lamb led to the Brazen Altar. In ch.19 the acceptable whole Burnt Offering, Lev. 1:1. In ch.20 the Ashes in a clean place. In ch.21 we stand on the eternal shore and meet the Master, the Mediator and the Man of Destiny.

The Great High Priest in His association with God vs.1-5; in His manifestation of God's Name vs.6-10; His preservation of the Priestly company vs.11-15; His sanctification through the Truth vs.16-19; His intercession at the Golden Altar vs.20-22; in His glorification as seen in the Ark of the Covenant vs.24-26.

The Glory of His Presentation at the Gate of the Tabernacle, vs.1-3, Exod. 27:16 “These words spake Jesus”, The Priest expounded the truth of God (Mal. 2:6,7). He enjoyed fellowship with God—“lifted His eyes to heaven” (Lev. 1:1). Expressed His willingness for the Altar—“the hour is come” (ch.10:11,17,18). Only one entrance—“Jesus Christ” v.3. He is the only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5.). An attractive and acceptable way (Mark 10:45; 2:2).

The “hangings”, speak of the Beauty of Christ (Ex. 27:16). Of “blue”—the Divine Son—“thy Son” v.1; “purple”—the Divine Sovereign—“power over all flesh” v.2; “scarlet”—the Divine Saviour—“given eternal life” v.2. “Fine twined linen”—God's righteous Servant—“whom Thou hast sent” v.3.

The Glory of His Pathway and Passion at the Brazen Altar, v.4; Ex. 27:1-8 He glorified God daily, willingly, joyfully and sacrificially (John 12:32,33). His condescension in love, His compassion for souls, His communication of truth and consecration in service glorified God (Mark 10:45). In Him is the revelation of God (14:9). He brought satisfaction to

God (Matt. 17:5). The work was prescribed by God and accomplished by the Son. As the Burnt Offering, His entire dedication to God (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:5-7). His ministry of expiation is spoken of as already accomplished—"finished" (13:22). His ministry of consecration is our standard for living (v.19). The Altar was anointed with oil (Ex. 40:10). God anointed the Lord Jesus for service and sacrifice (Acts 10:38). He glorified God as Prophet and Priest v.4.

The Glory of His Perfection in the Linen Curtains, vs.6,25; Ex. 27:18. The white linen is Christ in manifestation, the Holy One of God in His life among men (Acts 3:14; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; Mk. 1:24). "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness" (Psa. 132:9).

In verse 6, Jesus speaks as the revealer of the Father. The Father's Name is His character which Jesus has manifested to His disciples. The saints are a select company of people given to Him out of the world; holy and righteous, keeping His Word vs.6,7,8. This priestly company are distinguished from the world v.6b, possessed true knowledge v.7, appreciated divine things and accepted the truth v.8. The world knew nothing of the character of God or the righteous life of His Son. Righteousness barring the way to the presence of God—"white linen curtains" v.25. Only the believer knows the way (ch.14:6).

The Glory of His Purity in the Laver vs.17,19; Exod. 30:18-21; John 13:1-11. The truth of sanctification; suitability for sanctuary service v.17; (1 Cor. 6:11). The Laver, Christ the eternal Word, and the Water, the written Word (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3). The priests were to wash at the Laver before proceeding into the Holy Place, the place of fellowship (Ex. 30:21). Clean hands are necessary for fellowship with God (Psa. 24:3). Cleansing comes through the application of the Word (Psa. 119:9). Only Priests had access to the Laver (1 Pet. 2:5,9). No covering for the Laver, open to view. The Word of God is an open revelation for all to behold.

The Glory of His Provision, The Table of Shewbread vs.12,13; Ex. 25:23-30. Seven pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle; God's perfect provision now for those in Christ. The table is Christ, the Bread of Life in the sanctuary. Fellowship with God by feeding on the Word, to receive spiritual nourishment. This is the first time we read of a table. Israel ate of the manna, but only the priest ate the shewbread, in the holy place. The loaves "were baked"—a suffering Saviour; "pierced"—a submissive Saviour; "two tenth deals"—a sufficient Saviour; "pure frankincense"—supreme Saviour, "pure", "most holy table" (Lev. 24:6,9). Christ holy, harmless, undefiled (Heb. 7:26). Loaves guarded by a crown of gold—kept by the Lord (17:11,12).

The Glory of His Perfection—The Lampstand vs.21-24; Ex. 25:31-40. All of gold, the Deity of Christ. Within the Sanctuary, all was gold. "The Almighty shall be thy gold" (margin Job 22:25). It was richly ornamented, beauty and utility. Central shaft and its branches. He must have the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18). The oneness of Christ and His people (John 17:21; Heb. 2:11). The Vine and the branches (John 15:5; Eph. 5:30). Of beaten-work; the sufferings of Christ (Heb. 2:10; Phil. 3:10). The seven stems may remind us of the sevenfold Spirit (Isa. 11:1,2; Rev. 1:4; 3:1); the ministry of the Spirit, unveiling Christ (John 16:13-15). Mr. Newberry's comments on Acts 2:41,42; "the Apostle's doctrine—the Light, fellowship—the Lampstand; breaking of bread—the Table; prayers—the Golden Altar".

The Glory of His Priesthood vs.9,20 **The Golden Altar of Incense** Ex. 30:1-10. Used exclusively for burning incense v.7 (Ex. 30:34). Some see in the four sweet spices the merit of His life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Incense, what Christ is for us before God. Our acceptable worship (Psa. 141:2). Offered every morning and evening when the Lamps were trimmed vs.7,8. The continual ministry of Christ's intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24). He prays for us because we belong equally to the Father and Himself (John 17:9,20).

The Glory of His Person v.24 **The Ark of the Covenant** Ex. 25:10-16. The central vessel, it was God's throne, the first piece of furniture made (v.8). It distinctly speaks of the Person of Christ—who He is, not what He had done, (John 1:1); "The Word"—Gold; "became flesh"—Wood (John 1:14) Deity, Equality, Humanity. The dual nature of Christ. A crown of gold (Heb. 2:9). The Mercy Seat was the lid of the Ark, all of gold, divine mercy and grace (Heb. 4:16; Rom. 3:25; 5:21; 1 John 2:2). Christ in His life—the Ark; in His death—the Mercy Seat (Rom. 3:25).

Our High Priest has entered heaven (Heb. 4:14 R.V.; 9:12:24).

P - Pleasure to God, v.4.

R - Revealer of the Father, v.6.

I - Interest in His own, v.9.

E - Effective ministry, vs.17-19.

S - Suitable for the work, v.8.

T - Thrilling our souls, vs.24-26.

This Priest is ours, Heb. 8:1.

John 17

This chapter is the holy of holies of the Tabernacle, and we will find the Lord Jesus at the golden altar of incense.

It has three simple divisions:

- a. speaking to the Father, He uses the term, 'Father'.
- b. speaking about the saints, He uses the term, 'holy Father'.
- c. speaking about the world, He uses the term, 'O, righteous Father'.

vs. 1 to 5 Here is Emmanuel, and His *partnership* with the Father.

vs. 6 to 19 His *purposeful mission to the world*.

vs. 20 to 26 His *provision* for the saints in this scene.

vs. 1 to 5 He prays that the Son might be *glorified*.

—the *Sonship* of Christ.

vs. 6 to 19 He prays that the apostles might be *sanctified*.

—the *Stewardship* of Christ.

vs. 20 to 26 He prays for the church that it might be *unified*.

—the *Fellowship* of Christ.

In this chapter there are glimpses of the Tabernacle:

vs. 1 to 3 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *presentation* at the gate.

v. 1 The *approaching* priest 'lift up his eyes'.

v. 2 The *appointed* priest 'authority over all flesh'.

v. 3 The *approved* priest 'whom Thou hast sent'.

v. 4 The *atoning* priest 'I have finished the work'.

v. 4 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *pathway* at the brasen altar, as seen in the first part of v.4, 'I have glorified Thee on the earth.'

The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *passion* at the brasen altar, as seen in the latter half of v.4, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do'.

v. 6 (and *v. 25*) The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *presence* in the linen curtains. 'I have manifested Thy Name unto the men ...'

There is the *manifestation* of the character of God.

demonstration of the power of God.

exhibition of the love of God.

vs. 12 to 14 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *provision* in the table of Shewbread. The ministry of preserving sustenance, as we feed on Christ.

vs. 21 and 22 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *perfection* in the lampstand. The unity, beauty and dignity of the church in association with the Lord, as seen in Revelation ch.1.

v. 24 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *person* in the ark of the covenant. The ark was not built for the Tabernacle, but the Tabernacle was built for the ark.

vs. 19 and 20 The Lord Jesus in the glory of His *priesthood* in the golden altar of incense.

Summary The glory of His *presentation*
pathway
passion
presence
purity in the laver, vs.17 and 19
provision on the table, vs.12 to 14
perfection vs.21 and 22
person as seen in the ark v.24
priesthood vs.19 and 20

His ministry of prayer is one of intercession and adoration.

vs. 1 to 5 The truth of *revelation*.

v. 5 to 16 The *preservation* of the priestly company.

vs. 17 to 19 The *sanctification* of the saints.

vs. 20 to 22 The *unification* of the church.

vs. 24 to 26 The *glorification* of the saints.

vs. 1 to 5 **The truth of revelation**

v. 1 Christ in *communion*. Here is His *relationship* 'Thy Son' and His *reverence* 'Father'.

v. 2 Christ, His *claims*. Not 'My Father' or 'our Father', but just 'Father'. This is the unique relationship of the Lord Jesus to God, His Father. He never prayed *with* His disciples, but He prayed *for* His disciples.

There are no petitions in this prayer; He is not asking for anything, He is speaking as a co-equal with God, His Father. He is making requests, and He knows they will be answered because of the equality He shares with God, His Father.

v. 2 Christ, His *control*. He has authority over all flesh. The *sovereignty* of Christ—'His power'. The *salvation* through Christ—'Eternal life'. God can never trust power to mortal man since the failure of both Adam and Nebuchadnezzar, but He has entrusted it to the Lord Jesus.

v. 4 Christ, His *completion*. Here is the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, glorifying God and finishing the work that God gave Him to do and we see Him not only as a prophet, but as a priest.

This revelation is given that we might *appreciate* Him, have *affection* for Him, and *adore* Him.

vs. 5 to 16 The preservation of the priestly company

Here we are reminded of the beautiful gifts given by the Father to the Lord Jesus, then the Father's care.

v. 5 His *arresting* prayer. Suggests that the Lord Jesus is a *divine* person, *distinct* person, *eternal* person.

v. 6 His *acknowledged* gift. Here He is in *association* with His people. Here is the *revelation* to the saints and the *appreciation* of the saints for the gifts that were given. Here is the intimacy of the Son with the Father, and the association of the Son with these disciples.

So they appreciated what He gave, and that preservation is marked by: *provision* by revelation v.6; by distinction v.6 kept Thy word, and separated from the world.

personal care vs. 9 to 11. Here is the Lord's personal appreciation of these saints given to Him by His Father, and of the resources that God has given Him as well. Now this preservation is needed: we are in the world. It is requested by the Lord Jesus.

Notice the power of His *presence*, v.12; *guidance*, v.14; *guardian-ship*, v.12; *stewardship*, v.12; *separation*, v.14. Judas was *with* the disciples, but not of the disciples. He did not fall from grace, because he had none. Judas was never at the Lord's supper, because he was never one of the Lord's people. John's gospel makes this clear.

vs. 15 to 19 The sanctification of the saints

How can we be sanctified? The chief thought here is that sanctification is dedication to God. It is being set apart for a special purpose, just as the vessels of the Tabernacle were sanctified, just as the priests were sanctified, and as the sabbath day was sanctified. The means of our sanctification is the Word of God (v.17) q.v. Ps.119:9. The thought in sanctification is our suitability for the presence of God as a company of priests, and as members of a local church.

Think of the mission He has for them (v.18b). We are not only marked off for priestly service for God, but sent out as witnesses for the Lord Jesus into the world where He lived, and where He was hated. Now it is good to think that the model of sanctification is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is our example in all things, "leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps" (v.19).

When we think of sanctification, the *means* is the Word of God, the *mission* is to the world. The *model* for all our service, as well as our sanctification is the person and the conduct of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.

In verses 13 to 15, it is our position before the Father, but here it is our position and place in the world. *Separated* from the world. *Sanctified* by the Father. *Sent* into the world to witness.

vs. 20 to 22 **The unification of the church.**

This is a living unity made by the Lord Jesus when we were baptized by the Spirit into the church q.v. Eph. 4:3 to 6. You can have uniformity, and not have unity. Uniformity comes from the outside, but unity comes from the inside. We are made one in the Lord, and we are expected to keep that unity in the scene of His rejection. It was said of the early saints: see how they love one another. That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me. The unity, manifested by a company of saints, is not to draw attention to themselves, but to confirm that the Lord Jesus was sent of God.

What is the design of this unification? That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me.

It has got to be displayed to the world.

is a *manifestation* of the person of Christ.

is *confirmation* of His *mission*.

is *confirmation* of His *message*.

The need of the hour is not more Christians, but better Christians.

vs. 24 to 26 **The glorification of the saints.**

He does not say: 'I request', but He does say: 'I will'. He is speaking as an equal, speaking as the Son of God, speaking to God, His Father. It is the will of the Lord Jesus. 'I will that they also ...'.

He has *moral* glory

essential glory (v.5)

redemptive glory

The glory Thou hast given Me. Why? Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.

v. 24 His *unclouded* joy. 'that they be with Me'.

v. 26 His *unmeasured* love. 'that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them'.

Notice the use of the term 'O righteous Father' in relation to the world. The Father will judge the world in righteousness, as seen in Revelation 20. Here is the hope of the saint in the glory, the goal of all our hopes, the end of all our pain and sorrow. We will have a new body, a new vision, a new joy. We will gaze on the unclouded glory of the Lord Jesus.

It is not only *anticipated* but *appreciated* (v.24)

P Presentation of the priest at the gate of the Tabernacle.

R Revelation of God v.16

I Intercession for His saints vs.11,15 and 26

E Exhibition of grace and love v.23

S Sacrifice v.4 Sanctification v.19. *A finished work*

T Testimony v.6 Thanksgiving v.10 *A final work*

A fruitful work

So here is this wonderful Priest of the new order as seen in John 17.

- ch. 13* The *identifying* Christ
ch. 14 *illuminating* Christ
ch. 15 *inspiring* Christ
ch. 16 *instructing* Christ
ch. 17 *interceding* Christ

How great Thou art!

Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and forever.

John 19

Jesus and Pilate

Pilate's **disgrace** vs.1 to 3
declaration vs.4 and 5
dilemma vs.6 and 7
distress vs.8 to 14
decision vs.15 and 16

The Saviour in His **purity** vs.4 to 8
The Man of **authority** vs.9 to 13
The Man of **royalty** vs.14 and 15
The Man of **Calvary** vs.16 to 20.

John 20

The Greatness of His Power—His Greatness

His Almighty Power vs.1-10 “VICTORY”

- Dawn of a new day v.1
- Diligence shown vs.2-4
- Discovery made vs.5-8
- Difficulty mentioned vs.9-10

His Amazing Grace vs.11-15 “SYMPATHY”

- Her devotion vs.11-12
- Her declaration v.13
- Her intention v.15
- Her revelation v.16a
- Her appreciation v.16b
- Her commission v.17

His Assuring Scars vs.19-25 “CENTRALITY”

- Fears dispelled v.19
- Peace proclaimed v.19
- Joy restored v.20
- Commission given v.21
- Power received v.22
- Doubt expressed v.25

His Appealing Word vs.26-29 “DEITY”

- Cheering v.26
- Challenging v.27
- Confessing v.28

His Attractive Message vs.30-31 “SUFFICIENCY”

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The Ministry of the Risen Lord

INTRODUCTION

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an essential of the Christian faith. It is the most important fact of history, and the best attested fact of history. "Seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6). "Seen" not "Appeared" as the RSV needlessly and wrongly substitutes (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

It is the Gibraltar of Christian evidences, the Waterloo of infidelity. The resurrection is not a question of His spiritual survival, nor of His physical resuscitation, but of His conquest of death and His resurrection to a new plane of existence altogether (Rev. 1:18). If the evidence of the Resurrection of Christ is sifted and weighed honestly, it will be found to be convincing and conclusive. The Lord Himself never predicted His passion without adding that He would rise, and described His coming resurrection as a sign (Matt. 12:39,40; John 2:18-22; Luke 18:33; Rom. 1:4.)

There are four evidences of His resurrection: (1) the empty tomb (Mark 16:4-6,11); (2) the graveclothes were undisturbed (John 20:5-7); (3) the Lord was seen (Matt. 28:9; John 20:16-18; (4) the disciples were changed. The death of Christ left them despondent, disillusioned and near to despair. The resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit transformed doubt into faith, fear into courage and tears into gladness (1 Cor. 15:7; John 20:19,20).

May we rejoice in the great Christian affirmation, "the Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24:34; Matt. 28:6).

The morning of resurrection

All four Evangelists record the resurrection, agreeing that it took place on the first day of the week, as befitting a new life, a new era. It is interesting and important to compare their records. John begins earliest in time, "When it was yet dark" (20:1); it is night when John records. Matthew begins, "As it began to dawn" (28:1) that is the first faint flush of the new day appearing in the sky; dawn complete. Mark distinctly states that the sun has risen (16:2 R.V.) John tells us the stone was literally "lifted out of" the sepulchre, and Mary is horrified.

The dawn of a new day (Mark 16:1,2; John 20:1)

The Jewish Sabbath passed in gloom and doubt and sorrow, the Lord's day followed with death robbed of its prey and its power. The stone rolled away proclaimed death's power broken, the tomb was empty. The resurrection of Christ is a fact, a force and a factor beyond dispute. It is the

centre of all truth (1 Cor. 15:1-5); the channel of blessing for all the saved (1 Peter 1:3,4); the confession of our faith (Rom. 10:9; 1 Pet. 3:21,22); the communication of Divine power (Eph. 1:19,20); proves Christ is our choice Head unifying the Church (Col. 1:18); the continued inspiration of our service (Matt. 28:18-20); the certain pledge of our great change by and by (1 Cor. 15:53).

A morning of devotion (John 20:1)

Mary loved the Lord and affection for Him brought her to the tomb.

Her Salvation (Luke 8:2) Her terrible affliction, total possession by demons, was completely healed by spiritual regeneration. Her blessings like ours are due to three things; the Saviour's loving pity, His infinite mercy and his Divine power (Eph. 2:4,5).

Her Service was expressed in fellowship (Luke 8:12) and by consecration (Luke 8:3). Her life and substance belonged to Him who had done so much for her (Rom. 12:1).

Her Sorrow She saw her Lord die and watched by His tomb (Matt. 27:55,56). The gratitude shown (Mark 16:1), the grief experienced (John 20:1). Her Master's death must have been a profound mystery and a great loss. Mary possibly went round to all the women followers of Jesus, and got them to go to the sepulchre.

A morning of difficulty (Mark 16:3)

"Who shall roll us away the stone?" The barrier dreaded was the first thought in the women's mind because of great weight for feeble strength. The barrier was removed (v.4), God works for those He loves and leads. He ever goes before, and they find the way made ready beyond expectation.

A morning of discovery (Mark 16:4,5; Luke 24:2,3)

The stone removed, rolled away. It was a round disc placed against the door; it was rolled along a groove, leaving the entrance of the tomb clear.

It was not rolled away to let Jesus out, but that they, and we, might look in to see He had gone. John says, "taken away" and literally "lifted out of" the sepulchre. Mary's one horror was that somebody would get into the tomb and take away the body of the Lord. Think of His cruel death. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead, but the centurion assured him that it was so. (Mark 14:44,45). This gives the death knell to the swoon theory. Could the Lord survive thirty-six hours in a stone sepulchre after the flogging and crucifixion? The theory is perverse and the evidence entirely contradicts it. The careful watch, the seal, the guard made all things sure (Matt. 27:64-66). Another notion is that thieves of some kind stole the body. There is no shred of evidence for this conjecture. W.H. Griffith Thomas has well stated, "only two alternative explanations: human or supernatural. If

human, friends or foes. If friends—could they?; if foes—would they? Therefore, supernatural power removed the Body of Christ”. It was supernatural (Matt. 28:2). The illustrious visitor reveals the power of light. A shining, mighty, overpowering light from heaven (v. 3). This mighty power opened the grave, shattered the darkness and brought the light of hope to every true believer.

The dynamic declaration (Matt. 28:5-7)

A word of encouragement—“Fear not ye”; they were reassured by the angel. A word of assurance “I know that ye seek Jesus”. Just as at the Lord’s birth (Luke 1:30; 2:10), so here the first word from heaven was “fear not”.

A word of revelation—“He is not here, for He is risen”. Only those who knew the Crucified One found the Risen One. Resurrection is assured, by the absence of the Body, “not here”. The cause “He is risen as He said”, yet they still did not realize. The slow of heart to believe are blinded with the glory of the light.

A word of invitation—“Come see the place where the Lord lay” (v.6). For them and us this is the place of instruction, life, comfort and hope. Here is the power of life, the greatest evidence of Christ’s mighty power; the power of an endless life (John 2:20-22; 10:18; Heb. 7:25).

A word of commission—“go quickly and tell”. The liberty and privilege of every saved soul, to go forth and tell of a risen, living, loving Saviour, who has conquered every foe, overcome death, and lives to save to the uttermost. The first appearances of Jesus to His own were evidential. They were necessary to convince them that He was still victoriously alive. We need to come and see it, and know the power of it; then go and tell it out, and go quickly, for the need is great. Yes, “He is risen”—risen to save—be entreated. He is risen to intercede—be comforted. He is risen to judge—be warned.

The disciples’ visit (John 20:2-10)

The Search (vs.3,4) Peter and John set out to see for themselves. Peter is outrun by John. Perhaps guilty conscience made the going hard for him, he remembered his denial.

The Satisfaction (vs.5-8). Mary’s word was confirmed, the tomb was empty. They saw the winding shrouds exactly and precisely as they were when He was buried. The body was not there. John saw that and believed (v.8).

The different words for “seeing” are very interesting and illuminating. “Stooping down and looking in”, the same word in v.11 and Luke 24:12 literally means “bending down to look carefully at”, used in a figurative sense in 1 Pet. 1:12, and James 1:25. “Saw” v.5, seeth at a glance, Mary and John merely saw the facts; Peter went in and he “beheld them” (RV) which means he saw and he thought carefully about them. Then John “saw”,

perceived what it meant “and believed”, and from that moment John was convinced that Jesus was alive. John did not need a manifestation of the Lord. Now they go back home, John understanding, Peter all bewildered (Luke 24:12) and they leave Mary at the tomb, weeping—not just crying but convulsed with sobs. Mary was marked by perplexity and sorrow (vs.2,10), she did not expect a resurrection morning. John is marked by love and was first in the race and first to believe (v.8). Peter known for his zeal and impetuosity went right into the sepulchre. He defiles himself by entering the tomb but is rewarded by an amazing sight, grave clothes left behind by death’s Victor (Rev. 1:18).

On this resurrection morning may we look into the tomb and rejoice for “He is risen as He said”; listen to the angelic message and respond—“go quickly and tell” and remember

“We face a task unfinished that drives us to our knees;
A need, that undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease.
We, who rejoice to know Thee, renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and make Thee known”.

—Frank Houghton.

2—THE REVELATION TO DEVOUT LOVE

John 20:11-18

The writers of the Gospels present the truth of the Resurrection of Christ not only to confirm faith but to cheer the heart. There is progress in the development of truth in the “order” of the Gospels. Matthew closes with the account of the *Resurrection*, to emphasize His Sovereignty; Mark, the *Ascension*, to establish His Sinlessness; Luke the promise of the *Spirit*, the Lord effects our Salvation; John the *Second Coming*, to encourage His Saints.

John 20 portrays the Day of His Power; demonstrated (vs.1-10); venerated (vs.11-18); communicated (vs.19-23); appreciated (vs.24-29), and propagated in the Gospel message (vs.30,31).

Here is the revelation of the Living Lord (vs.1-10) as All Supreme; to the Loving Heart (vs.11-18) as always sympathetic; to His Longing Church (vs.19-23), as always Sufficient, to His Lapsing Followers (vs.24-29) as an Assuring Friend, and in the life giving message (vs.30,31) as an almighty Saviour.

The supreme proof of the Resurrection, the thing that makes it not only credible but inevitable, is the person of Jesus Himself. The risen Lord by His appearances banished the sorrow of death, sanctified the home, consecrated work and defeated despair.

“The Revelation to Love” (v.11)

Mary had a sorrowful heart and she knew the tenderness of the Lord and her sorrow was turned into joy. In Mary is personified the love and devotion of one who owed everything to her Lord, and who knew it.

“I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me” (Prov. 8:17).

Love’s Affection (v.11a) “she stood without weeping”. Forlorn, forsaken and desolate, Mary weeps. Her all had gone into the tomb with Jesus and He was gone. Earlier she said “They have taken away THE Lord” but now she says “My Lord”. How she adored Jesus, do you?

Her weeping was intense and audible; and even the sight of angels in the tomb did not check it.

Love’s Attention (v.11b) “she stooped down and looked in” and “seeth” or “beholdeth” as in v.6, a long contemplative gaze. Mary had nothing in all this world, but the Saviour, and she thought Him dead. She gazes in bewilderment and sees “two angels, one at the head, one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain”. They remind us of the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat (Ex. 37:8,9). Later she saw Jesus as the gardener (v.15), and then as the Saviour (v.16). Her devotion is simple and beautifully expressed by the words she used of Him—“my Lord” (v.13). It was that love first sought the lost Lord; and in answer to love He also first revealed Himself (Mark 16:9).

Love’s Anxiety (v.13) The vision and the inquiry of angels were unable to surprise or to arouse her. In reply she says, “they have taken away my Lord”. She pays no further regard to their presence; she makes no petition for their help. They don’t satisfy her, she wants her Lord.

This was the one burden of her thoughts, to all else she is blind and deaf. She turned with arrested, lingering gaze, there was Jesus standing.

Love’s Attraction (vs.14,15) Her tears and sense of loss might explain her mistaken identity—the gardener. Jesus understood her tears, “why weepest thou” and would undertake to meet her need. She sought for a Person and not for a thing, seeking for some relief to her suspense. She is rewarded and soon her sorrow will be dispelled. She hears the voice of the Good Shepherd, her own name pronounced in a familiar tone. Joyfully she exclaims “Master”. But Mary’s faith was immature. What she craved was her Lord’s body, if need be, dead (vs.13-15).

Love’s Assurance (vs.16,17) Her request (v.15) brought a full revelation of her lover and her Lord. In v.15 the Lord sympathises with her, now He satisfies her heart—“Mary”. He awakens her true self, as in former days. The blinding veil of a self-chosen grief is torn off, and she expresses her new-born faith, with the accent of Galilee—“my master”. She thinks that she can now enjoy His restored Presence as in times past, but there is a prohibition (v.17). Now she would “cling” to His body, to His physical presence. She is entrusted with a message and assured of a new relationship. Fellowship towards which Mary reached would be established as abiding by

His Ascension. The Resurrection appearances of the Lord brought the disciples assurance. John was convinced by His clothes, (vs. 1-10); Mary was convinced by His voice (vs. 11-18), the disciples were convinced by His wounds (vs. 19-23), and Thomas was convinced by His grace (vs. 24-29). May we join in his adoration "My Lord and My God". The message is not "I have risen", but "I ascend". The revelation was in a part a promise as well as a fulfilment. The Lord's work was done; but its import had to be progressively apprehended by men. Mary learned that day something of His Priestly Sympathy—"Why weep". His victory, "I ascend". Our dignity—"His brethren", and His Deity, and Authority, "My Father, My God".

Love's Announcement (v. 18) Mary was the first to see Jesus after His death (Mark 16:9), a humble obscure woman who had nothing to distinguish her but her forgiven heart, and no claim at all but her love. She is commissioned and signally honoured as first messenger of His resurrection, she joyfully obeyed. She must have been thrilled that once again she was engaged in service for her Lord, and the beginning of far higher service that would not cease.

Have we lost the thrill of the Victorious Lord and His soul emancipating message. W.H. Griffith Thomas writes, "Armed with a threefold message—(a) To a world under condemnation, we proclaim the atonement of Christ; (b) To a world in bondage to fear, we proclaim the resurrection of Christ; and (c) To a world at enmity with God, we proclaim the ascension, intercession and return of Christ. This is the full and glorious gospel!" In times of depression and despondency may we like Mary turn ourselves (v. 14) and see our Lord as the Conqueror of Death—His victory (vs. 1-10); the Comforter of Hearts—His Sympathy (vs. 11-18); Calming our Fears—His Centrality (vs. 19-23); Confirming our Faith—His Authority (vs. 24-29) and the Communicator of Life—His Ability (vs. 30,31).

The Revelation to Penitence (Luke 24:34; Mark 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:5).

As far as we can work out, this is the second appearance of the Lord Jesus to Peter, and the Lord meets the yearning heart of this penitent defeated apostle.

Sincere Repentance (Mark 14:72) Did he recall and use the words of Ps. 130:1-4? What would he give to unsay those words of denial. He would have loved to hear one word of pardon from His Lord. The word and the look of the Master broke his heart and he wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75).

Thought, sorrow and action were seen in his change of life. See him running (John 20:4), in contrast to following afar off and sitting at the world's fire (Matt. 26:58; Mark 14:54). Peter never expected the Resurrection and the sight of his Master again.

The Saviour's Remembrance (Mark 16:7). The Lord was not content with a passing look of sorrow upon the wanderer. He had a personal interest in him

and a special message for him "and Peter" (Mark 16:7). That message would assure him of the unchanging love of his Master.

Sweet Restoration (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). A veil is drawn over the third appearance of the Risen Lord. He saw His erring and sorrowing servant alone first and saved him much embarrassment (Psa. 32:5). We have no record of Peter's deep contrition for it is too sacred to mention, but he was graciously restored (Psa. 23:3). There is a jubilant note in the message of the twelve who returned with the good news to the saints (Luke 24:34). Peter is restored privately as a disciple; then publicly as an apostle (John 21:15-19). Like Peter we can know the forgiveness of the Lord for our failure.

3—THE REVELATION TO DELIBERATE THOUGHT

Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12f.

The message of the Easter morning—HE LIVES: of the Easter afternoon—HE LOVES, HE LISTENS, HE LEADS! George Elliot calls the Emmaus walk, "The loveliest story in the world". It certainly is homely, thrilling and romantic and that makes it beautiful. The Resurrection Gospel is incontestable because of the amazing transformation of the disciples themselves. The complete change in these men from absolute despair and futility to absolute radiance and mastery of life, has only one credible explanation—Christ was risen indeed.

The value of the story is (1) Evidential—a proof of Christ's Resurrection is the fellowship enjoyed by these two disciples; (2) Preparatory—such an experience to prepare them for His bodily absence and their future life of faith (2 Cor. 5:7,16); (3) Symbolic—for when to walk together and talk of Christ He draws near to cheer the heart (Mal. 3:16).

This is the road of glad surprise. In their depression Christ appeared (vs.13-16); in their discussion—Christ assured (vs.17-27); and in their dwelling—Christ abode (vs.28-32).

One of them was Cleopas, if this is the same person as mentioned in John 19:25, then Mary his wife would be his companion? Most scholars are not agreed in this matter.

The first appearance was to a loving woman, the elevation of personal devotion, to Peter the restored saint, the satisfaction of personal forgiveness, the third appearance to reasoning men, was the confirmation of social hope. They cover a large part of the experience of Christians.

They were bound together (v.13a)

They shared a common loss and were drawn together by their love for the Saviour (Amos 3:3; Mal. 3:16). They travelled on an important day—His Resurrection. Important to Christ—it vindicated His character (Acts

2:26,27); His claims (John 2:19; 10:17,18); and His crosswork (Rom. 4:25), an important day for the church, through this it was founded, furnished and fitted for universal propagation of the Gospel. For the Christian, our past is eliminated (Acts 3:19); our purity assured (John 13:10; 1 Cor. 6:11) and our power guaranteed (Matt. 28:18).

Their Beautiful Topic (v.14a)

“The things which happened”. What eventful tragic days they had been. They discussed their difficulties and talked together of those awful happenings in their life that are worthy of discussion. They were helped that day by the Priestly Care and Companionship of their Lord.

Their Blessed Companion (v.15)

“Jesus Himself”, their conversation and investigation was all about HIM. The Stranger who joined them being none other than the Subject of their talk. Literally it was while they communed and while they were reasoning, that Jesus drew near and went with them. He was interested in them and this intrusion into their lives proved most beneficial. Remember this when things are going wrong and you are bewildered, when tragedy strikes for which there seems to be no explanation (vs.14-21).

Their Blinded Eyes (v.16)

They failed to observe that there was Someone walking by their side. He was there and He was going with them before they knew that anybody had joined them. The mystery of God’s ways, some things are hidden from us (Psa. 103:7). The mercy of God’s dealings; Christ is often nearest when men think Him gone for ever, and He knows just how much we can take. (1 Cor. 10:12). He chose to remain unrecognised.

Their Burdened Faces (v.17)

“And they stood still, looking sad” RV. The look of despair, “sad” means “dreary”. It is the downcast look of settled grief, suggesting—“I’ll never smile again”. This word only occurs twice in the N.T., here and in Matt. 6:16. How often have you felt like these two disillusioned and desolate saints? The Lord showed interest, sympathy, love, when they needed it most. Shattered, their world might be, but somewhere at the heart of it there was still this Jesus; He was and is quite unforgettable. He came that He might be known; yet He could only be known by the faith which He purposed to quicken.

They were arrested by His questions and He drew out of their hearts their burden of sorrow. There is astonishment yet no resentment; “Art thou only a Stranger” “hast not known”. The sorrowful think their cloud enwraps everyone, anything else impossible.

Their Bright Testimony (vs.19b-20)

They gave a noble description of a Man accursed because He has hung on a tree.

It reveals what the disciples thought of Jesus at that time.

His Testimony. A Prophet with character and ability, “mighty in deed”, and approved by God and the people.

His Treatment. They had a clear picture of His arrest, condemnation and agony on the tree, this was the end of all their hopes. They hoped that He might have turned out to be the Messiah, but He was just a Prophet.

Their Blasted Hopes (vs.21-23)

They were not ashamed to reckon themselves still followers of the Crucified. They are disappointed—“this is the third day”, and their doubts are increased. The latest report brought another difficulty, the absence of the body, and the vision of angels who said “He was alive”, rather than “risen”. Their hopes are shattered, “Him they saw not”. The Lord patiently listened to their explanation of the events and knew the condition of their hearts. They were unashamed in their affection for their Saviour and told Him all that was in their heart (1 Kings 10:2).

Their Blundering Minds (vs.24-27)

The Lord chides them, they were “slow at the uptake”, or without perception. They had read the Scriptures without understanding. They had failed to believe the prophets from lack of intelligence and from lack of sympathy. He is gently rebuking them, “you ought not to have been astonished and so dismayed after all that the prophets have spoken”. If they had believed they would have expected His resurrection, and accepted His witness.

The Lord led them to a fuller view of God’s ways, and made clear that the Crucifixion was an essential part of the counsel of God (v.26). The Lord was not only interested in them but interpreted the Scriptures to them. What a revelation they had of the meaning and message of Scripture, “Himself”, associated with their pilgrimage (v.15), as announced by the prophets (v.27), the abiding attraction of His saints (v.36).

Their Beckoning Voices (vs.28-31)

They have reached home, “He made as though He would have gone further”. They invited Him in and Jesus accepted, for He loves to be invited (10:38; 19:6). Dr. Maclaren says, “The Christ who is asked to come in order to receive, abides in order to bestow”. As they sat at meat the greatest wonder of all happened—they discovered Who He was; their Saviour. That changed defeat into victory.

Their Burning Hearts (vs.32-35)

Their burdened hearts (vs.13-17) are now burning hearts (vs.25-32) and as they rose, returned and rehearsed they had buoyant hearts (vs.33-35). This was a day of good tidings and they went to tell the good tidings (2 Kings 7:9). Their enjoyment was shared with other saints who were talking about the wonderful experience Peter had had that day with his Lord. He is still journeying with us, sympathizing with us, ever willing to expound the Scriptures to us and reveal Himself, causing us to rejoice in His love and grace and enable us to witness for Him.

Saints still travel the Emmaus road to learn more about Himself:

E —Engulfed with grief, v.17.

M —Missed their Lord, v.18.

M —Mentioned His Fame, v.19.

A —Aware of His Presence, v.31.

U —Unfolding of the Scriptures, v.27.

S —Satisfied always with the Lord, vs.32,33.

4—THE REVELATION TO UTTER DISMAY

John 20:19-23; Luke 24:36-48

On this Easter evening the disciples saw the complacency of their Lord. They were badly frightened, very disturbed and, sorrowful enough, hard of heart. The Lord manifests Himself to every variety of need and in all sorts of places. These saints were terrified when the Lord appeared to them. They had reached the ultimate depths of fear and hopelessness and despair (Luke 24:37). "Then came Jesus" (John 20:19). He was still the centre of their lives and they still loved Him.

He Brought Assurance (v.19)

Assured of His presence—"in the midst", yes for pardon (ch.19:18); for peace (20:19) and for power (v.22); the power of new life proceeding from the Risen Lord. The assurance of peace. Having made peace by His blood, (Col. 1:20), He now brought it right into the upper room. His greeting brought reassurance and replaced their fear with faith (Luke 24:38,40), bringing peace and safety. His Assuring Scars (vs.19,20). His familiar voice and the scars in hands and side gave them abundant proof that "it is I myself". Peace was proclaimed. He disentangled their thinking about Himself, straightened out their problems for them. There was identity—they saw Him, corporally—they handled Him, and reality—watched Him eat.

He Gave Them Authority (John 20:22-23)

Divine life and power were imparted and they were commissioned by their Master. They were despatched under His authority, He sent them out with all the power of heaven behind them. Their mission had already begun, He had commissioned them (v.21) and endued them (v.22) and promised them success in His business (v.23).

"These words are the charter of the Christian Church, They define its mission; they confirm its authority, they reveal its life." Bishop Westcott.

"As the Father hath sent me" (v.21). The Lord speaks of His mission as present and not past, as continuing and not as concluded. What a transformation was wrought in the disciples of this first Easter Day. Death had been defeated, they had received forgiveness and peace; they had felt the breath of divine life and been entrusted with a supernatural message. They knew the consciousness of the unchanged love of their Master, His living sympathy, and His sovereign majesty.

The commission was given to the whole company present; not to the Apostles alone. The commission and the power have never been revoked and it is our responsibility to carry the message of the Gospel to a needy world.

He gave them Apprehension (Luke 24:45)

The disciples had doubt, despondency, and despair and need a glimpse of the Risen Lord.

He dispelled their fears (vs.37,38)

This is one of the most remarkable appearances of the Risen Christ. They are cheered by His greeting, "Peace be yours" (v.36); and chided for their anxiety—why troubled? (v.38a). He comforted their hearts but they were not yet convinced or at rest.

He directed them to Himself (vs.39,40)

"It is I myself". He gave them proof by a demonstration of the reality of His person (Acts 1:3). The familiar tone of His voice, the opportunity to handle Him and His pierced feet were abundant evidence that He was not a spirit. Occupation with Himself is the antidote to fear and despair (Psa. 27:4,5).

He Delighted their Hearts (vs.41-45)

With His companionship, standing in their midst, and bestowing peace (v.36). This brought them comfort, joy and confidence (v.41). His communication of truth gave them a new Bible. He disentangled their thinking about Himself, and straightened out their problems (1 Cor. 2:10-13). He opened their eyes to see the fascinating theme, Christ in all the Scriptures. Have you had this thrilling experience as you meditate on His Word? (Psa. 45:1).

Note these lessons:

The presence of Christ is the guarantee of real and enduring peace (v.36). Panic and anxiety are dispelled with Christ in the midst (John 20:20). A "spirit" may frighten but the Holy Spirit will comfort our hearts and glorify Christ (v.38). Our Lord can always be identified by the scars of Calvary on His Person (vs.39-41).

Meditate on this thrilling chapter and obtain help from God each day to live and serve the sovereign Lord. The resurrection is vital (vs.1-12); the conversation was helpful (vs.13-32); the revelation was valuable (vs.33,34); the benediction was personal (vs.36,37), the identification was unmistakable (v.39), the provision was acceptable (vs.42,43), the interpretation was infallible (vs.44-46); the proclamation is universal (vs.49-49), the reception is eternal (vs.50,51) and our adoration is joyful (vs.52,53).

"Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou would'st do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire Divine."

5—THE REVELATION TO DOUBT

John 20:24-30

The revelation to the loving heart (vs.11-18), to the lonely Church (vs.19-23), now to a lapsing follower (vs.24-29). It is very encouraging to observe Christ's care for and patience with individuals. Did the Master pay a second special visit to the apostolic company in order to help Thomas? There are four pictures of Thomas in this book. Devotion to the Lord (vs.11-16); Direction from the Lord (14:5,6); Despair and dereliction of duty (20:24); disbelief (20:25), his defiance is disposed of (vs. 26,27) and this led to delight in the Deity of Christ (v.28).

Absent as a disciple (v.24)

We cannot determine why Thomas kept away from the little assembly of waiting disciples but the cause lay in himself. He missed the blessed experience of meeting the risen Lord. The doubt of Thomas sprang from the desperate need and desire to believe. What deep yearnings underlay that

“except” of a despondent practical minded soul (v.25). Being “one of the twelve” he should have been there. Had he lost heart and interest? or just anguish at not going with His Lord to die? (11:16). How like Thomas we are, we stop away from Assembly gatherings, and brood over things all by ourselves.

Adamant in disbelief (v.25)

The Lord fulfilled His word and gathered with His own (Matt. 18:20), filling their hearts with joy and their minds with peace. Nursing his doubts, even the marvellous tale of his brethren is not believed. He was not willing to be persuaded, this is far more than doubt, it is disbelief. This obstinate attitude made him blind to all else, he did not want to believe. You get a bit callous and cruel when you become disbelieving, “thrust my hand into His side”.

This was brought about by the *Thoughtfulness of the Lord*. For a whole week the Lord was not seen and the silence and suspense must have been strange. Then the Lord appeared in the midst specially for the sake of Thomas. He knew all that Thomas had said in defence of his doubt.

The Tenderness and Condescension of the Lord (v.27) The Lord offers what had been demanded, external evidence of the Manhood, will it suffice?

The Test from the Lord, “be not faithless but believing.” What a challenge to his obstinate, unreasonable disciple. What an amazing offer from a charming Saviour, “become” not faithless.

Thomas is rebuked, humbled and ashamed in the presence of His Lord and did not accept the invitation. He bows in adoration to make a confession which no-one had made before. “My Lord and my God”.

This Tribute to His Lord is the greatest confession of all the apostles. This is the only time in the Gospels when anybody claimed for Christ Deity, what worship from a soul on the way to becoming faithless.

Here is the conviction of identity, “My Lord” and the conviction of Deity—“My God”. No “dear Jesus” in apostolic times. He was to them, the Mighty God, God our Saviour, the Unchanging One, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Only Mary (20:30), Thomas (v.28) and Paul (Phil. 3:8), speak of the Saviour as “my Lord”.

The Teaching of the Lord (v.29) The Lord Jesus accepts and approves this confession of belief in his Deity. There must have been some disciples who believed in the Resurrection merely on the evidence of others. Jesus had not appeared to every one of His followers and to them and the countless number of believers who have never seen Christ in the flesh, He pronounces this sweet benediction, fulfilling the promise of Matt. 5:8. Believe it.

The triumphant note of the gospel (vs.30,31)

Only Luke and John give the reason why they wrote their Gospels (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30,31).

A Definite Purpose “This is twofold: (1) to lead to personal belief in the historical ‘Jesus’ as the ‘Christ’ or Messiah (for the Jews) and as the ‘Son of God’ (for the Gentiles). (2) to lead, by believing, to the possession of life in His name” Dr. Griffith Thomas. Verse 30 gives us the signs of the Saviour, the assurance of His authority. Verse 31, salvation in the Saviour through the acceptance of His atonement, the possession of a personal Saviour.

The Variety of Signs These must not be limited to proofs of the Resurrection, but as a general reference to the deeds of Jesus during His earthly life. These signs were many in number and different in kind from those related. they qualified the disciples to be competent witnesses and give clear testimony concerning that which they themselves had seen, heard or experienced.

The Voice of Signs The signs recorded were not only works of power—but had reference to Christ in His grace, authority and sovereignty. It was not John’s purpose to write a complete “Life of Christ” but to produce saving faith in Him as The Messiah and The Son of God.

The Victorious Saviour (v.31) The signs given show the Absolute Supremacy and the All Sufficiency of the Lord Jesus in every realm, the natural, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, eternal.

They convince us of two things:— (1) that Jesus the well-known Teacher and Prophet, is the Christ, the long looked for Messiah and Deliverer of Israel. (2) That He is also the Son of God, the Divine Word and true God (1:1-3:18; 1 John 4:14,15).

The Valuable Life (v. 31b) “Continue to believe” not only “that you may come to believe” but the faith may be strengthened. There were many heretics trying to undermine the faith of the Church, these enemies must be repulsed (1 John 4:1-4; 2 John 7:9). The acceptance of the truth and personal faith in the Lord Jesus gives us eternal life (5:24). “In His name” rather than “through” His name. This does not mean through the naming of His name, but through the power of the Person who bears the name, all that He is in Himself.

In this chapter we see the Risen Lord as the Conqueror of death. His power demonstrated (vs.1-10), the Comforter of hearts, His power venerated (vs.11-18); Calming our fears, His power communicated (vs.19-23), Confirming our faith, His power appreciated (vs.24-29), Communicating eternal life, His power propagated (vs.30,31). May we be captivated by Him as our Centre of achievement, of affection, of association, of adoration and of assurance.

6—THE REVELATION TO DEFEAT AND DESPAIR

John ch.21

This revelation of the Risen Lord was to give them something to

remember for ever after, "He showed Himself" as Lord of all. Lessons on work (vs.1-14); on character (vs.18,19); and on duty (vs.20-22).

Here is Christ with His disciples mediating, directing and controlling, giving us life (vs.1-14); love (vs.15-17) and light (vs.18-24). The title "Lord" occurs eight times in the chapter and is the message for our hearts today.

Lord of His saints whom He loves (vs.1,2)

He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. His ministry of revelation—Himself; No one else can save, sustain or satisfy the heart. In this book the Person of Christ is central. He made Himself visible. He had been there all the time, the constancy and the reality of His love would be memorable. His ministry of recovery (v.2). What variety and unity is seen in these seven saints. The unnamed are not unnoticed, and all loved by the Lord. His ministry of prevention (v.3). A night of failure for them.

Lord of our labour which He directs (vs.3-6)

Did they go out in self will? Were they discouraged as they waited for Him? (Matt. 28:10).

The Lord does care and He wants to control our service (v.4). It is always morning when Jesus is near; His presence is our sunrise. He is ever watching us and waiting to help us. He is concerned (v.5). He inquired as to the results. His personal interest in what we do is the very best incentive to faithful service (Mark 6:48). Did the Lord all night long deliberately keep the fish out of their nets? Over much of our service He still writes, night—nothing. His restraining hand would enforce what He had told them; "Without me ye can do nothing" (15:5).

His word of command (v.6). Here is the true method of work, when and where He orders. Their prompt obedience is commendable and fruitful (v.6). He always compensates those who do His will.

Lord of our needs which He supplies (vs.7-14)

What preparation He had made for them (v.9). Did the miracle recall to Peter's mind a similar experience in this area which led to his enlistment as a disciple (Luke 5:1-11). The Lord always meets our need, what rich provision He has for us. Just what those men needed most that morning, Jesus had prepared for them. They came in cold after being on the chill waters all night, and He had a fire for them. They came in depressed and perhaps irritable, they needed a friend and He gave them a welcome and fellowship. They were charmed by the warmth of His own presence and He invited them to break their fast. They were hungry and He provided food for them. What a word of comfort "Come and dine". "Fire of coals" (v.9) occurs here and in 18:18 only. At the one Peter thrice denied his Lord; at the other he thrice confessed Him. The Lord's provision is appropriate "all our need", it

is abundant, (v.6, v.8), it is assured “come and dine”, and should be accepted and appreciated; be sure to thank Him for everything.

This was no ordinary meal and there was a hush over the meal; silent worshipping hearts in His presence (v.12,13). It reminded them of another miracle and meal, when He multiplied what the lad gave that day (6:9). Both a picture of what will be hereafter (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 19:9).

Lord of my love which He solicits (vs.15-17)

Peter is welcomed, warmed and fed before he is challenged by the Lord, “lovest thou Me more than these?” Jesus remembered the words of Peter (Mark 14:29). This reminder which Peter is given of his previous self-confidence leads him to speak modestly in what follows.

The love of which Christ spoke was something absolute, heavenly, eternal and Peter had not reached to the pure heights of such love. He raises now no question of comparison with others, he was sure of personal affection (v.15c).

The word of commission (v.15d) “Feed My lambs”

Provide the little ones with that which is needed for their support (1 John 2:12).

This fisher’s work was to be followed by the shepherd’s work. In the Gospels Peter is the evangelist—the man with the hook, a fisher of men, in the Acts a pastor, the man with the crook—caring for sheep, in his Epistles a teacher, the man with the book—feeding our souls. The second time Peter is given a new charge—“shepherd my sheep”, the mature and the vigorous to be guided. (1 John 2:14), “the fathers”.

The third time the Lord uses the apostle’s own word for love, lovest thou Me with the affection which will give up all for a friend? Peter leaves out the affirmation which he had made before, and throws himself wholly upon Christ; “Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

The Final Commission to a sphere of difficult service, “Feed My sheep” (1 John 2:14b). All service to Christ depends upon our personal devotion to Him. Do you really love Him? Is your service for Him sacrificial? (2 Cor. 5:14,15). True love will never be idle.

Lord of my future which He determines (vs.18,19)

Peter had learned what he was to do for others, what he might ask, would be the issue for himself. His past is described (v.18a). He was impulsive and independent; he had freedom in his youth. His future is disclosed (v.18b). It will be marked by surrender and suffering, complete outward bondage ending in martyrdom and glory (v.19). His present is declared (v.19c) “Follow Me”. Christ glorified the Father by His death. Peter will do the same. Peter will do the same. Peter is now directed from all service and

suffering to a life of devotion and allegiance to His Lord. He is still looking for lovers and followers.

Here is the foundation, the character, the issue of active service for Christ. There must be love, considerate thoughtfulness (v.22) and self-surrender. This is the spirit of the Master and of the new covenant (1 Cor. 13).

Lord of my life which He controls (vs.22-25)

All is under the sovereign control of our Master day by day. Like Peter we are interested in what others do and inquisitive as to what their future might be (v.21). Peter was fond of meddling and even tried to manage his Master (Matt. 16:22). But he had learned the lesson later, (see 1 Peter 4:15). He learned that the Master's will is always sovereign over all, but not always seen by all. Each servant has a special sphere. To Peter it is working, to John it is waiting. We must accept our responsibilities as individuals and serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:24; Mark 13:34). We have a simple duty, a life of absolute trust and implicit obedience. We have a splendid prospect—"till I come." This should thrill our hearts whether we are called to serve or to suffer, we do so in the expectation of His soon coming again. May we trust in the Lord (vs.1-14), love and serve Him (vs.15-17), be courageous in suffering or death (vs.18,19) and exercise patience (vs.20-23).

It is sometimes more difficult to wait than to work, but it is not an inferior grace.

May we learn that our Glorious Lord is the Indispensable Christ (vs.1-7), the Inexhaustible Christ (vs.8-14); the Interrogating Christ (vs.15-17); the Illuminating Christ (vs.18,19) and the Incomparable Christ (vs.20-25).

His last words in John chs.19-21

Three precious words for the soul:

"It is finished" 19:30.

Three gracious words for the spirit:

"Why weepest thou?" 20:13.

Three cheering words for the mind:

"Peace unto you" 20:19,21.

Three encouraging words for the weary:

"Come and dine" 21:12.

Three searching words for the conscience:

"Lovest thou me?" 21:15.

Three commanding words for the will.

"Feed my sheep" 21:16.

Three directing words for the feet.

"Follow thou me" 21:22.

Three inspiring words for the heart.

"Till I come" 21:22.

7—THE REVELATION TO WAVERING WORSHIPPERS

Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:19,20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11

In Matthew 28:16-20 we see His authority and the wavering worshippers. **The mountain of appointment (v.16)**

The disciples were sustained by the living presence and daily comradeship of their Lord. Such fellowship was the direct consequence of the Resurrection. The appearance in royal majesty fitly closes the first Gospel of Christ, the King. The end of the narrative answers to the beginning. The adoration of the Wise Men finds its counterpart and completion in the adoration of the disciples. The mountain was evidently chosen by the Lord with a significant purpose. Most of His authoritative declarations were made from mountains (Ch.5:1; 17:1; 24:3; 28:26; Mk. 3:13; 6:36; Acts 1:12).

Their Association (v.16) Preparation for service means solitude with Christ. They were once more apart from the world and in communion with God. Listening to His voice, learning His will, and living in His presence as He unfolds His plans for them.

Their Adoration (v.17a) The majesty of His Person compelled them to worship, they were flat on their faces before Him. They recognised Him and were subdued before Him and satisfied with the sight of the Risen Lord. In the very act of worshipping, some doubted but were soon convinced of His identity and of the reality of His risen life. This word “doubted” only occurs twice in the New Testament and both times in Matthew (see 14:31). Like Peter frightened and floundering, one moment full of faith, the next moment full of fear (Jas. 1:6,7,8).

His Approach (v.18a) He had big things for them and would make demands upon them. He came right up to them, came close to allay their fears, assure their hearts and confirm their faith.

Our Lord's body after His resurrection was a “spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:44). There was identity between body buried, and body raised. Yet there was dissimilarity; it was the same though different and different though the same.

His Authority (v.18a) The four “Alls” assure us of universal power, “all power”; of unbounded love, “all nations”; of unwearied watchfulness, “all things”; and of unceasing fellowship, “with you always”. These have aptly been called, “The Marching Orders of the Church”. They are a Divine warrant for all types of Christian service and witness.

His Sovereign Power

“all authority is mine in heaven and on earth.” He must be Master and Lord of life (Acts 2:34-36; Psa. 45:11b; 2 Cor. 4:5). The life of Christ in these men was an explanation of Divine power. On the *physical level*, they experienced new and exhilarating energies, enabling them to endure hardship and do exploits for God. It was power on the *mental level*. Ill-

educated and illiterate they had been; but they were given power of initiative and directness of decision the life of which the world had not seen before.

Power on the *moral level*, they were transformed and enabled to live spotless victorious lives in cities that were dens of corruption. It was power on the *spiritual level*. Wherever they went, other lives were changed, souls redeemed, and mighty miracles of grace were witnessed. The power of Christ in them (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13). Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!

His Special Plans “make all nations disciples”.

The scope of the work was to be national rather than individual conversion. The presentation of gospel to people of all nations without exception. This world outlook had indeed characterised the life and teaching of the Lord (5:14; 8:11; 24:14; 26:13). Individual evangelization and discipleship are included in the aim and scope of the Great Commission. Christ does not ask His friends as a favour to bear witness to Him among men. He claims it as a duty. A disciple is a convert consecrated to the will of His Master (John 15:14; Luke 17:10).

Baptism was intended as a badge of relationship to Christ, a proof that they were real disciples, learners in the school of Christ. The fundamental thought in baptism is something done to us, a symbol of act of God toward us, our separation from old associations being united to Christ. Baptism is “into” the Name of Trinity, revealing the spiritual meaning of the rite. It means to be brought in God’s own way into fellowship with Him Who has been so revealed.

His Sound Principles (v.20)

This is the substance of our service. Having made disciples and initiated them by rite of baptism the Apostles were to instruct them in everything previously given by Christ for guidance of His followers. The ministry of teaching is most important and sadly neglected among us today. Growth in grace is dependant upon teaching and acceptance of, and obedience to the truth taught.

“Observe” means to guard, to watch over, as the Tomb was guarded (27:66). The ripest believer has not exhausted the teaching of Christ, nor reached the limit to which he can attain. Like Paul we must press on (Phil. 3:14). Our weakness today is we are not observing all, obeying all. We must live as well as preach “Jesus is Lord”. (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3).

His Sustaining Presence

“Lo I am with you all the days”. Here is our strength for service; the assurance of continuance of His own presence in our work for Him. Study the many and varied references all through Scripture to the power and provision of God’s presence.

This is not a promise, it is better than a promise, it is a Fact.

Here is complete equipment for Christian work and this should cheer, inspire and strengthen us wherever we go in His Name.

I would always trust my Saviour,
Let Him choose my times and ways,
For the promise never fails me,
"I am with you all the days."

His Activity—The Willing Workers (Mark 16:19,20)

The Mighty Acts The presence of the Lord was realized for He worked with them and confirmed His word through their lips by His divine power. The Ascension is the guarantee of His continual presence with us (v.19).

"Think of the blessings which are ours today; a righteousness—untarnished, acceptance—unquestioned, peace—undisturbed, life—unending, relationship—unbroken, an inheritance—unfading" Dr. Griffith Thomas.

It is not enough to know that He is with us; we must use His help. There is work to be done as there is blessing to be secured.

His Arrival—The Welcome in Heaven (Luke 24:50-53)

The Lord had been their Teacher, expounding the Scriptures (vs.44,45); their Master, explaining His mission and commissioning them to preach and witness (vs.47,48); their Inspiration promising power and blessing (v.49). Now He is their Leader, "as far as to Bethany". What memories must have crowded back as He led them up the slopes of Olivet over towards Bethany. Trace all references to Bethany in the Gospels. This is the scene of His final triumph over sin, death, hell and the grave.

His Priestly Benediction (v.50b)

(See Num. 6:23-27) for the completion of the Aaronic ministry. The implication of the uplifted hands is a fitting close to Christ's ministry in Luke.

His Sovereign Power (v.51b)

He ascends as the Forerunner the Firstborn and the First-fruits, and these forty days give us a glimpse of the nature of His present ministry for us (Heb. 9:24).

The uplifted hands implies an absolute sufficiency to sustain and satisfy. His blessing shows His transcendent superiority as a priest (2 Cor. 13:14).

His work on earth is completed, His sacrifice accepted, He is carried up into heaven and sat down (Mk. 16:19; Heb. 1:3; 8:1).

The Worthy Adoration (vs.52,53)

His going to the Father was a change of state, it was spiritual. The close of one dispensation and the dawn of another, the last event recorded in the Gospel and the first event recorded in the Acts. The response heavenward was worship and the thrill inward was joy, these two are linked in our experience. They willingly worshipped and obeyed and continued in praise to God. One day he will descend and His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives once again.

His Ascension—Wonderful Days of Fellowship (Acts 1:1-11)

The Acts records the continuing work of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit through the Church.

Establishing (vs.1-3) by communicating His will (v.1). It was preparatory and transitional. "Jesus began to do" during His life on earth, and continues to do from heaven, through His saints (Mk. 16:19). It was practical and powerful, "to do", by His saving work He redeemed the trusting soul. "To teach", by His wonderful words He teaches the obedient saint.

Commanding His apostles to wait until endued with power from on high (v.4; 2:33). Confirming His resurrection (v.3) by proof that His crucifixion was an atoning death.

Encouraging (vs.4-7) by a ministry of instruction. They enjoyed companionship with the Living Christ (v.4). They had the promise of a Divine Guide with them and a Divine Power within them (v.5). A ministry of correction concerning seasons (vs.6,7). They were preoccupied with a materialistic kingdom instead of a spiritual kingdom (Rom. 14:17). One day He will set up His millennial kingdom (Zech. 1:10; 14:14). The time is still God's secret, knowledge withheld from them (Matt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32; 1 Thess. 5:1).

Enabling (vs.8-11) Here is the Lord commissioning His servants. Their great work is mainly witnessing from personal experience (v.8).

The Power

The Holy Spirit is God's provision for powerful testimony. He would come upon them on the Day of Pentecost to (1) baptize all saints (John 1:29-34); "In" the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12,13) is historical and collective and never repeated, it places us in the Body of Christ. (2) to indwell all saints (John 7:39; 14:16,18; Rom. 5:5; 8:8,9). (3) to empower all saints (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8).

The Personnel

"Ye, witnesses unto Me." A personal experience of Christ and then, personal expression of it (ch.4:20). What Christ is and all Christ is, to us, we must show to others, by consistent life, by confession of lip and propagation of truth through literature.

The Programme (v.8c)

The field is the world; three extending circles. The first—"Jerusalem and Judea", the home circle (Luke 8:39), then our neighbourhood, city and country. The second circle, in Samaria (8:1-48) reaching the neighbourhood by word and work. The third circle—"the uttermost part of the earth", with the introduction of gospel privileges to Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48). All is done under divine direction, divine empowerment and divine blessing according to His will.

The Parting (vs.9-11)

The Ascension was the climaxing event of the entire career of the Lord. He was carried up (Lk. 24:51); taken up (Acts 1:9); received up (1:9); went up (v.10). The Ascension is the assurance of the advent to earth. He ascended personally, bodily and visibly, and so He will return (Zech. 12:10). Our witness will be useful and blessed if Christ is real to us, rules our life, and we respond to His claim and call (v.8).

8—GLIMPSES OF HIS PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Luke 24; Heb. 8:1,2

There are many delicate touches peculiar to Luke's gospel that set forth the infinite tenderness and immeasurable compassion of the sympathetic Priest, who came to unveil the very heart of God with all His kindly love. As a priest He represented mankind before God, and His right to officiate on man's behalf lies in His kinship as Son of Man. His resolve to undertake the work of atonement emerges from His friendship, for Luke displays Him as the Friend of publicans and sinners. By virtue of the resurrection, the mediator of the covenant became the minister of the sanctuary (Heb. 8:2). The claims of righteousness are finally met and the comfort of love fully manifest.

His Priestly Suitability (vs.1-12)

THE CONQUEROR OF DEATH

Now dawns the first Lord's Day of the new creation, and the resurrection floods all the landscape of life with a brilliant light. These women who sought Jesus "at deep dawn" were rewarded (v.1). They had anticipated a difficulty (Mark 16:3), but when they arrived, it was removed (v.2).

His resurrection was the positive proof of the divine satisfaction in His offering (Rom. 4:25). Observe, it is now the LORD JESUS (v.3). The stone was removed not to enable Him to leave the tomb, but to allow others to see He had gone. Supernatural power removed the Body of Christ.

Luke gives a very condensed account of the first day of resurrection. He

selects incidents that took place in the early morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. The angels message of interrogation, "Why"; of affirmation, "He is risen"; and exhortation, remember: was meant to end their perplexity (v.4) and calm their fear (v.5). The resurrection ratifies Christ's loftiest claims. He is the first-born among His brethren (Rom. 8:29), and the first-born from among the dead (Col. 1:20). He is the first-fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20), and our Forerunner within the veil (Heb. 6:20).

His Priestly Sympathy (vs.13-24)

THE COMPANION ON THE HIGHWAY

After the opened grave comes the opened Scriptures, on the road of glad surprise (vs.13-35). The Resurrection of Christ is a historical fact. It is God's pledge of final triumph for His people. These two disciples were full of gloom. With burdened hearts they were returning home. The value of this story is:

1) Evidential—a proof of Christ's Resurrection; 2) Preparatory—preparing His followers for His complete bodily absence, leading to days of faith, not sight; 3) Symbolic—for when two talk together with Christ as their theme, He draws near.

He lives to serve because He loves and cares, and longs to lead us into the privilege of this new relationship. His intrusion into their lives (v.15). The Stranger who joined them none other than the Subject of their talk. He chose to remain unrecognised (v.16).

His interest in their sorrow (vs.17-19). He showed interest, sympathy, love. He chose to draw out their thoughts in order to clarify their sorrow. His inspiration from their testimony (vs.19-24). Their recital of events was a confession of their faith in Him. A sad outpouring of hearts unlocked by sympathy. Christ still revered, loved, mourned. They had doubts, disappointment and difficulties, hope once aroused, now shattered (vs.21-24).

His Priestly Spirituality (vs.25-27)

THE COMMUNICATOR OF TRUTH

"The Priests lips should keep knowledge" (Mal. 2:7). His priestly knowledge enabled Him to teach them divine truth. He took them back to their sacred literature, to the things most familiar to them (vs.25,26). His perfect covenant knowledge qualifies Him to arbitrate in the affairs of His people (Deut. 17:8-11). His authority is final, and His ability indisputable (Luke 4:20,22). They listened to His priestly instruction as He traced the Messianic note in the ritual of the Mosaic economy, the clear statements of the prophets, pointing out the tenor of the Old Testament in its ethical and symbolic character.

How much we have missed through not coming to Him more constantly for instruction (Prov. 8:34,35; 4:5-9). It is God who reveals His Son (Gal. 1:16).

His Priestly Succour (vs.28-33)**THE COMFORTER IN THE HOME**

They learned—"after Easter, always Easter". The Lord aroused their interest and tested them by feigning continuance of the journey (v.28). He accepted their invitation to stay with them. Suddenly the Guest becomes the Host. The frugal meal became a Sacrament, and the home, a House of God. That's what Christ does wherever He goes. The familiar act brought a revelation of the living Saviour and they were satisfied (vs.30,31). That changed defeat into victory. Their cup of gladness was now more than full, it overflowed. They were cheered and comforted, their burdened hearts became beaming hearts, (v.32).

His Priestly Strength (vs.34-43)**THE CENTRE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD**

Their faith was perfected by recognition and sealed by experience (1 John 1:1). No good thing should ever be selfishly kept, hurry and tell somebody (v.33). What a welcome at the expectant gathering. Their clear testimony—"He is risen", complete transformation—"appeared to Simon". He was the first apostle to see Him (1 Cor. 15:5). Penitence brought Peter pardon and privilege. The Lord confirmed their story, dispelled their fears, and conferred His peace (vs.36-38). He convinced them He was alive, granting proofs of His identity and reality (vs.39-43). No one would or could have invented this story.

His Priestly Service (vs.45-49)**THE COMMISSIONER OF HIS SERVANTS**

These verses are a summary of the forty days ministry between the Resurrection and the Ascension. His gracious assurance (vs.45-48); His glorious Ascension (vs.50-53). The Lord opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures, thus fitting them to be His witnesses (vs.45,48). Preparation of their mind (v.45), and of their hearts (v.47), for their work of witnessing.

The guilt of sin pollutes, and the power of sin paralyses mankind. The call of the Gospel is for repentance, and the comfort is the remission of sins (v.47). The sphere is "all nations", and the power "in His Name". Their responsibility "to witness", and the resources of grace are assured (v.49). The "promise of the Father" assured them of blessing, "power from on high" would be effective in every aspect of service. The dynamic for evangelism (Acts 1:8).

His Priestly Sanctuary (vs.50-53)**HE CAPTIVATED THEIR HEARTS**

As the Ark of the Covenant "He led them out" (v.50; Josh. 3:3,6,7). Our Glorious Leader, leading to the place of separation and communion—

“Bethany”; and benediction (v.50). His departure indicates redemptive work accepted, and His representative position taken as Priest (v.51b; Heb. 8:1).

His priestly benediction (vs.50,51) includes the Lord’s keeping His grace, and His peace, which are inseparably linked with Himself (Num. 6:23-27; 2 Cor. 13:14). The propitiation having been made in the Sin offering, the Lord can bless and keep. The dedication rendered in the Burnt offering enables the Lord to cause His face to shine and be gracious. The reconciliation effected in the Peace offering, the Lord can give peace.

He ascended as our representative and is still leading us to victory, interceding for us and blessing us. This is the source of our security and the secret of tranquility.

May we daily recognise not only the suitability of Christ but His transcendent superiority as our Priest (Heb. 8:1-6).

Like true disciples may we worship, obey, witness and rejoice. Believe the promise of the Prophet (v.49); enjoy the blessing of the Priest (v.50); and rejoice in the glory of the King (vs.51-53). Amen.

9—A MINISTRY OF RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

John 21

The apostle John contributes the supreme proofs that witness to Christ’s Deity. Christ’s mediation is portrayed under the title “Son of God”, accompanied by the sufficiency, superiority and sovereignty of His relationship and the rights they entail. John’s message supplies the widest aspect of a universal ministry. This gospel leaves the Lord with His disciples mediating, directing and controlling. This chapter seems to summarise all. The Life attracting vs.1-14; the Love appealing vs.15-17; and the Light assuring vs.18-25. Eight times “Lord is mentioned. A fitting title “HE IS LORD”.

(A) **Lord of labour which He controls vs.1-8 Renewing His ministry**

This is the Lord’s seventh appearance in Resurrection. 7 is the number of spiritual perfection. The Lord is acting as “Head of the Church” and is a picture of how He governs His Church in His ascended glory today. What He continues to do.

(a) *A Ministry of Revelation* “He shewed Himself” (v.14). This unique company were in a crisis. The time is between Passover and Pentecost. The Lord deals with them as a group, reassuring them, eventually controlling them (v.2). What variety here. The two foremost in failure, the doubter and the denier, are recovered to privilege. The undesignated have a place and the undistinguished a part in this closing unveiling. Do not assume that Peter

and the others did wrong in going a “fishing.” They failed, as we always do without the Lord.

(b) *A Ministry of Prevention* (v.3) “that night—nothing”. The Lord often disciplines and educates by failure. Have you ever toiled fruitlessly? Yes, even at fishing, the job Peter thought he could do best! It was not lack of faith or experience on his part. There was design in the divine discipline.

(c) *A Ministry of Consolation* (v.4) “In the morning Jesus stood on the shore”. They were discouraged, but Jesus was at hand to help. When they obey their Master’s command, how successful they become (vs. 6,11). It is only obedience to the Head of the Church that can make us effective fishers of men (Mark 1:17).

(d) *A Ministry of Compassion* (v.5) The Lord is often close by when we are unaware of His presence (v.4; Luke 24:16). He does care when things go wrong for us. He is interested in our welfare and loves to hear how we fare down here. Tell Him all your troubles as well as your triumphs.

(e) *A Ministry of Direction* (v.6) RIGHT is not contrasted with WRONG, but with LEFT. How readily they obeyed, no why’s or wherefore’s, and blessing resulted (Psa. 119:60). There is nothing mystical in the number of fish caught (v.11). This scene may prefigure the review of service at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

(B) Lord of light which He generates vs.9-14 He resumes His activity.

(f) *A Ministry of Preparation* (vs.9,10). Nothing is so quick as love “it is the Lord”. Peter’s zeal and God given strength are impressive (vs.7,11). What a welcome they had and how sweet their fellowship at breakfast. A fire they never kindled, fish they never caught, bread provided, all by the Master Himself. He presided over this gathering which brought satisfaction to each heart. His general care for His saints should inspire us to serve Him.

(C) Lord of love which He deserves vs.15-17 He reveals His ability.

“Fire of coals” (v.9) occurs here and in 18:18. Peter would be reminded of his failure. The Lord restores and commissions Peter. He humbles Simon by reminding him of his confident boast to love his Master more than the others (Matt. 26:33). Peter speaks modestly of himself in what follows. The Lord uses two words for “love”. He begins by using “agapan”—commonly used of Divine love. Peter only lays claim to lesser love “phileon”, human love. “You know that I am your friend” (v.15). On the third occasion our Lord descends to Peter’s own level. Peter was deeply hurt, only His Lord’s “friend” now. As Simon lost his self-confidence, the Lord increased His commission. It is far more difficult to minister to the sheep than to the lambs. The Apostle remembered that when he wrote, “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pet. 2:25).

(D) Lord of life which He determines vs.18-22 He reassures His authority.

The Lord describes Peter's past and discloses his future (v.18). He would die violently but John naturally, which, tradition affirms they did. We can "glorify God" by death as well as by life, and this the martyrs have done (v.14). John's lot was not Peter's responsibility; that is in the hands of the Sovereign Head of the Church (v.23). Dr. Graham Scroggie writes, "The Church needs four things (1) Trust (vs.1-14); (2) Love (vs.15-17); True love is always sacrificial. (3) Courage (vs.18,19) and (4) Patience (vs.20-23). It is sometimes more difficult to wait than to work, but it is not an inferior grace.

10—HIS REDEEMING MISSION

Matt. 28:16-20

Matthew emphasises the triumph of Kingly grace. By means of the Gospel message, He is bringing many sons unto glory. Ch.28 is the chapter of "Power". The power of love (v.1). Two devoted souls come to the sepulchre. "Dawn"—His resurrection began a new day in the history of the world. The power of light (vs.2-4). Angelic ministry, rolled the stone away. Appearance, lightning-like, a flame of fire (Heb. 1:7). The power of life (vs.5,6). Angelic consolation (v.5); confirmation—He is risen, and instruction (v.7). The power of Liberty (vs.7,8). The path of obedience became the path of joy (v.8) and of satisfaction (v.9). The power of their Leader (vs.9,10). Underline the pronouns in this chapter. There are more than twenty six, it is all about their Risen Master. He brought joy to them and worship from their hearts. The power of lying (vs.11-15), these are sordid verses. To the guard the empty tomb spelt disaster and they were bribed to tell lies. The power for labour (vs.16-20). Divine appointment (v.16); human adoration (v.17); Divine authority (v.18); Divine orders and assurance (vs.19,20).

Equipped by a mountain experience (vs.16,17)

They had an appointment with the living Lord Jesus in Galilee. He never breaks an appointment with the believing company (Matt. 18:20). They needed solitude with Him (Mk. 6:31). They were satisfied with Him, they worshipped. He is never late for an appointment, "then", "when", He knew they needed His presence. It is always worth while keeping tryst with the Lord.

Engaged by a Master whose resources are eternal (v.18)

The Lord claims for Himself *omnipotence*. The "all" of universal power to enable and encourage them in His service. This is the secret of success. They

needed power to witness, to preach and to bring lost souls to the Saviour. This was Paul's dynamic for evangelism (Rom. 1:16). The universal Sovereignty of Christ is indispensable.

Entrusted with a message that has no equal (v.19)

This is the great commission of the Church. The Divine order does not change. How comprehensive—"all nations", how dear, "go, make disciples, baptize, teach". Here is our Lord's *omniscience*. His unbounded love for the world and His unequalled knowledge of human need makes this a missionary message. The substance of the message needs to be remembered and obeyed today. We need loyalty to His sufficiency (v.18). Loyalty to His command and commission (v.19). There is no message like the Gospel for transforming lives. It is no longer confined to Israel (Matt. 10:5,6); it is the whole world (Mk. 16:20; Acts 1:8; 15:7,8,14). Its scope extends to every realm, it involves enlisting men under His Lordship "make disciples" (RSV).

Enlisted for a ministry that can never fail (v.20a)

All disciples identify themselves with the Lord and His followers in the rite of baptism. There is commitment to teach the truths of the Word of God—"all things". Paul carried this out effectively (Acts 20:24-27). God has given to us as well as the apostles the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). May we never be ashamed of this message (2 Tim. 1:8-13). Obeying Christ's word to us is as important as trusting Christ's work for us. Conversion to His way (18:3) must be followed by conformity to His will (12:50; John 15:14).

Encouraged by a master who will never forsake us (v.20b)

His *omnipresence*. The promise of unceasing fellowship—"Lo, I am with you alway". His continued presence with His own. This is the guarantee of daily strength for suffering or service (Heb. 13:5b). His living, guiding and abiding presence. With that promise the early Christians marched out to win the world, knowing Him to be by their side (2 Tim. 4:17,18).

May we rejoice, Christ Jesus lives today (Rev. 1:18). Recognise you have a Lord to serve (v.18). He is the victorious Conqueror (Eph. 1:20-22). We have all nations to reach (v.19). What a tremendous task. A word to obey (v.20) "teaching them to observe" and a fact to believe (v.20). "I am with you". This book opens with the announcement of His name, "Emmanuel, God with us" (1:23) and the resurrection confirms the reality of His presence "always".

Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high;

Can we to men benighted
 The lamp of life deny?
 Salvation! O Salvation!
 The joyful sound proclaim
 Till men of every nation
 Have heard the Saviour's name.

11—HIS REDEEMING MESSAGE

Luke 24:45-53

In this chapter the Lord is risen (vs.1-12); He is revealed (vs.13-35); then recognised (vs.36-48) and received up to Heaven. His ascension to glory (vs.49-53).

Christ in the heart—the indwelling Christ (vs.1-12); on the highway—the interested Christ (vs.13-24); in the holy Scriptures—the inexhaustible Christ (vs.25-27); in the home—the illuminating Christ (vs.28-32); in the house of God—the inspiring Christ (vs.33-45); in happy service—the indispensable Christ (vs.46-49); and in Heaven—the interceding Christ (vs.50-53).

The Risen Lord brought peace to the hearts of His despondent disciples (v.41). He gives them perception for they were slow of heart (v.25). He is preparing them to be His witnesses in a sinful world (v.45). Verse 44 is possibly a summary of His ministry during the 40 days before His ascension. He illuminates their minds to comprehend the meaning of His death and resurrection. The predictions concerning Him had to be fulfilled (vs.44-46). He interpreted the O.T. references in the light of the events in the previous few days. We have glimpses of His greatness in those verses (vs.46-53).

Greater than Isaac in His sonship (v.49)

“My Father”. Like Isaac He is the “Only Son” (Gen. 22:1; Rom. 8:32). He went to Calvary, part of mount Moriah, to suffer and to die (John 19:17).

(a) The purpose of God for His Son (v.46) “To suffer and to rise from the dead the third day”. Typified in Isaac (Heb. 11:17-19).

(b) The provision of God for sinners (v.47). The end in view was the preaching of “repentance and remission of sins”. There must be a deliberate change of mind relative to one’s sinful state before God (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Forgiveness is proclaimed because the sacrifice of Christ met God’s claims against us (Rom. 3:25; 1 Cor. 15:3).

(c) Power for the servants (v.49). This was vital to preaching. This was given at Pentecost, the Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:33).

Greater than Joshua in His leadership (v.50a)

An account of His ascension. Here is the Captain of the Lord’s Host (Josh.

5:14,15). He has conquered all our foes (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14). He causes us to triumph (2 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57). He has brought us into our heavenly Canaan land (Eph. 2:6). He led them to Bethany the place of hallowed association. The two sisters welcomed the Lord. He was shown hospitality, they gave Him attention and affection. He was their Prophet (Luke 10), Priest (John 11), their Head and King (John 12). It was a place of Benediction, "lifted hands", and satisfaction—"blessed them" (Num. 6:23,24). These saints were cheered (v.41), commissioned (v.47), enabled at Pentecost (v.49) and enriched with His blessing.

Greater than Moses and Aaron in mediatorship and priesthood (v.50b)

He is going back to Heaven as the Mediator of a better Covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:13). His Priesthood is eternal, perpetual, spiritual and suitable (Heb. 7). His Priesthood is better in benefaction, inauguration and benediction (Heb. 5).

Greater than Elijah in His stewardship (v.51)

"Carried up into Heaven" (2 Kings 2:11). Compared with Elijah what a record He had (John 17:4). He did all things well. What a reception He enjoyed—carried up, taken up in ascension (Acts 1:2,9). What a reward is His (Heb. 1:13) He is bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:13).

Greater than Solomon in His kingship (v.52)

Matt 12:42 "they worshipped Him". For them it was the place of adoration. They appreciated His supremacy (v.6) risen from the dead (vs.6,7). Some knew much of His sympathy (vs.13-25) and His sufficiency in the home. Worship during His birth and life (Matt. 2:11; 14:33) and in resurrection (28:9,17). Now after His ascension (Luke 24:52). May we hear the Spirit say to our hearts, "For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Psa. 45:11). This hallowed ground was a place of satisfaction (v.52b, 53). They had unspeakable joy, unbroken fellowship in the upper room and unceasing prayer and praise (v.53; Acts 1:13,14). They were captivated with Himself (vs.15,27,36).

The Acts of the Apostles

Written from Rome AD 63

The Introduction ch.1:1-11

The Manifestation of the Lord vs.1-4

The Instruction of the Lord vs.5-8

The Ascension of the Lord vs.9-10

The Confirmation of the Lord v.11

“The Church Established” 1:11 to 8:4

by

“The Demonstration of the Spirit” 1:11 to 8:2 “AD 30-37”

1. The Preparation for the Church ch.1:1-26

The Obedience of the Saints vs.12-13

The Occupation of the Saints vs.14-20

The Ordination by the Saints vs.22-26

2. The Formation of the Church ch.2

The Fulness of the Spirit vs.1-12

The Fulfilment of the Scriptures vs.13-36

The Facts of Salvation vs.37-40

The Fellowship of Saints vs.41-47

3. The Demonstration of the Church ch.3

Of power in Christ's Name vs.1-11, their works

By preaching for Christ's Glory vs.12-26, their words

4. Opposition to the Church ch.4:1-32

The Apprehension vs.1-4

The Examination vs.5-12

The Consultation vs.13-17

The Prohibition vs.18-22

The Satisfaction of the Apostles vs.23-32

5. The Administration of the Church ch.4:33—5:16

Marked by Prayer v.31

Marked by Power v.33

Marked by Provision vs.34-37

Marked by Purity 4:1-11
Marked by Progress 5:12-16

6. **The Vindication of the Church** ch.5:17-42
Their Testimony confirmed vs.17-25
Their Troublers confuted vs.26-40
Their Teaching continued vs.41-42
7. **The Organisation of the Church** ch.6:1-6
The Disciples complain v.1
The Decision of the Church vs.2-4
The Deacons Chosen vs.5-6
8. **The Persecution of the Church** ch.6:7—8:3
The Cause of it ch.6:7-10
The Course of it ch. 6:11—7:60
The Consequence of it ch.8:1-3

“The Church Enriched”

by

“The Declaration of Salvation” ch.8:5-12; “AD 37-47”

1. **By the Preaching of Philip** ch.8:5-40
 - (a) In Samaria ch.8:6-25
Successful Service vs.6-8
Simon the Sorcerer vs.9-24
Spreading the Gospel v.25
 - (b) Towards Africa vs.26-40
Philip’s manner commendable vs.29-30
Philip’s movements controlled vs.26-28
Philip’s message captivating vs.32-35
Philip’s ministry concluded vs.36-40
2. **By the Persecutor** ch.9:1-31
Saul’s conversion vs.1-9
Saul’s consecration vs.10-19
Saul’s confession vs.19-31
3. **By the Preparation of Peter** ch.9:32—10:48
Peter at Lydda—demonstration ch.9:32-35
Peter at Joppa—consolation ch.9:36-43
Peter at Joppa—preparation ch.10:1-8
Peter at Caesarea—revelation ch.10:9-16
Peter at Caesarea—salvation vs.23-48

4. **By the Persuasion of the Apostles** ch.11

The Accusation vs.1-3

The Explanation vs.4-17

The Commendation v.18

The Recognition vs.19-24

The Identification vs.25-30

5. **By the Persecution from Herod** ch.12

The Imprisonment of Peter vs.3-4

The Intercession of saints v.5

The Intervention of the Lord vs.6-17

The Indignation of Herod vs.18-19

The Inglorious end of Herod vs.21-23

Note the word “but” in this chapter.

Study the “Ministry of Angels” in the Acts.

“The Church Extended”

by

“Devout Service” chs.13-28; “AD 47-63”

1. **Paul’s Faithful Activity** chs.13—21:16

First Missionary Journey chs.13-15

THE SPIRIT CALLING

Commendation by saints 13:1-4

Opposition from Satan 13:6-12

Exposition of Scriptures 13:13-41

Evangelisation by the servants 14:1-18

Confirmation of saints 14:19-28

Discussion at Jerusalem 15:1-35

Contention over Mark 15:36-41

Second Missionary Journey chs.15:36—18:22

THE SPIRIT CONTROLLING

In Asia Minor 13:40—16:10, The Vision of Faith

In Macedonia 16:11—17:15, The Venture of Faith

In Achaia 17:15—18:22, The Victory of Faith

Third Missionary Journey chs.18:23—21:16

THE SPIRIT CONSOLIDATING

Seeking to encourage 18:23-28

Seeking to evangelise ch.19
 Seeking to edify ch.20
 Seeking to enlighten ch.21:1-17

2. **Paul's Fruitful Captivity** ch.21:17-28

(a) *At Jerusalem* 21:17—23:22

APPARENT FAILURE

His Shameful Treatment 21:17-36

His Splendid Testimony 21:37—23:11

His Life Threatened 23:12-22

(b) *At Caesarea* 23:23—26:32

ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS

Before Felix—Courageous ch.24

Before Festus—Confident 25:1-12

Before Agrippa—Courteous 25:13—26:32

(c) *At Rome* chs.27,28

ABUNDANT FRUIT

A Tempestuous Voyage ch.28

Triumph and Virtue 28:1-10

Testimony and Visitation 28:11-31

His life Godward —Unbroken Fellowship

His life Manward —Undaunted Courage

His life Churchward —Unfailing Ministry

The Epistle to the Romans

Written by Paul about AD 59, while he was in Greece, **probably in Corinth**, in the house of Gaius, 16:23; during his third missionary journey. Tertius wrote it for Paul 16:22; and **Phebe** in Cenchrea **took it** 16:1.

Readers: Never visited by Paul 1:11; Rome had not been visited by an Apostle previously 1:10,11; 15:20-29. The Church was not founded by Peter, Gal. 2:8. Peter the Apostle to the Jews. Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, Rom. 15:20.

Theme: "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD" 1:16,17; 2:26

Will it work? chs.1-8 Yes it works effectively

Will it win? chs.9-10 Yes it wins eventually

Will it wear? chs.12-16 Yes it wears everywhere

Some writers see a parallel with the Pentateuch in the entire sixteen chapters, but there is a closer similarity in the first eight chapters.

Chapters 1,2	The fall of man	Genesis , "The way down"
Chapter 3	The Law and the Mercy Seat	Exodus , "The way out"
Chapters 4,5	Our access to God	Leviticus , "The way in"
Chapters 6,7	The Wilderness, warring against the flesh	Numbers , "The way through"
Chapter 8	The end of the wilderness	Deuteronomy , "The way home"

NINE WORDS SUMMARIZE THIS EPISTLE

Introduction 1:1-17

Condemnation 1:18-3:20

Justification 3:21-5:21

Sanctification chs.6,7,8:17

Glorification 8:18-39

Dispensation and Election chs.9,10 and 11

Consecration 12-15:13

Conclusion 15:14-16:27

1. **The Introduction** 1:1-17 Personal
(a) *Paul and his Gospel* 1:1-7 The Salutation
A servant, apostle, called and separated v.1.

The Gospel from God—its source; Through the prophets—its channel
v.2

Concerning His Son—its content vs.3,4; For all nations—its objects
vs.5,6

To all saints—its subjects v.7.

(b) *Paul and his readers* 1:8-15 The Introduction

Salutation v.7; Thanksgiving v.8; Prayers and Petitions vs.9,10; Desire
vs.11-13; Obligation to all men v.14; Conviction vs.15,16.

(c) *Paul and his theme* 1:16,17 The Proposition

Note its power, purpose, character, content and operation.

2. **Righteousness Required by All 1:18-3:20** Doctrinal

(a) "*The Idolater*" 1:18-32 "The Gentiles"

His impurity v.24; Idolatry v.25; Utter depravity vs.26-32

Witnesses called: Creation vs.19,20; History vs.21-31

(b) "*The Moralist*" 2:1-16 "The Jews"

Their Claims v.1; Conduct v.4; Condemnation vs.5,6; Conscience v.15.

(c) "*The Religionist*" 2:17-28 "The Jews"

The oracles vs.17,18; Ordinances vs.25-27; Obligations vs.19-21

The objections met 3:1-8; Witnesses Conscience and Law 2:15.

(d) "*The whole Word*" 3:9-20; Verdict All are Guilty 3:19.

3. **Righteousness Revealed and Received 3:21-5:21** Doctrinal "Justification"

(a) Its Manifestation—foreshadowed in Law, foretold by the prophets
3:21

(b) Its Foundation—propitiation and redemption 3:24,25

(c) Its Reception— by faith—apart from the law v.28

by grace—apart from works v.24

by blood—apart from ordinances v.25

(d) Its Illustration ch.4

Abraham the Principle of it BEFORE the law vs.1-6

David the Pattern of it UNDER the law vs.6-8

Faith in the Power of God v.18; Promise of God v.21

Word of God v.23; Work of Christ v.25

(e) Its Perfection ch.5

For the individual vs.1-11; For the Race vs.12-21; A full salvation
vs.1-11; A free salvation vs.12-21

Two Heads: Adam and Christ Two Powers: Law and Grace

4. **Righteousness Reckoned and Realised ch.6:1-8** Doctrinal "Identification" 6:1-23

(a) **The Principle of Holiness** 6:1-11 **Two Men:** Old man, New man

United to Christ in Death vs.1-5; in Crucifixion vs.6,7; In Resurrection vs.8-11

(b) **The Practice of Holiness** 6:12-7:6 **Two Masters:** Sin, the Lord
The Divine Provision and Promise vs.12-14

The Divine Position and Pursuits vs.15-21

The Divine Product v.22; The Divine Power 7:1-6 **Two Husbands**
“**Sanctification**” 7:7-8:17

(c) **The Preventative of Holiness** 7:7-25 **Two Laws**

The Function of the law vs.7-13 Before conversion

The Failure of the flesh vs.14-25 After conversion

(d) **The Power of Holiness** 8:1-7 **Two Principles**

The Possession of Life vs.1,2; Purpose of Liberty v.4

The Power of Liberty vs.5-11; Power of the Spirit vs.12-17

“**Glorification**” 8:18-39

The Aspirations vs.14-17; The Anticipation vs.18-27

The Assurance vs.28-30; The Adoration vs.32-39

5. **Righteousness Refused** chapters 9-11 Dispensational

(a) **The Past** ch.9 **Israel’s Election** “**The Olive Tree**”

The anxiety of Paul vs.1-6 **The Sovereignty of God** vs.7-33

His Sovereign choice vs.1-13 Purpose vs.14-24 In Blessing and Judgment

(b) **The Present** ch.10 **Israel’s Rejection** “**The Vine**”

The Righteousness of God

The Sufficiency of the Gospel vs.1-5; Simplicity of the Gospel vs.6-12

The Universality of the Gospel vs.13-21

(c) **The Future** ch.11 **Israel’s Restoration** “**The Fig Tree**”

The Wisdom of God

His purpose in preservation vs.1-3

His purpose in condemnation vs.6-10

His purpose in salvation vs.11,12

His purpose in restoration vs.13-36

6. **Righteousness Reproduced** Chapters 12-15:13 **Practical**

(a) **In Church Life** ch.12:1-13 “**Internal**”

Our Responsibility to God vs.1,2; To ourselves v.3; The Church vs.4-8

Our Responsibility to follow saints vs.9-13

(b) **In Social Life** ch.12:14-13:14 “**External**”

Our Responsibility toward all men 12:14-21

Our Responsibility toward the state 13:1-7

Our Responsibility toward our neighbours 13:8-10

Our Responsibility toward the world 13:11-14

(c) **In Social Life** ch.14-15:13 “**Mutual**”

Mutual toleration and the Lordship of Christ 14:1-12

Mutual consideration and the Service of Christ 14:13-23

Mutual edification and the Example of Christ 15:1-13

7. Righteousness Recognised ch.13, 14-16:27 **Personal**

His Personal Ministry 15:14-21

His Personal Matters 15:22-29

His Personal Messages ch.16 of commendation and admonition

Benediction 15:30-33; Doxology 16:25-27

Addendum: ch.12 Saintship; ch.13 Citizenship; ch.14 Relationship; ch.15 Stewardship; ch.16 Comradeship.

Romans 6:5

1. The purpose that begins by death

Something which must be *apprehended by us*
accomplished in us
appropriated by us

2. The process that results from death

The *emergence* of a new *quality* of life in Christ
 The *experience* of a new *liberty* from sin.
 The *effulgence* of a new *glory* of character

3. The patience that abides in death

Abide—much fruit

Rom. 6:22 *Freedom* from sin

Fettered to God—servants

Fruitful unto honour

Romans Chapter 10

Chapters 9 and 11 are NATIONAL; Chapter 10 is PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL (Salvation for ALL).

Chapter 10 tells of Israel's Failure and Folly—Blinded by ritualism and religion.

They failed to see three vital things in Christ and His Salvation:

1. **THE ADEQUACY OF THE GOSPEL** (vs.1-4)—Christ has fulfilled the law
2. **THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE GOSPEL** (vs.5-11)—Christ is available to all.
3. **THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL** (vs.12-21)—Christ is proclaimed to all.

(A) The Failure of the Nation (vs.1-4) or, **SUBMISSION REFUSED**

This Chapter answers the problem stated in ch.9:30-33 . . . their inability to accept God's way of life in Christ.

Interest (v.1) His good pleasure and desire for their Salvation.

Intercession (v.1b) He prays because of their condition, false zeal and wilful rebellion.

Indictment (v.2) Their zeal was a misguided and misdirected thing Acts 22:3

Ignorance (v.3a) Blind to everything but the law. Ignorance of God's righteousness and reliance on their own righteousness Phil. 3:9. They spurned the revelation of God and His provision in Christ Jn 14:6; 1 Cor. 1:30.

Independence (v.3b) Unwilling to submit themselves to God; their efforts end in failure.

Information (v.4) Christ is the end of legalism, Gal. 3:23-26. The goal to make men righteous. Christ led the life and gives the power. In Him its precepts were perfectly exemplified, its purpose was fulfilled and its curse exhausted.

Righteousness Ours is unclean, 3a; God's is unspotted yet unwanted, 3b; that of the Law unsparing, 5; that of faith unfolding and understood, vs.5,10.

(B) The Fulness of the Gospel (vs.5-11) or, **SALVATION REVEALED**

Paul exposes human merit, v.3 and explained the divine method, v.4; he examines righteousness under law, v.5, contrasted with what is offered through faith in Christ, vs.6-8.

Its Sufficiency (vs.6-7) What God required, v.5, is realised in Christ, v.4; Who removes all barriers of distance, vs.6-7. The Law said, "Go to Christ for salvation," Acts 3:24. Christ in Incarnation makes salvation possible, v.6; in resurrection and ascension make it actual to the believing soul. These historical facts were divine miracles, beyond human power. Salvation is made available by Divine grace.

Its Accessibility (v.8) The way is neither distant, v.6; nor difficult, v.7; but near, v.5. The Word is near, therefore accessible. Plain and simple . . . so apprehensible. It deals with historical facts, therefore reliable. It is within the grasp of all.

Its Availability (v.8b) What was true of the law is equally applicable to the

Gospel, Deut. 30:11-14. It is not our effort which wins us righteousness; we have only to accept what has been done for us. In Christ salvation is right at hand for our reception.

Its Simplicity (v.9) Our twofold response to the offer of Christ, confession (outward) and faith (inward) bring salvation. The heart includes the intellect, feeling and will. Trust includes the assent of the mind, the consent of the will and reception by the heart. Faith acknowledges that Christ has come, v.6; is risen, v.7; and is Lord over all, vs.9,12. We accept the sacrifice of Christ, know the victory of Christ, for He lives and He is Lord.

Its Responsibility (v.10) Faith expresses itself in confession. Righteousness comes by believing and salvation is evident in confession by life and lip. I have a standing before God (righteous) and everything in and from God (salvation).

Its Certainty (v.11) The scope of the Gospel—"whosoever". The simplicity of the Gospel—"believeth in Him". The satisfaction of it—"not put to shame". If our faith is real, we will never know disillusionment.

FAITH is the way of approach, v.9; of acquisition, v.10; acceptance, v.19; assurance, v.17; the word of announcement, v.5; and appeal, v.16.

(C) The Function of the Preacher (vs.12-18) or, The Servants Responsibility.

His Good Congregation (vs.12-13) The universality of the Gospel is declared, vs.12,13, then proved, vs.14,15. All racial and social distinctions are obliterated—"no difference", Rom. 3:22. All have sinned and all can be saved, vs.10-12. We are encouraged by the character of God—"Lord of All"; and the promise of God, v.13, "call and be saved", Psa. 86:5; Eph. 3:8. Titles given to Jehovah are given to the Lord Jesus, Acts 10:36; Phil. 2:10f. The terms of acceptance—"call" v.13, and the tidings of assurance—"be saved".

His genuine concern (v.14) Joel foretold that salvation would be granted, not on the ground of nationality, but of urgency—Call v.13. The four questions asked in vs.14-15 emphasise the universality of the Gospel and the absolute necessity of its proclamation. The objections raised are answered by Isa. 52:7, and Paul shares the joy in carrying the message.

His God given commission (v.15) Here is the dignity, importance, call and benevolence of the messenger. Israel had four such messengers, David, Isaiah, Hosea and Joel, preaching the message. Only sent men are serviceable and faithful.

His grief and condemnation (vs.16-18) Preaching the truth is no guarantee of acceptance. The message was scorned and the messenger perplexed—"who hath believed". Opportunity afforded was deliberately despised. God's message has gone out to all the world, Psa. 19:4. There is the voice of creation and the Word of God.

(D) **The Folly of the Nation** (vs.19-21) or, **Their Shameful Rejection.** *Folly reprov'd* (v.19) As for Jewish unbelief, there is the testimony of Moses in "whom they trusted", Deut. 32:21. Because of their disobedience and rebellion, God will transfer His favour to another people. This was not caused by any unfaithfulness on God's part.

Faith rewarded (v.20) God has been found and worshipped by the Gentile, leaving Israel absolutely without excuse. They scorned the idea of a free salvation, vs.5-11, and a universal salvation (vs.12-17).

Failure replete (v.21) Their wilful blindness culminated in their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. God is depicted as stretching forth His hands for an entire day. He is still longing, willing, wanting and waiting to save.

Summary: *Lessons from verses 12-21*

The abundant provision of God v.12

The acceptable principle of faith vs.13,17

The amazing privilege of preaching vs.14-16

The abiding proofs of the inspired scripture v.10

The apathy and antagonism of Israel to the gospel vs.18-21.

Romans 16

Church Life

1. **Variety** in the church

Christian grace marked by:

- a. *activity* helpers, labourers
- b. *courage* fellow prisoners
- c. *character* beloved, approved

2. **Unity** in the church

A bond united them all, and they were to avoid those that caused divisions (v.17)

3. **Dignity** in the church.

The Gospel: *elevates* called saints v.2
 separates avoid them v.17
 activates laboured much in the Lord, v.12

4. **Humility** in the church.

All described as helpers, not leaders, who quietly went about their tasks.

5. **Spirituality** in the church. Can be seen in the greetings and salutations.

6. **Testimony** in the church.

- v.1 a servant of the church
- v.3 my helpers
- v.6 bestowed much labour on us
- v.8 my beloved in the Lord
- v.12 labour in the Lord

7. **Quality** in the church

Love and fellowship

8. **Responsibility** in the church.

- v.2 *receive* her in the Lord.
- vs.17 and 18 *refuse* them.

Five separate groups of saints are mentioned:

- group 1—vs.5 to 9
- group 2—v.10
- group 3—v.11
- group 4—v.14
- group 5—v.15

1 Corinthians 11

The Lord's Supper

S Saviour is **remembered** v.24

His *deity*
dignity
devotion
declarations

U Unfolded by **revelation** v.23

Divine in *origin*
occasion
order
object
outlook

P Provided for the **redeemed** v.26

related to Him
reconciled to Him
revere Him

P Precious for **reflection** v.28
 look back to Calvary *justification*
 look into the heart *examination*
 look around the saints *communion*
 look up to the throne *glorification*
 look on to His coming *expectation*

E Expect His **return** v.26
 His *pledge*
 purpose
 promise
 pleasure

R Recognise our **responsibility** v.31
 to be *present*
 reverent
 consistent

1 Corinthians 13

Grace in the church

The sublimity of love

Love's way is <i>indispensable</i> vs.1 to 3	its contrasts	<i>values</i>
Love's worth is <i>indescribable</i> vs.4 to 7	its characteristics	<i>virtues</i>
Love's wealth is <i>inexhaustible</i> vs.8 to 13	its continuance	<i>victories</i>

1. The song of love's excellence vs.1 to 3.

Examine its values, or the capabilities that are endowed by love.

- Love is more than *language* (in the sphere of evangelism)
- Love is more than *learning* (in teaching or ministry)
- Love is more than *faith* (fanatical, but not practical)
- Love is more than *philanthropy* (discharging stewardship)
- Love is more than *martyrdom* (a sacrificial life)

Love should control: the heart v.1
 the mind v.2
 the will v.3

Embraces, here, the orator, the scholar, the pioneer, the philosopher and the martyr.

2. The signs of love's presence vs.4 to 7

Expounding its values

The control exercised by love vs.4 to 6

Here are 8 things that love never does.

Love's <i>character</i> v.4	never hasty
Love's <i>compassion</i> v.4	never unkind
Love is <i>contented</i> v.4	never envious
Love is <i>Christ-like</i> v.5	never proud
Love is <i>courteous</i> v.5	never ill-mannered
Love's <i>conduct</i> v.5	never indiscreet
Love <i>controls</i> v.7	never quick-tempered
Love is <i>considerate</i> v.5	never selfish

3. The surety of love's **permanence** vs.8 to 13

- a. love never faileth v.8
 - prophecies *fail*
 - tongues *finish*
 - knowledge *fades away*
- b. love is eternal in the sense of:
 - timelessness v.8
 - completeness v.9
 - perfection v.10
 - maturity v.11
 - spake as a child *expression*
 - understood as a child *experience*
 - thought as a child *evaluation*

Faith will give place to sight.

Hope will give place to fruition.

LOVE IS ETERNAL.

Notes on First Corinthians 15

“THE TRUTH OF RESURRECTION” vs.1-19 “FUNDAMENTAL FACTS”

Some in Corinth were disputing the truth of the resurrection (v.12) saying: “There is no resurrection of dead men.” Paul rehearses the vital facts of the Gospel on which their faith rests (vs.1-11). Unhappily, these deniers of the resurrection are not without numerous successors today, including both the “scholarly” or rationalistic, and the “spiritual” or mystical varieties of unbelief.

“The Lord is risen”—what a message (vs.1-11): “the Lord is revealed”—what manifestations (vs.12-19).

The dynamic message (vs.1-11) The authority of resurrection

Faithfully preached (vs.1-4) Paul shows that Christ’s resurrection is fundamental to the Gospel. He reiterates the glad tidings which he had announced among them.

The messenger—Paul. He was dramatically saved (Acts 9:9); divinely sent (Acts 9:15-16); a dedicated servant—“Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16; Phil. 1:1); a delightful saint (Phil. 1:21; 3:17); a diligent shepherd (1 Thess. 2:9-12).

The message spoken. He announces the glad tidings. In this Gospel—God offers salvation, pardon, emancipation and life. This message has a divine source—Gospel of God; a divine subject—concerning His Son; divine scope—all nations; divine purpose—salvation; and divine power—the dynamic of God.

It saves “Ye are saved” (v.2). The Gospel is the means Christ uses to bring about salvation. Salvation is comprehensive. The past—they received it; the present—standing in it; the future—in the process of being saved. It commenced by faith in the Saviour, it continues—through fellowship with Him; and is completed—forever with and like Him.

It secures “Ye stand” (v.1). They had a foundation—Christ the impregnable rock (ch.3:10); this brought them into a family (Eph. 2:19-20); and they had a Father (Gal. 4:6).

It is sound (v.3). It is important. His preaching provided a ground for their acceptance. It is inspired—“I received it”. Paul did not originate the message, he passed it on to them (ch.11:23; Gal. 1:11-12). Incontrovertible historical, redemptive facts are clearly stated. Three basic facts about the death of Christ. Its passion—He died; its purpose—for our sins; its plan—

according to the Scriptures. The cross is at the heart of the Gospel. His death was an atoning death—for our sins. A propitiatory sacrifice for sin (ch. 1:17; ch. 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:25).

It is *scriptural* (vs. 3-4). The Gospel was no after-thought, it was foretold long before in sacred Scriptures. The death of Christ was a verification of Old Testament prophecies (Psa. 16:10; Psa. 22:69; Isa. 53:5-12; Acts 2:23). This silences all discussion and controversy.

“*Buried*” His atoning death and actual burial go together. Both are certified as Isaiah had prophesied (53:9).

“*Rose again*” Resurrection interprets Christ’s death, guarantees His present ministry and predicts His return to destroy the last enemy (v. 26). It is the royal evidence of His authority (Matt. 28; Acts 2:32). The fact of resurrection (Acts 2:24) foretelling of it (Acts 2:24-28); fellowship of it (vs. 29-32); fruit of it (vs. 33-36). The radiant testimony of His Deity (Rom. 1:4). The recognised sign of His Purity (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27). The real seal of His sufficiency (Acts 4:10-12; 13:37-38). The regal fact of His Supremacy (Rev. 1:17). It is the proof that all the claims He made are genuine, the witness that He does justify the ungodly, and the pledge that the redeemed are destined for Glory.

Resurrection is fully proved (vs. 5-9). These events were grounded in Old Testament scripture, rooted in history and confirmed by experience. Note “that”, “He was seen”. Christianity is founded upon facts, personal, historical and well attested. The truth of the resurrection was confirmed by unimpeachable witnesses. Six appearances of the risen Lord are mentioned. Peter is placed first because he was the first apostle to see the risen Lord (Luke 24:34).

Paul gives four proofs—their saving experience (vs. 1-2); the scriptural record (vs. 3-4); the servant’s testimony; sound witnesses, named and numerous (vs. 5-11) and the scheme and history of salvation (vs. 12-19).

Verse 6. This grand meeting is almost certainly to be identified with Matthew 28:7, 10 and 16.

The fruit abiding (vs. 10-11). The witness of the first apostles to the resurrection was complete and unqualified. Note Paul’s sincerity (v. 9); humility (v. 10a); industry (v. 10b); and suitability for the service of God (v. 10c). His preaching conformed to general Apostolic practice (v. 12).

The delightful ministry (vs. 12-19) The necessity of resurrection

“If a man die shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). Job answered for himself in the next verse (v. 15). “Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee”. We have the light of revelation in the words of the Lord Jesus (John 5:28-29; ch. 11:25). Paul states fearlessly the consequences if there be no resurrection at all.

(1) *A vanquished Saviour* (v. 13). No living Saviour, no Gospel of salvation,

and no message of hope for a world confronted by the grim reign of death.
(2) *Vain preaching* (v.14). Devoid of all reality, empty, unreal, no spiritual value for us.

(3) *Virtueless faith* (v.14). All that they had been taught and received had been but the baseless fabric of a dream. If the Gospel is a sham, then faith is a delusion.

(4) *Vague witness* (v.15). The apostles are guilty of falsehood regarding God. They were deceivers, imposters of the worst kind, "either He rose from the grave or we lied in affirming it". The apostles were men of honour for Christ is alive.

(5) *Void of pardon* (v.17). Sin has conquered, guilt remains, and there is no justification (Rom. 4:25). The burden of sins is unremoved. If no resurrection there is also no redemption, no reconciliation with God and no salvation for us.

(6) *Vanished hope* (v.18). No prospect beyond the grave, "they perished" implying a condition of ruin; they passed into death, to meet all the dread consequences of their sins. All this assumption is contrary to evidence, to history and to experience. Christ is risen!

(7) *Victims of delusion* (v.19). Future hope is seriously imperilled and we are to be pitied. To have a hope in Christ which ends with this life, and avails not thereafter, is to be in a sad condition.

The first appearance of the Lord to His own was to convince them that the Cross was not the end but the beginning. Now the revelations of the risen and everliving Christ are strengthening, sustaining, renewing. His delightful ministry of comfort, peace, assurance, commission and promise are as real to our hearts today as they were during His resurrection appearances.

"THE TEACHING OF RESURRECTION" vs.20-44 "FURTHER FACTS"

The Lord shall reign (vs.20-28): what majesty is His. We shall be raised (vs.35-44): what moment of triumph.

The Divine majesty of resurrection (vs.20-34). Its certainty and reliability

The certainty (v.20a). "But now" is a triumphant affirmation, and a glorious return to reality. His resurrection is a credible authenticated fact. The crucifixion culminated in a coronation which was sovereign and supernatural. Here is the importance of the resurrection in regard to the redemptive programme of God, with some of the consequences for believers (vs.20-28).

The Testimony (vs.20b-21). The resurrection is the seal of His Sonship

(Rom. 1:4); of His Lordship (Acts 2:34; Rom. 14:9); of His Headship (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18); of His Kingship (Acts 13:38); of His High Priesthood (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 5:5-6); of His universal Judgeship (Acts 17:31). Thus our future resurrection and glory are assured (1 Thess. 4:4). Christ for us (Col. 1:18) becomes Christ in us the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The risen Lord is the first fruits (Lev. 23:10-11). The first fruits had twofold significance. First Godward, they were God's portion of the harvest; they honoured God as the Giver of the harvest. Manward, they were a pledge of the harvest, so Christ is not to be alone in resurrection (John 12:24). Christ is sample as well as pledge (2 Cor. 4:14). There are four allusions to Old Testament history in this Epistle, Christ on the shameful tree (ch. 1:24-34); His passion to purchase. The passover (ch. 5:7); His provision to purify "that rock was Christ" (ch. 10:4). His presence to preserve. The first fruits (ch. 15:23); His power to perfect.

The mortality of the race (v. 22a). All men are in Adam by nature, in Christ by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Never once are unbelievers said to be in any sense "in Christ" as Paul limits his view to believers. Only within these limits is verse 43 true. There is no general resurrection in scripture. In John 5:28-29 each man rises from the dead according to his rank or class. "Order" is military array, the Captain marches first and His followers afterwards.

The dignity of Christ (v. 23b). He must be pre-eminent; He stands alone. His resurrection is unique. All in keeping with the plan of God for His Son (Col. 1:18; Acts 26:23). For Him, priority in time, also in dignity and inheritance (Col. 1:18) and here (ch. 15:23) is priority in fruitfulness. Is this pictured for us in John 20:7? The napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. At His coming, then later the visible return of Christ, His advent (2 Thess. 1:7) "They that are Christ's". Not a special group among believers, but them all. There is no partial rapture based on Heb. 9:28, nor spiritual attainment (Phil. 3:11). All will rise (John 11:25). Verses 20 to 28 stand alone in scripture for their unsurpassed sublimity, giving us the whole history of redemption from Eden to Glory. Note the twelve "all's" here. Condemnation in Adam (vs. 21-22); Identification with humanity "by man", the Christ "in Christ"; regeneration and association; resurrection—"made alive"; vindication (v. 20) Christ risen; manifestation—"His coming" (v. 23); consummation—the end of the kingdom (v. 24a); restoration—"kingdom delivered" (v. 24b); coronation—"He must reign" (v. 25); abolition of death—(v. 26; Rev. 21, v. 4); subjugation of all foes (v. 27); realisation—Son also subject, His redemptive victory complete; unification—"God all in all" (Eph. 1:10).

The culmination (v. 24) "the end" of the redemptive reign of Christ as suggested in verse 25, and proved by the emphatic and prolonged reference in vs. 25-28.

The Kingdom of the Father (vs. 24-28). The end is the climax of the long

drama of history, of the conflict of righteousness and iniquity (Phil. 2:11); the glory of God reached through the submission of all things to the exalted Christ (1 Peter 3:23). Victory is attributed to the Son in verse 25 and to the Father in verse 27.

The domination of Christ (v.25). The mediatorial kingdom of the Son of Man will last for 1,000 years (Rev. 20). He will have absolute authority (Psa. 8:6), restoring the image-likeness and dominion of Genesis 1:26, that were lost in the fall. "He must reign". This is a compelling Divine necessity for God has determined it.

Subjugation of all things (vs.26-27). Christ's kingdom as a process of conquest precedes the final kingdom of God as a settled permanent state (Psa. 18:27-50; Isa. 2). Death brought to nought denotes the certainty of final victory. The final defeat of death is made certain by the purpose of God for His Son (Psa. 8:6; Heb. 2:5-9). His victory must include the endless continuance of His humanity (Rom. 5:29; Col. 1:18), and this fact guarantees the operation and permanence of His work.

Unification (v.28). Verses 27 and 28 visualise the Eternal State with Paradise regained (Rev. 22). God will be absolutely supreme in a sinless, deathless universe. All will be in harmony with His will, and His creatures will find everything in God.

The reality of resurrection (vs.29-34)

This is argued from Christian practice and experience—link these verses with the consequences of denial of Christ's resurrection in vs.12-19. What is the value of baptism if the dead rise not? The New Testament does not contemplate an unbaptised believer in Christ. "They who are baptised", the present participle is in force "these who from time to time receive baptism" applies to Christians generally. The argument is, "What is the use of being baptised if it is only to remain dead?" The symbolic meaning of baptism (Rom. 6:1-7) seems to be the best explanation of verse 29.

Suffering unnecessary (v.30). Why suffer for the faith, hazard your life if death is the end of everything? Paul's service was costly, he was always in danger (Acts 20:24; 2 Cor. 11:23-27).

Sacrifice useless (v.32). Paul was always in peril, facing risks in the cause of Christ (2 Cor. 1:10; ch.4:11; Rom. 8:36).

Saintliness (v.34). The mystery of destiny and present duty are inter-related. Righteously signifies the manner of the awakening, it is right that they should raise themselves from self-delusion.

The dignity of resurrection (vs.35-41)

The difficulty raised (v.35). They failed to perceive that the power of God is unlimited. The first question intimates the impossibility of the thing, answered in v.36. The second question, the inconceivability of the manner, is answered in v.37.

The illustrations used (vs.36-41). Botanical (vs.36-38). The process is described as death. Death is the prelude to life, in nature nothing lives except it dies (John 12:24). The decay of the body of life is, therefore, no argument against the resurrection.

Zoological (v.39). There is diversity in animal and bird life, they are all separate in nature. The God of creation is the God of resurrection, "He doeth all things well".

Geological (v.40). Here Paul alludes to further distinctions in the created universe. Earthly bodies differ from heavenly bodies in variety and beauty.

Astronomical (v.41). Gradations in glory can be seen among the heavenly bodies themselves. The God who made all these discernible differences can change our present bodies and conform them to the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21).

The beauty of resurrection (vs.42-44)

The mystery and beauty of resurrection is stressed in several contrasts—our present life is the seed time, the plant produced will be different, a body incorruptible, glorious, powerful and spiritual. "Spiritual" expresses the quality of the body in the eternal state. What a wondrous change, free from the possibility of corruption, no mark of the curse and no trace of decay. Unhindered and *unceasing* fellowship with the Almighty Saviour.

"THE TRIUMPH OF RESURRECTION" vs.45-58

The resurrection is announced as basic to the Gospel (vs.1-11); it is assailed by the critics (vs.12-19); it is assured in Christ (vs.20-23); and acclaimed in Christ's mediatorial victory (vs.24-28); is assumed by the practices of Christians (vs.29-34); an analogy from nature (vs.35-49); is awaited and anticipated by the saints (vs.50-57); and applied to active service for the Lord (v.58).

The Wonderful Christ (vs.45-49)

Paul's argument about the nature of the resurrection body is supported by the testimony of scripture (Gen. 2:7). The matter of the two headships, that of Adam and that of Christ, is shown to necessitate a change in the body. The contrast is between a dying Adam and a life-giving Christ. Read Romans 5:13-19 and Hebrews 2:5-18 with this chapter and think of two federal heads, two familiar gardens, two formidable acts, two far-reaching effects and two final connections in Romans 5:13-19.

His dignity (v.45). He became a life-giving spirit as "the last Adam", the unique and exclusive representative of those whom the Father gives Him (John 6:37; 17:2-9). He is not only the pattern of those who are in Him, but the source of their spiritual life. Compare Genesis 2:17 with John 20:20. The latter is the breathing of Christ as the Lord God of the new creation. The

“last Adam”, there shall not be another head after Christ. In Him is absolute finality, and all God’s ways are complete in Christ. Adam and Christ are not here regarded as simply historical individuals, they are representative figures. Each stands for the whole race, the old and new humanity respectively. Illustrated in the story of David and Goliath (1 Sam. 19:9-51). Thus Adam lost his battle and all his side “lost” in him, but Christ has conquered death and all related to Him share in His victory. He has the power to raise from the dead those who have died believing in Him (1 Thess. 4:14).

The development of human life (v.46). The natural precedes the spiritual. This is the order of experience and of history, the temporal will give place to that which is eternal.

Distinction of origins (v.47). Adam and Christ are contrasted. Adam is of the earth (Gen. 2:7). The “second man” is “from Heaven” (John 3:13; 6:38; 8:23; 16:28). The words, “The Lord” are omitted by the RV and JND translations. What is in view is not His title nor the glory of His Person, but His heavenly origin in contrast to that of Adam. There are only two types of life: one fallen derived from Adam, the other eternal life in Christ.

Deduction (vs.48-49). Adam’s posterity are of one kind with him. Similarly Christ’s people are of one kind with Him. As He is heavenly, so will they, in resurrection, be heavenly. “Image” is not mere similarity, but of a derived resemblance (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:21).

The wondrous change (vs.50-57)

The goal of God’s electing grace and saving purpose are sure and certain and spoken of in the past tense, as something already made good (Rom. 8:17,30).

The final revelation (vs.51-52). Verse 50 reminds us that we are not physically suited for Heaven. Corruption appertains to flesh and blood, but “incorruption” characterises the Kingdom of God. The details of the final working out of the Divine plans are given to us here. The great transformation is sure and all Christians will not die (v.51). Very many will be alive when Christ comes again (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We “shall all be changed”: certainly, instantly, completely, at a given signal (vs.51-52). This is the expectation of every saint of God. “All” will be changed. The “last trump” is a military allusion to the Roman Camp. It gave the signal to strike camp and move. The Lord will come back to claim His own and His sheep will hear His voice and respond. Here is triumph, victory over death for some, and victory over decay for the sleeping saints (v.53). The effects of sin will have been conquered, for Christ and His followers have conquered death. That new life marks the transition from the old Adamic order of sin and death to the new Age of immortality and incorruption.

This will be the final transformation (v.54). This clothing of the saints

with immortality will be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies (Isa. 25:8) since it reverses the sentence of doom that was pronounced in Genesis 3.

The apostle's exultant shout of triumph is a free adaption of Hosea 13:14. The objective atonement of Christ produces subjective results in the lives of all believers. Not only final victory then, but the assurance of victory "now". But, a new hope is heralded and a fresh start is given these timid Christians in the conflict against sin with the certain hope of victory at last. The certainty of victory is a matter for praise (v.57), now and evermore.

The final exhortation (v.58). This personal expectation, awaiting the image of the heavenly, leads to persistent work and witness for no exposition of doctrine is complete without exhortation. Here is a call to perseverance and service.

He ends on the notes of affection—"beloved". Despite his severe reproofs his affection for them remains undiminished. Association—"brethren", we are called into the fellowship of His Son (1:9) so work for Him, fulfil your vocation. Appeal—"be steadfast" or become steadfast, they had not grasped firmly the principles of their faith. Activity—"abound in the work". The secret of stability is progress, keep going on, advance, do not recede. Assurance—"not in vain", weariness involved in work for Christ is not an empty expenditure of energy. May we appreciate that He is "Lord" and do all in His name and for His glory. AMEN.

“Outline of Second Corinthians”

Chapters 1 to 7

This Epistle is Paul’s personal apologetic. It is a letter of vindication of his own ministry. It is almost an autobiography. Some did not accept his corrective ministry and challenged his apostolic authority. They said he was fickle, (1:17,18), boastful (3:1), of weak appearance (10:10), being insane (11:16-19), and being deceitful (12:16-19). He was accused, derided, insulted and challenged.

Brief analysis: Introduction 1:1-11. His Conditions 1:12-17; His Confidence 8-9; His Credentials 10-13. (Written from Macedonia in A.D. 57).

CHAPTER 1: “The Servant Diligent for His Master”

Introduction 1:1-11. A life of adversity. *Salutation* 1-2. Call to service 1. Constant supply 2. *Appreciation* 3-11. Dwelling in comfort 3-7. Revel in deliverance 8-10. Help in prayer 11. *Misinterpretation of his movements* 12-24.

(1) His integrity 12-14—stated 12; accepted 13; vindicated 14.

(2) His intentions 15-18—clear 15-16; convincing 16-18. His inspiration 19-24—ministry 19; certainty 22; testimony 23-24; no superiority 24.

CHAPTER 2—“Defending His Integrity”

(1) His good conscience 1-4—determination 1; discipline 2; desire 3; distress 4.

(2) His genuine concern 5-11—censure 5-6; consideration 7-8; challenge 9; compassion 10; caution 11.

(3) His growing confidence 12-17—opportunity seized 12-13; victory shared 14; testimony given 17.

CHAPTER 3—“Delighting in His Ministry”

The glory of the ministry:

(1) Its accreditation 1-6—unnecessary 1; undeniable 2-3; unique 4-6.

(2) Its ministration 7-11—spiritual 6-7; successful 8-9; substantial 10-11.

(3) Its illumination 12-18—restriction 13-15; revelation 16-17; reflection 18.

CHAPTER 4—“Declaring His Sincerity”

The message. sincerity 1-2; possibility 3; suitability 4-6; excellency 7; his frailty 8-13; certainty 14-16; and eternal glory 17-18.

CHAPTER 5—"The Design of the Minister"

(1) The glad message 1-8—his prospect 1; preference 2-4; divine purpose 5; principle 8.

(2) The great manifestation 9-13—its call 9; certainty 11; constraint 12.

(3) The genuine motivation 14-17—love constraining 14-15; Lord controlling 16-17.

(4) The grand ministry 18-21—the messenger 18; message 19; method 20; means 21.

CHAPTER 6—"The Development of His Character"

(1) The minister's concern 1-3—responsibility 1; urgency 2; consistency 3.

(2) His character 4-10—patient endurance 4-5; preservative graces 6-7; productive gains 8-10.

(3) His compassion 11-13—its reality 11; restriction 12; recompense 13.

(4) His consistency 14-7:1—separation—its principles 14; practice 15; purity 16b; promise 7:1.

CHAPTER 7—"The Desires of His Heart"

(1) A strong love 2-7—pleading 2-3; caring 4; worrying 5; rejoicing 7.

(2) A severe letter 8-11—humbling 8; repenting 9; saving 10; restoring 11.

(3) A sweet comfort 12-16—reminding 12; refreshing 13; receiving 15; rejoicing 16.

Chapters 8-13

This section deals with:

(1) Gospel ministrations: Chapters 8-9.

Chapter 8: The grace of giving 1-4; the joy of giving 5-8; the height of giving 9; preparation for giving 10-24.

Chapter 9: Not haphazardly 1-5; not sparingly 6-10; and not grudgingly 11-15.

(2) The Godly Minister: Chapters 10-13.

Chapter 10: Defending his appearance, his authority, and his assignment;

Chapter 11: 1-6, his pure gospel; 7-12 pure motive and 13-33 pure method.

Chapter 12: Apostolic experience 1-6; encouragement 7-10; explanation 11-12.

Chapter 13: His purpose to visit them and vindicate himself 1-6; desire for them 7-12; benediction 13-14.

(A) The Contribution for the Saints

Chapters 8-9 **"The Grace of Giving"**

CHAPTER 8—"Example and Exhortation"

(1) The pattern we should follow 1-6—Give joyfully, humbly, wholeheartedly.

(2) The promise we must fulfil 7-15—Abounding 7-8; amazing 9; acceptable 13-15.

(3) The practice we should foster 16-24—the deputation 16-17; reputation 18-19; administration 20-23; the application 24.

CHAPTER 9—"Exercise and Encouragement"

Viewed churchward 1-5; selfward 6-8; saintward 9-12; Godward 13-15.

(1) The practice of giving 1-5—informed 1; inclined 2; intended 3; ashamed 4-5.

(2) The principle of giving 6-10—Sow the seed 6-7; supply assured 8; sequel achieved 9-10.

(3) The pleasure of giving 11-15—enjoyment 11; expression 12; the inexpressible 15.

(B) Contention with His Critics

Chapters: 10-13:10 **The Glory of the Ministry**

CHAPTER 10—"Vindication of His Apostleship"

(1) By his attitude 1-6—his humility 1-2; spirituality 3-4; victory 5-6.

(2) By his authority 7-11—position 7; purpose 8; and presence.

(3) By his assignment 12-18—divine acceptance 12-14; divine approval 17-18.

CHAPTER 11—"Self-Revelation of Apostleship"

(1) "*His Service*" 1-15—his illustration 1-6; anxiety 2; subtlety 3-4; ability 5-6; his independence 7-12; his method clear 7-8; his motive pure 9-12; his indignation 13-15; false apostles deceptive 13-14; destructive 15.

(2) "*His Suffering*" 16-33—reflection 16-22; record of physical torture 23-26; mental distress 27-28.

CHAPTER 12—"Recognition of His Authority"

(1) His strange experience 1-6—privileged 1-2; problem 3; pleasure 4-5.

(2) His patient endurance 7-10—discipline 7; desire 8; discovery 9; delight 10.

(3) His practical evidence 11-18—validity 12; humility 13-14; sincerity 15-18.

(4) His gracious endearment 19-21—constraining 19; condemning 20; exposing 21.

CHAPTER 13—"Apostolic Admonitions"

(1) Correction 1-4—personal 1; plain 2; practical 3; profitable 4.

(2) Examination 5-10—purposeful 5-6; practical 7-8; preservative 10.

(3) Salutation 11-13—how to live, four injunctions 11, how to love 12-13.

(4) Benediction 14—Trinitarian, encouraging, enriching.

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

The Sincerity of the Messenger

v.1 **Conscious** of a great and glorious mission.

v.1b **Courage** to face all trials.

v.2 **Conduct** must be commendable, renouncing dishonesty, and avoiding disgrace.

It speaks of shame in v.2 Luke 14:9 'with *shame* to take the lowest room'.
Rev. 3:18 'the *shame* of thy nakedness'.
Phil. 3:19 'whose glory is their *shame*'.

craftiness—subtility—'Why *tempt* ye me?'

deceitfully—with guile. The word must be with no adulteration, no alteration.

manifestation—bringing the truth to light.

conscience—faculty of appreciating, and acknowledging the truth.

v.3. **Conviction** The god of this world has blinded those who already will not believe. Enlightenment follows light. Christ is the visible representation of God. Nothing or nobody can be compared with Him.

v.5 **Consecration to Christ**

Negatively 'we preach not ourselves'.

Positively 'but Christ Jesus as Lord'.

v.6 **Conversion** 'commanded the light'—the first command in the Bible in Genesis 1 was to give light.

v.7 **Consciousness of human frailty**

the treasure—something beautiful.

the earthen vessel—not beautiful.

All must be of God.

The Cross in Galatians

In the religious world the “cross” is taken as a symbol of Christianity. It is an expression that gathers up and contains the great fact and the significance of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. To Paul, it is a symbol of shame and folly, 1 Cor. 1:18; of liberty, Gal. 5:1; of unity, Eph. 2:15-16; of humility, Phil. 2:8; of harmony, Col. 1:21; and of glory, 1 Thess. 4:14. In Hebrews 13:12-13, it is a symbol of loyalty, and it is used by Peter of suffering, 1 Pet. 2:21-24. In Galatians there are many references to the cross-work of the Lord Jesus. It is a means of rescue, 1:4; of removal, 2:20; of restoration, 3:1; of redemption, 3:13; of relationship, 4:5-7; of reproach, 5:11; of reproduction, 5:25; and of rejoicing, 6:14. Let us glory in the cross.

(1) A New Deliverance from the World, 1:4-5. SPIRITUAL EMANCIPATION. Verse 4 gives us the gospel in a nutshell. Christ was both the Priest who offered the sacrifice and the Sacrifice that was offered. This is the trespass offering aspect.

His Amazing Sacrifice, “himself”, His greatest conceivable gift, this inestimable treasure voluntarily given. It was vicarious—on behalf of our sins, 1 Cor. 15:3.

An Almighty Saviour, to rescue us from this evil age, Acts 7:34; 12:11; 23:27. The gospel is a rescue operation. We were held captive by the entrenched powers of evil. Delivered from the curse, character and condemnation that belong to the present age, 1 John 2:15-16.

An Appointed Plan, “the will of God”. The work is effectual. The death of Christ is the historical outworking of the eternal purpose of God, 1 Pet. 1:19-20.

An Ascription of Praise, v.5. Paul’s heart overflows readily with praise. We join in the adoration, the final Amens. His death is an exhibition of divine power.

(2) A New Discovery of Divine Love, 2:20. SPIRITUAL IDENTIFICATION. Paul crucified with Christ was his charter of freedom. He knew deliverance from the bondage of law, sin and a self-centred life.

Identification. Paul could say, “I have shared with Christ the results of His death on the cross”. The Lord is my Substitute, but also my Representative. He not only died for me, He died as me. He went as me to the death to which my sin condemned me. The old life, the old friends, the old habits, are forever and completely behind me, Rom. 6:6.

Transformation. "Christ liveth in me". His own personality is transformed by Christ, so that he no longer recognizes his former sinful self. It does not spell the end of a truly human personality as God designed it. He lives on earth in human flesh a life not earthly but heavenly, not carnal but spiritual. Faith is the real element in which we live, faith in the Son of God.

Appreciation. He gave Himself up for me. All things are seen in the light and love of Calvary. Abandonment to the Lord becomes a spontaneous, unconscious attitude of the soul, John 20:28. Meditate on the eleven personal pronouns in verses 19-21.

(3) A New Display of Grace, 3:1-3. SPIRITUAL RESTORATION. Paul begins this section with a personal argument from the Galatians' own experience. *The Grief he had*, v.1. In giving heed to false teachers, they were senseless, not using their minds as they ought to. *The Grip they were in*. They were bewitched; some sorcerer had brought them under his influence, not by means of his evil eye, but rather by evil teaching. "A Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted", Wm. Hendriksen. *The Gospel they heard*. "Christ evidently set forth crucified". How could they reject this message of life so clearly and vividly presented? *The Gift they received*. They received the Spirit by believing the gospel. Sanctification, no less than regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

(4) A New Dynamic in the Life, 3:13-14. SPIRITUAL INTRODUCTION. The cost of deliverance, v.13; the consequent blessing of the Spirit, v.14. These two verses beautifully summarize Paul's teaching in this section. The law cannot be the way of salvation, it brings only a curse, Deut. 27:26. Christ's death here is both representative and penal; He acted in our place and took the penalty due to us, 2 Cor. 5:21. We have a new standing before God and a new indwelling life-principle, Gal. 3:14. Our Lord is both Redeemer and Benefactor, Eph. 1:13.

(5) A New Dignity before God, 4:5-7. SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE. From religious bondage to Christian liberty. The fulness of time was also the fittest time in the world's history, Mark 1:15. The world was providentially ready for the birth of the Saviour. Note His dual nature; He is both God and Man, v.4. He "came forth", John 16:28. Note the Trinitarian reference, v.6, the historical event, v.4, and the spiritual experience, v.6. Our Lord fulfilled all the precepts of the law of God, and exhausted its penalty as our Substitute, 3:13. God sent His Son to give us the STATUS of sonship. He sent His Spirit to give us the EXPERIENCE of sonship. "Sons" is expressive of the rights and privileges of those who have entered their majority. Redeemed, related, and made rich.

(6) **A New Duty to Myself**, 5:24-25. SPIRITUAL SEPARATION. Identification with Christ should prove a stimulant to holy living. A definite break with the flesh and its sinful desires, v.24. A deliberate preference for the pathway and power of the Spirit. Yield to Him today.

(7) **A New Dedication to the Lord**, 6:14. SPIRITUAL ESTIMATION, ADORATION. Paul looks at the legalists, vs.12-13, and sees them as compromisers, v.12b, and hypocrites, v.13. He is a loyalist making his confession of allegiance to Christ, v.14. His ground of boasting and the central fact of his gospel—the cross of Christ. He embraced the Person of the cross, and made Him Lord of his life. He experienced the power of the cross which revolutionized his life. He enjoyed the preaching of the cross which brought men to God. He was crucified—the world had become dead to him, and he became dead to the world.

His cross: C—cancels sins, 1:4.
 R—reveals His love, 2:20.
 O—offers divine blessing, 3:14.
 S—satisfies the heart, 4:6-7.
 S—separates from the world, 6:14.

Galatians chapter five

“Cherish your freedom in Christ, the moral argument”

In chs.1-2, Paul’s personal explanation. Chs.3-4, His doctrinal exposition. In chs.5-6, His practical application of Sovereign Grace. In ch.5 two main divisions: THE PRIVILEGES OF LIBERTY IN CHRIST vs.1-12; THE PROHIBITION OF LICENCE AS CHRISTIANS vs.13-26.

(A) **Preserve your freedom** vs.1-6. Paul exhorts those who have found “liberty in Christ” to beware, lest they (a) *Lose it* by returning to bondage vs.1-12; or (b) *Abuse it* by self-indulgence vs.13-15. Four pictures used:—(1) The Slave v.1—you lose your liberty. (2) The Debtor vs.2-6—you lose your wealth. (3) The Runner vs.7-8—you lose your direction. (4) The Leaven v.9—you lose your purity.

v.1 *Our evaluation of the work of Christ*. He has freed us from the ceremonial law, the moral law as a covenant of works “Stand fast therefore”. Don’t get tied up again with a slave-yoke. v.2 *Repudiation of the work of Christ*. Legalism makes Christ of no value. They cannot have Christ AND circumcision for salvation. We cannot add our righteousness to His. (2:21).

v. 3 *Obligation to keep the whole law*. Legalism requires this. The Lord is an exclusive Saviour. v. 4 *Rejection of grace*. Christ is sufficient for salvation in Himself. Salvation is in Christ alone, by grace alone through faith alone. v. 5 *The contemplation of grace*. Waiting for the completion of the experience, having been justified by faith. v. 6 *The expression of love*. A personal faith in Christ expresses itself in loving service to one another (Rom. 12:10).

Progress in grace vs.7-12. *Obstruction* v.7 “Hindered”, is a military term used for “cutting up a road” to render it impassible. A hindered pathway to holiness (5:7); hindered plans (Rom. 15:22); hindered prayer life (1 Pet. 3:7). Don’t be hindered by false teaching (Matt. 16:6,12; 1 Cor. 5:6-8). Legalism is disobedience to the truth.

Persuasion v.8. God had called them in grace (1:6), whereas the false teachers were propagating a doctrine of merit. Heresy hindered them (v.7). it troubled them (v.10) and unsettled them (v.12), and would contaminate the truth beyond recognition (v.9).

Preservation by the Lord v.10. Paul is confident in the Lord that the Galatians will be enabled to break through the meshes of legalism in which they are being ensnared. He pronounces judgment upon their deceivers.

Persecution for preaching the cross vs.11-12. It was the symbol of humiliation to the Jew. The Isaacs of this world are always persecuted by the Ishmaels’ (4:29). Perversions of gospel truth call for drastic measures (v.12).

(B) The Power for Practical Holiness vs.13-26. The Holy Spirit is mentioned seven times in vs.16-26. These verses are concerned with the relationship between liberty, licence, law and love.

(1) *The Fulfilment of the law of love* vs.13-15. Here is the expression of liberty. We are called to liberty, this is not licence to indulge the flesh. Christian liberty is not a licence to sin but an opportunity to serve in love. Verse 14 Love for the Lord will control my personal conduct and behaviour, and love for others, will control my public conduct. Verse 15 Lacking Christian love led to the wreckage of wrath, always destructive.

(2) *The engagement in war against the flesh* vs.16-18. The liberative ministry of the Spirit (v.16). *The conflict* vs.16-17. Verse 17 plainly declares that two powers are within us, in conflict for the mastery. The Spirit and the Flesh. If we move forward in accordance with the pattern revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and in the power imparted by the Spirit we shall be victorious (v.16). The Spirit and the flesh have different appetites, and this is what creates the conflict. Like the dove and raven in Gen. 8:6,7. The “flesh” is fallen human nature. *The conquest* v.18 The spirit of the law and the law of the Spirit are poles apart. We need the continuing directing, sanctifying work of the Spirit to live victoriously (v.18).

(3) *Estrangement from God* vs.19-21. A picture of slavery, the corruption of the flesh. In verse 16 the “lust”, now in verse 19 the “works” of the flesh. The list is only representative and includes sensual sins, religious sins, social

sins and personal sins. Most translations leave out "adultery" and "murder". The sins in this list will keep a man out of heaven unless he knows Christ as Saviour and Lord (Rev. 21:8,27; 22:15). (1) *Sensual sins* "immorality", any kind of unlawful sexual behaviour among unmarried people. "Uncleanness", unnatural vice, a filthiness of heart and mind that makes a person defiled (Tit. 1:15). "Lasciviousness", a wanton appetite that knows no shame, debauchery. Absence of restraint. Indulgence of animal desires (Eph. 4:19; 5:3). (2) *Religious sins* "Idolatry" the worship of deity in a visible form. The immorality that accompanies demon worship (1 Cor. 10:14,19-21; Col. 3:5). "Sorcery" R.V. was prevalent in Asia just as witch-doctors are in Africa. The secret tampering with the powers of evil. Trusting in horoscopes and spiritualistic mediums (Rom. 1:18-25). (3) *Social sins* (v.20b) The breakdown of personal relationships. The largest group affords proof of the depravity of the human heart. (Jer. 17:9) Enmities lead to strife, discord which finds expression in distrust, suspicions, outbursts of anger, factions, formation of parties, separations caused by dissension and sects formed by men. Envy at the success or prosperity of others. (4) *Personal sins* Intemperance, worldly indulgence engaging in loose, boisterous behaviour. (5) *Development of character* vs.22,23 The reproduction of the Spirit's "Fruit" whose organic development springs from the one living root of the Spirit. The first three qualities express the *Godward* aspect of the Christian life.

(a) *My Personal Life* "Love" is unconquerable benevolence. A concern for the highest welfare of others. "Joy" is the cheerful heart with sweet thoughts of Christ (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 1:25; 3:1). "Peace" the inward calm of those who are guarded by the peace of God (Phil. 4:7).

(b) *My Public Life—Manward* "Longsuffering", courageous endurance of wrong, slow to anger. "Gentleness" a serene, loving and sympathising temper. "Goodness" is love in action (Acts 10:38).

(c) *My Private Life—Selfward* "Faithfulness", dependability in dealings with others. Loyalty and trustfulness. "Meekness", a self-effacing humility. "Temperance", self control in the broadest and fullest sense of the term. Thus where the Spirit reigns, the law has no longer any dominion.

(6) *Victory day by day* vs.24-26. Keep in step with the Spirit. If we walk in the Spirit no Assembly disharmony is possible (v.26). There must be compliance with the will of the Spirit as well as reliance on the grace of the Spirit.

Ephesians

God's Masterpiece

This book is the very pinnacle of spiritual knowledge, the summit of revealed truth, the coping-stone of doctrinal structure, and the masterpiece of revelation.

Written by Paul in A.D. 61-62.

Introduction The Resources of God 1:1-2

Exposition The Revelation of God 1:3—6:21

Conclusion Our Response to God 6:22-24

1. The Eternal Purpose of God 1:3-14, *The Wealth of the Church*

The Father's Electing Love vs.3-6

The Son's Emancipating Work vs.7-10

The Spirit's Encouraging Revelation vs.11-14

The Purpose is Spiritual v.3, Original and Pleasurable vs.5-6, Redemptional and Educational vs.7-9, Final v.10 and Beneficial vs.10-14.

2. The Effective Power of God 1:15-23, *The Worthiness of Christ*

Power required by the Saint vs.15-18

Revealed in Resurrection vs.19-20

Power Resident in Christ v.21

Related to the Church vs.22-23

3. The Elevating Grace of God 2:1-23, *The Welcome of the Church*

Required because of Death vs.1-3, my Guilty Past

Rich in its Display vs.4-10, my Glorious Position

The Character of God vs.4-6, The Purpose of God vs.6-9, The Pleasure of God v.10.

Reaching the Unworthy vs.11-13, my Gentile Plight

Reconciling in its Work vs.11-22, my God-Given Privileges

4. The Enlightening Plan of God 3:1-13, *The Witness of the Church*

The Minister Prepared vs.1-3, Experience v.3, Equipment v.4, Example v.7.

The Message Presented vs.8-10, its Content v.6, Communication vs.8-10

The Mystery Propagated vs.5,7

The Meaning Plain vs.10-13

5. The Enjoyed Presence of God 3:14-21, *The Wonder of the Church*

The Posture we Adopt vs.13-14

The Petition we Present vs.16-17

The Possibility Presented vs.16-18

The Praise we Offer vs.20-21

6. The Enriching Provision of God 4:1-16, *The Welfare of the Church*

The Vocation of the Child of God vs.1-3

The Valued Truth of God vs.4-6

The Varied Gifts of God vs.7-12

The Vital Growth for God vs.13-16.

7. The Excellent Pattern from God 4:17—6:9, *The Walk of the Church***a. IN PERSONAL LIFE vs.17-31, *Instructed by Christ****A Changed Life* vs.14-24

Do not think like children vs.14-16

Do not walk like children vs.17-21

Do not behave like children vs.22-24

A Clean Life vs.25-32, *Inspired by Christ*

Enlightened Hearts to Love

Engaged Hands to Work

Enkindled Feelings of Sympathy and Kindness

Exercised Lips to Speak the Truth

Enabled Feet to Walk

b. IN SOCIAL LIFE 5:1-21, *The Imitation of Christ**A Controlled Life* vs.1-14, *Marked by Love* vs.1-7, *Light* vs.9-13, *Wisdom* v.14*A Careful Life* vs.15-17, *Redeeming the Time**A Spirit-filled Life* vs.18-20, *Speaking, Singing, Giving, Submitting.***c. IN DOMESTIC LIFE 5:22—6:9, *Identification with Christ***

Wife —A Submissive Life

Children —A Disciplined Life

Master —A Just Life

Husband —A Sacrificial Life

Servant —An Obedient Life

8. The Entire Panoply of God 6:10-24, *The Warfare of the Church*

The Soldiers Encouragement v.10, Engagement vs.11-12, Equipment vs.13-17.

The Soldiers Environment v.18, Example vs.18-20 “ALL”—8 times.

Message for Today

Christ my Leader and my Lord. Lord 28 times.

Leading us into a Glorious Heritage ch.1

From the Grave, by Grace to Glory ch.2

Leading us to go with the Gospel of Gladness ch.3

Enabling us to live a life of Humility, Unity and Harmony ch.4:1-16.

Lord of my Life which He Directs 4:17-32

Lord of my Love which He Deserves v.5

Lord of my Labour which He Desires 6:1-9

Lord on the Battlefield Bringing Victory vs.10-24.

Philippians

The Life that Wins

Introduction

Philippi takes its name from the famous Macedonian king, Philip, father of Alexander the Great, by whom the old town was enlarged and fortified. It was situated on the banks of the River Gengites, about ten miles from the shore of the Archipelago. It stood on the great highway from Asia to Western Europe and in memory of the victory, which decided the question of who would rule the civilised world, Augustus constituted the town a Roman Colony.

A greater battle was fought later when a little company of Christian Commandos made a beach-head for the Gospel on the shores of Europe and pierced the fortress of Wickedness bringing emancipation to many enslaved souls. The thrilling account of this victory is recorded in Acts 16:6-40. Ten years later, the leader of this inspired company of liberators writes a letter to these happy souls and sets before them the plan of campaign for victory today over every enemy, and on any continent or among any community.

Paul was a Spirit-controlled, Spirit-possessed and Spirit-propelled messenger who never made strategic withdrawals from the territory of Satan. By divine help he went on to conquer every enemy and consolidate his gains in Christ.

The Epistle to the Philippians is the sweetest which Paul ever wrote, and has been aptly called "The Twenty-Third Psalm of the New Testament."

This epistle has a special flavour of fellowship and affection, and the spirit of rejoicing pervades every chapter. It is full of commendation and congratulation from beginning to end, and the only fault to which the writer alludes is a lack of unity among his converts. The Apostle has no doctrine to expound (Romans), no error to correct (Corinthians), no legality to condemn (Galatians), and no issues to refute (Colossians). He introduces us to the secret and strength of Christian experience, a living Christ dwelling in the heart, dominating the will and directing the life.

Here we find doctrine transmuted into living experience, Christ thrilling the soul and this is the only way to victory today in a world marked by despondency and depression. When Christ is crowned as Lord in the believer, that soul experiences an irrepressible joy making him superior to his surroundings. Here is the royal road to victory for us today.

Keywords in the Epistle are: "Christ", "Christ Jesus", and "Jesus

Christ,” which occur thirty-eight times; “joy” and “rejoice”, sixteen times; “gospel” eight times; and “all” eighteen times.

Victory over Partizanship by Emulating Christ 1:1-11

Victory under Persecution by the Evangel of Christ 1:12-24

Victory over Personal Preference by the Example of Christ 2:5-30

Victory over Personal Passions by the Expectation of Christ 3:1-21

Victory over Personal Privation by the Enjoyment of Christ 4:1-23

Suggested Plan of the Epistle

Introduction 1:1-2

1. **Rejoice in the Fellowship of Saints** 1:3-11

Fellowship appreciated, consolidated, cultivated.

2. **Rejoice in the Furtherance of the Gospel** 1:12-30

By means of bonds, boldness and behaviour.

3. **Rejoice in the Fact and Fruit of Christ's Work** 2:1-16

Promoting harmony and producing humility.

Proved by honourable living.

4. **Rejoice in the Fervour of Faithful Servants** 2:17-30

Paul the pastor who thanked others.

Timothy the partner who thought of others.

Epaphroditus the pioneer who toiled for others.

5. **Rejoice in the Firm Foundation of Faith** 3:1-16

Not in ritual and not in religion.

In righteousness of Christ.

6. **Rejoice in the Future Glory with Christ** 3:20-41

Precious association and present attitude.

Perfect likeness and personal affection.

7. **Rejoice in Fellow-Labourers in the Gospel** 4:2-4

Labourers should be undaunted, united and unselfish.

8. **Rejoice in the Fulness of Divine Peace** 4:5-9

For our daily life v.5, prayer life v.6.

For our entire life v.7, thought life vs.8-9.

9. **Rejoice in the Fragrance of their Ministry** 4:10-20

Contentment, confidence, commendation.

Salutation and Benediction 4:21-23.

Facts Regarding Philipians

Its historical setting may be gleaned from the book itself. Read chapters 1:3-7; 12-19; 25-27; 2:19-30; 4:10-22.

Keywords: Joy and Rejoice.

Character: Christological.

Where written: Rome.

Date: 62-63 A.D.

Purpose in writing: This is threefold:

1. **To Thank Them:**

For their love, ch.1:7

For their liberality, ch.4:10-19

For their labours, 1:5; 4:3.

2. **To Teach Them:**

Their need of being followers of the Lord Jesus, ch.2:5

To be filled with fruit, ch.1:11

To be faithful in suffering, 1:27

Of the continuity of fellowship, 4:1-3.

3. **To Warn Them:**

Of the danger of Rivalry, ch.2:3-4

Of the spirit of Partisanship, ch.4:2-3

Of the spirit of Pride and Fault Finding, ch.2:14

Of the spirit of Self-Complacency, ch.3:1-12

Of the danger of False Teachers, ch.3:2,18-19.

Contents: It sets forth the Lord Jesus as

The Source of our Life, ch.1

The Standard of our Conduct, ch.2

The Supreme Object of our Heart, ch.3

The Secret of our Strength, ch.4.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 1

“In Christ” — “Life and Salvation”

1. **Paul the Pastor** vs.1-11 “Reflecting”

(a) *His Gracious Salutation* vs.1-2. Our Security—“In Christ.” Our Service—“Bondslaves.” Our sphere of witness “Philippi.” Our source and supply—“Father”—“Grace and Peace.”

(b) *His Grateful Heart* vs.3-6. The Joy of Memory. No tears v.3. Joy of Prayer v.4. Prayer a delight, a duty, a discipline of character. Joy of fellowship v.5. Interested in and identified with the Gospel. Joy of Glory v.6. God will complete His work in you.

(c) *His Genuine Sympathy* vs.7-8. Mutual service and support.

(d) *His Godly Concern* vs.9-11. Prays for growth in their love, v.9. For growth in their lives, v.10. For growth of fruit, v.11.

2. **Paul the Prisoner** vs.12-20 “Rejoicing”

(a) *Triumphing over Circumstances* vs.12-20. “His mission in Life”. The Blessing of his Bonds vs.12-13; the Boldness of his Brethren vs.14-15; the Beauty of his Character vs.16-18; the Benefits of Prayer vs.19-20.

(b) *Testimony for Christ* vs.21-26. “His Passion in Life.” His Absorbing Passion vs.21; his Amazing Problem vs.22; his Alluring Prospect v.23; his Assembly Pleasure vs.24-26.

(c) *True Interest in Others* vs.27-30. “His Vision of Victory.” Saints must Behave as well as Believe the Gospel v.27a. Strength and Beauty of Oneness of Mind v.27b. Show Boldness before the Enemy.

A LIFE OF SAINTLY SINCERITY 1:1-11

How beautiful is the conjunction of the aged Apostle and the young disciple Timothy. Here we see the union of Spring-time and Autumn; of enthusiasm and experience; of impulse and wisdom. They were linked together as bondslaves in the service of their Master and were ever at his absolute disposal.

This letter is addressed to saints first, because character is eternal. Bishops and Deacons last, because office is temporal. We live in two environments, one spiritual, the other natural; and the former should dominate the latter; not the latter the former.

His affectionate salutation (v.2) is rich in holy affection. Here the Oriental and Occidental are united together in Christ. Grace and Peace are mighty rivers for the refreshment of our souls in this wilderness world. The supply is never diminished.

(A) Sincerity seen in His Praise for Their Fellowship vs.3-5

A sanctified memory is a wonderful book; it inspires gratitude, leads to prayer, awakens joy, and sweetens fellowship. Like Paul we should cultivate the grace of encouraging others. Christian fellowship is one of the choicest gifts of God's love. Fellowship has been defined as “Fellows in the same ship going in the same direction.” Their fellowship was spontaneous, continuous and practical, it was co-operation in the noblest sense of the word. May we cherish and cultivate it, for the devil is ever busy trying to mar the testimony of God in the world.

(B) Sincerity seen in His Confidence in Their Future v.6

Paul's assurance of these saints is based upon the love, interest and power of God and the evidence of grace in their lives. The Lord perfects what He begins, “The Good Work”; there is no unfinished business with God in the glorifying of every one of His children. The “Day of Christ” takes in the rapture of the church, the judgment seat of Christ and the coming of the Lord with His saints. It will be the day of complete conformity to the image of God's Son.

(C) Sincerity seen in His Passion for Their Friendship vs. 7-8

Paul not only thought about them, he had them in his heart. He loved them with an intense longing like His Lord and expended himself on their behalf. What a force for God in the world this fire of love could be if only pastors and people would surrender their hearts and lives to God. How quickly breaches would be healed, misunderstandings cleared, and animosity and antagonism dissipated for—"Love Always Wins."

They were one with him in vigorously defending the central citadel of the Christian faith. One with him in missionary enterprise and in the establishment of the Gospel.

(D) Sincerity seen in His Prayer for Their Fruitfulness vs.9-11

Growth is the law of spiritual life, as of natural, and moral dwarfs never pray that others may become moral giants. Paul prays for an increase in their love, he wants it to be a growing love, yes, and a knowing love—"Approving and Discerning." We need the faculty of distinguishing Christian virtue from all counterfeits; of deciding accurately and judging everything in the sunlight. Transparency of character, inoffensiveness of conduct, lives free from inconsistencies. These will elevate and inspire other lives and commend the cause of Christ in the scene of His rejection. The need of the hour is not so much more Christians, as better Christians.

Does God find fruit, every branch laden, or are we empty vines? Our life should be progressive, controlled, fruitful, influential and enriched by the Lord Jesus. He is the vital source of productive bearing in our life and as we anticipate "The Day of Christ" when all life will be judged, approved and rewarded and the good work of Grace will be crowned in glory, may we display the fruits of righteousness by sincere Christian living.

Then grant us, Lord, in all things Thee to own,
To dwell within the shadow of Thy throne,
To speak and work, to think and live and move,
Reflecting Thine Own Nature, which is Love;
That so by Christ redeemed from sin and shame,
And hallowed by Thy Spirit's cleansing flame,
Ourselves, our work, and all our powers may be
A sacrifice acceptable to Thee.

Ernest Dugmore

A LIFE SUPERIOR TO OUR SURROUNDINGS 1:12—2:4

Evidently the Philippians had been troubled by news of Paul's imprisonment, they were afraid it was curtailing his missionary work. They see little meaning or purpose in his adversities, so Paul shows them that God makes no mistakes. Apparent calamity becomes another reason for giving God thanks. Paul has victory over his circumstances vs.12-19, over his

opponents vs.20-24, victory by good behaviour vs.27-30, and victory over pride 2:1-4. He explains his difficulties, expresses his desires, encourages their devotion and expects to see in them the development of the graces of his Lord.

(A) Victory by Christ being Manifest in His Bonds vs.12-19

His bonds were permitted of God and had actually proved an advantage. How? (a) by enabling him to witness for Christ among the soldiers of the Imperial Guard; v.12; (b) by stimulating the saints in Rome to a bolder testimony through his example, v.14; and (c) provoking his enemies to greater missionary activity, vs.15-18.

"Divine wisdom makes man's opposition to further the saints' eternal salvation." Paul literally says, "I have been able to make clear what life in Christ means to the whole Praetorian Court." Note in these verses the Preacher's message, methods and motives, and search your own heart regarding these things.

(B) Victory by Christ being Magnified in His Body vs.20-26

His indignation has been mastered, the irritation has produced a pearl, and he will rejoice in sovereign grace which brings good out of evil. He pleads for prayer that the Spirit might descend in power upon him. He had joy, faith, hope, prayer and a real purpose in life. His one motto—"For me to live—Christ." What is our position, object, goal in life? Is it self or Christ? Are we living aimless empty lives? Is the Lord being made great in the eyes of others by our surrendered life, or do we seek "A place in the Sun?" How true the words: "They that deny themselves will be sure to find their strength increased, their affections raised, and their inward peace continually advanced."

Paul finds himself in a very happy dilemma; the choice of living for Christ here, or to change immediately to the state of living with Him in His immediate presence. The metaphor behind the words "To Depart" "is drawn from the breaking up an encampment" (Lightfoot). It is the taking down of a tent that the occupant may move onward on his journey. Paul relinquishes his own desires in favour of helping others for he never put "Number One" first.

(C) Victory by Christians Manifesting Boldness vs.27-30

Paul now exhorts these saints to conduct themselves worthy of the Gospel. He desires tidings such as will gladden his heart. How could they gratify this desire? (a) by boldness being seen in their conduct, v.26, and by conducting themselves worthy of Christ as a colony of Heaven. It is the corporate life, not the individual, that Paul is looking at here. Their lives must be ruled by the laws of heaven. (b) boldness seen in their co-operation,

v.27. Be united in spiritual steadfastness. The defensive side—"Stand Fast," repel all assaults. The offensive side—earnestly and unitedly maintaining the Faith.

Our responsibility is to live consistently, stand unitedly, work earnestly and show courage which is a prophecy of victory. Never be scared no matter what subtle strategy is used by the enemy. Our Great Deliverer Himself has given us a sure token of complete victory by His conquest on Calvary.

God's Church has never prospered in times of ease. It was when they suffered for the Faith that they were strong and mighty.

(D) Victory by Christians Manifesting Meekness in their Behaviour 2:1-4

Daily victory in the Christian life comes through lowliness, by submission—not to the Devil but to the Lord. All was not well at Philippi; true accord was missing so Paul emphasizes the need for brotherly love and self-denial. He appeals for this on a four-fold ground; "In Christ" (a) Consolation, (b) Comfort of Love, (c) Fellowship of the Spirit, (d) Affections and Mercies. Since ye have found these in Christ then—fulfil ye my joy. He directs them to the fulness of their profession, v.2; and points out features that should mark their practice vs.3-4.

Drinking of the Spirit of Christ, we exemplify the mind of Christ. Where any discord exists in our relationship to fellow Christians we are defeated before we enter the fray to battle with the enemy of souls. Are these four heavenly plants growing in your assembly garden? v.2. We must ever avoid passion—"strife", pride—"vain glory", and selfishness—"esteem others better." The consideration of what we are and what we have destroys unity and humility "Others"—must become the watchword of our lives day by day.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER TWO

"Live Christ" "In Lowliness and Suffering."

1. Harmony Encouraged among the Saints vs.1-4

(a) *There is Everything in Christ* v.1

Consolation in Christ. Cheer and Help.

Communion of the Spirit. Compassionate Care.

(b) *Essentials in Conduct* vs.2-3a

Be Like-minded and Loving. Be Selfless and Sympathetic. By Love Serve One Another.

(c) *Exhibit Consideration* vs.3b-4

By your lowliness, thoughtfulness and selflessness.

2. Humility Exemplified in the Son of God vs.5-11

Seen in His Incarnation vs.7,8a, in His Crucifixion 8b, leading to Exaltation v.9, and to Glorification vs.10-11.

3. Holy Enthusiasm as Stewards vs.12-17

By your dependence upon God vs.12-13; by displaying Christ vs.14-15. By declaring the Gospel to others v.16.

4. Helpfulness Exhibited in the Servants vs.18-30

Paul—A Picture of the suppression of Personal Service vs.17-18.

Timothy—A Picture of the suppression of Personal Inclination vs.19-24.

Epaphroditus—A Picture of the suppression of Personal Comfort vs.25-30.

Paul was a man of Self Abasement Guided by God's will.

Timothy was a man of Self Sacrifice Grieved by God's Love.

Epaphroditus was a man of Self Effacement Giving all in God's Service.

A LIFE OF SACRIFICIAL SERVICE 2:5-30

When Paul believed a thing he always did something about it. His plea and precept for humility is now enforced by the supreme example brought before us in vs.5-11. Pride perishes beneath the shadow of the Cross. There we become deeply conscious of our littleness and sinfulness.

Here is victory by the example of Christ, vs.5-11; by exhausting ourselves, vs.12-17; and by expending our energies in the cause of Christ thus acknowledging His Lordship, vs.18-30.

Humility Seen in His Condescension vs.5-11

Here we have an entire course on Christology, our greatest need during our pilgrimage in the wilderness. Israel ate the Manna which was round, "The form of God", small—"No reputation", white—His Sinlessness. It lay on the ground—"He humbled Himself"; the true Manna. The Ark was the centre of the Tabernacle. It was overlaid with Gold, telling us of His Inherent Glory v.6. It contained the Golden Pot of Manna and Aaron's Rod which Budded—His perpetual Manhood and Exaltation vs.8-11.

(a) *The Stooping Redeemer* vs.5-8.

As the Self Existing One He contented Himself. In assuming manhood He emptied Himself. It was the renunciation not of deity, but of praise and glory, and we his followers are expected to do the same.

Have we here a summary of John's Gospel—"The form of God;" Mark's Gospel—"The form of a servant"; Luke's Gospel—"Found in fashion as a man"? His was an infinite stoop and it was voluntary for He never was asked to abdicate His throne. God took note of these seven immeasurable steps and saw to it that there was no defeat in His Death.

(b) *The Sovereign Ruler* vs.9-11

His glorious exaltation and final triumph will issue in universal subjugation and worship. His self-forgetful life is vindicated and has the approval of His Father. He has been exalted—"Made Highly High", He is far above all.

“Name” indicates office, rank, dignity and character. The reference is not to the name Jesus, but to the name of Jesus when the whole creation shall give to Him the worship which is His due. His name is “Lord” the name which is above every name. See Isaiah 45:23,24; Romans 14:9.

Humility seen in our Co-operation with God vs.12-16

Doctrine is not to be separated from duty and in these verses we are reminded of our relation to God (vs.12-13); to fellow believers (v.14); and to the world (vs.15-16). These verses are written, not to individuals, but to a community. “My Beloved” might be translated, “My Dear People.” Work away at your salvation, stand on your own feet and don’t depend on me. As we think of the task we are marked by fear and trembling. Sacred things must not be treated with unholy recklessness. Ours is a high calling, to be instruments of God to do His good pleasure. His working in us will enable us to suppress disturbing elements—“Strife and vain glory”, and display divine features—“Blameless and Harmless”. We can silence a deluded world by consistent life and witness—“Shining as luminaries.”

Humility Demonstrated in Consecrated Service, 2:17-30

Three human examples of service are given here: Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

(a) Paul the willing sacrifice: pouring out his life vs.17-18

He had the vision of the mind of Christ. He was joyful in God’s service, vs.16-17, humble among the saints v.17, and careful about God’s will. True joy is found in sacrificial service, so Paul rejoices in the pouring out of his life. He was the drink offering poured out upon their sacrificial work for the Lord. His service is only incidental compared with theirs.

(b) Timothy the willing servant: going on in service vs.19-24

In Timothy we see the virtue of the Mind of Christ. Paul bears noble testimony to his love v.20, his unselfishness v.21, and his loyalty v.22. He was a valued lieutenant to the Apostle and had the true spirit, for he always put the Lord first. While others were half-hearted, he was out-and-out for Christ. He had a warm heart, a listening ear, a pure motive, a quick eye, and a genuine interest in all the saints. He had served a glorious apprenticeship with a great craftsman and had drunk of the same spirit of self-effacement.

(c) Epaphroditus the willing soldier: the charming messenger vs.25-30

His name means “charming” and what a charming winsome person he was. We have here a miniature portrait of this very attractive character, held in the highest esteem by Paul and his fellow believers. In relation to God’s family, he was a brother; in God’s service—a labourer; in the army—a good soldier; in the church—a messenger; and to the saints—a comforter. He hazarded his life for the cause of Christ, he held nothing in reserve, and in laying his life on the altar he was courageously filling in a garland for the brow of the Church that sent him to Paul.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER THREE

“For Christ” Looking and Serving.

1. **Caring for the saints** vs.1-3
Confirming their faith v.1, condemning the enemy v.2.
Claiming the best of privileges v.3.
2. **Conceited Religion** vs.4-6
What he inherited vs.4-5, pride of race.
What he exhibited v.6, pride of place.
3. **Converted to God** vs.7-11
His calm decision v.7, his captivating discovery v.8
His complete dependence v.9, his consuming desire vs.10-11.
4. **Concentration on the Prize** vs.12-14
Following after v.12, forgetting the past v.13
His eye fixed on the prize v.14.
5. **Considering others**, vs.15-19
Divine principles to guide us vs.15-16
Delightful examples to help us v.17
Difficult people who try us vs.18-19.
6. **Coming glory**, vs.20-21
Our politics are in Heaven v.20a
Our prospect from Heaven v.20b
Our perfect body in Heaven v.21a
His power assures the change v.21b.

A LIFE OF SELF-SURRENDER ch.3:1-21

Here we have the spiritual autobiography of the Apostle Paul.

The Past—what he was vs.1-7, the present—what he became vs.8-12. The Passion—what he was doing vs.13-17, and the prospect—what he would be vs.20-21.

There are certain persistent spiritual dangers against which we are warned, obstacles in the path that would deprive us of victory in life. The first is self-righteousness, or confidence in the flesh vs.2-6. The second danger is spiritual self complacency, or trust in past experience, vs.7-14, the third is self-indulgence, or carnality vs.15-19.

(A) **Warning His Converts** vs.1-3.

Was Paul interrupted in his letter? There appears to be a break of thought in the middle of verse one. It may be due to lapse of time, then he realised, on resuming his letter, that there were many other things he had to say.

He did not think it irksome to repeat this note against error. He exposes the enemy showing their unclean character—“dogs” ungodly conduct—“evil workers” and their unscriptural creed—“concision”. They were moral degenerates and must be avoided Gal. 5:12.

In contrast to these Judaistic opponents we have the new Israel of God

v.3. Here is a new approach to God—"By the Spirit." The Spirit of God is the power by which the human spirit is enabled to worship in spirit and in truth. The new allegiance—"Glory in Christ Jesus." The new attitude—"No confidence in the flesh", for at the cross all man's boasted privileges vanish.

(B) Counting His Credits vs.4-7.

Paul gives us his list of natural advantages and privileges. As to ritual—a natural born Jew. As to race—stock of Israel. As to rank—the royal line of Benjamin. As to profession and training—a Pharisee. He zealously practised its precepts and propagated its message yet it was worthless for, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Contrast these seven ascending steps of Paul with the seven condescending steps of the Lord in chapter two. All the religion in the world cannot save the soul.

(C) Captivated by Christ vs.8-11.

Verses 4-7 tell us what he gave up for Christ now we learn what he claimed in Christ. He came to a settled conviction with regard to the matter of his past. The various gains are all counted as one loss. His life has become reconstructed, his vision has become enlarged and his passionate desires were redirected. His sole object in life is Christ and everything earthly must grow strangely dim in the dazzling super-excellence of Christ Jesus His Lord. He has no regrets for he still was satisfied with Christ—"I counted", "I count." His passion was to know His Lord better, for he interpreted the christian life in terms of present progress and not past attainment. He has a new estimate of life and willingly surrenders all to the Lord. Consecration is not only an act but a daily attitude of surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ. His ultimate objective was to attain to the resurrection from among the dead. This does not refer to a special phase of resurrection, or a moral experience, for no other portion of Scripture supports this interpretation. "Attain" means "to arrive at a goal" not to achieve something by his own efforts.

(D) Constrained to follow vs.12-16.

The word "attained" in verse 12 is from a different Greek word than that in the preceding verse. Here it speaks of active appropriation. He is not yet spiritually mature; there is room for further development so he presses on. No matter what our attainment, there is no place for any other attitude while down here. We must neither go back nor look back, but specialise in reaching the prize. He was arrested by Christ, aware of the Divine purpose, and ambitious to please God who had saved him. It is well that we should remind ourselves of the petty done, and the vast undone lest we become slack.

Paul uses the favourite metaphor of an athlete in a race whose eyes are on the finishing point, vs.13-14. He was urged on by the upward calling in Christ Jesus. "Persecuting" v.6, "follow after" v.12 and "press" v.14 are the same word in Greek. He is intent on the future, eager in the present and governed by the principles that brought his advancement in spiritual things.

We have a common mission—"the same thing" and should have a common measure—rule of truth to correct our lives.

(E) **The coming transformation** vs.20-22.

These verses give to us the example v.17, the enemies vs.18-19, and the expectation of Paul vs.20-21. His life was the practical exemplification of his teaching. There were others whose lives brought sorrow to his heart. They were not enemies of the blood or of the death of Christ; their opposition was directed against "the cross" which told of shame and rejection. They were carnally minded and lived for self-indulgence. In contrast to these we look for a body in which the Lord is fully glorified. He is coming back as Saviour and as Sovereign to perfect His work in us. Our association is heavenly, our expectation is the Saviour and our transformation is sure. Our hope is Christ, our home is Heaven. Let us therefore live looking for Him who will subdue all things unto Himself.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER FOUR

"From Christ" Liberal Supplies and Strength.

1. **The Trouble Diagnosed** vs.1-3

Hold your ground v.1

Heal this breach v.2

Help those women v.3a

Hold records in Heaven v.3b

2. **The Treatment Prescribed** vs.4-9

For the Spirit —cheerfulness v.4

For the Strife —selflessness v.5

For the Soul —prayerfulness v.6

For the Mind —peacefulness v.7

For the Life —godliness vs.8-9

3. **The Thankful Servant** vs.10-20

For the support given by the saints v.10

For the satisfaction found in Christ vs.11-13

For the sympathy shown towards him vs.10-11

For the supply of his need vs.17-18

For the sufficiency of God vs.19-20

4. **The Parting Salutation** vs.21-23

Encouraging —every saint in Christ Jesus

Embracing —all the saints

Inspiring —They of Caesar's household

Enriching —Grace be with you all

A LIFE OF SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION chapter 4

Our Christian faith is not so much a matter of outward conduct as of the state of the mind. Paul had cheered their hearts (chapter 1), stirred their

spirits (chapter 2), reached their consciences (chapter 3), and now in closing his letter he would settle their minds (chapter 4).

"Therefore" links this chapter with the thought of the Lord's coming and their being like Him. In view of that stand fast, for godliness is a life-long business. We have in this chapter four pictures of a christian life. Christian service or our responsibility vs.1-7; Christian silence or our spirituality vs.8-9; Christian satisfaction or our sufficiency vs.10-14; Christian sacrifice or our generosity vs.15-20.

(A) The great essentials: a life of simplicity vs.1-7.

(1) *Be faithful* v.1. Paul's heart is moved and he speaks to them in terms of strongest affection. He is linked with them, longs for them and loves them above measure for they are the fruit of his toil in which he finds his highest joy. The steadfastness of the battle-front of the whole company is in view here, not individual constancy.

(2) *Be humble* v.2. Previously Paul had hinted at a certain want of harmony at Philippi, and now he plainly speaks of it. Two of his valued friends were at variance so he begs them to be of the "same mind in the Lord," Euodias means "prosperous journey" and Syntyche means "pleasant acquaintance" and as they exercise humility and put self in the background their acquaintance will be pleasant and their future journeys prosperous.

(3) *Be helpful* v.3. The true yoke-fellow is entreated to act as mediator and bring about a peaceful settlement to this dispute. The Philippian church was like a hive of bees, every one busy, so some must be reconciled and others relieved that the work of God be not hindered.

(4) *Be joyful*, vs.5-6. Maintain joy at all times and under all circumstances for depression weakens our defences against the enemy. Rejoice in the Lord's work for us, faithfulness to us, interest in us, and coming for us. This will make us considerate, gentle and gracious to all men. In order to uphold us the Lord is near at hand so "Let your unselfishness be known".

(e) *Be prayerful* vs.6-7. The cure for worry is believing prayer. Let cares become prayers and worry will be driven away. This prescription is always useful: "Be careful for nothing, be prayerful for everything, be thankful for anything." Divine peace is a garrison against fretting so let it mount guard today.

(B) The good education, a life of spirituality vs.8-9.

The mind is but a machine, it receives and builds into the life whatever is put into it, hence the importance of attending to these rules of mental health. Bishop Taylor Smith said, "You are not what you *think* you are; but—what you *think*, you are." Here are eight things of immense value in building Christian character, they appear to go in pairs. The first pair are intrinsic values, the second pair—relative values, the third pair—social values, the fourth pair, inclusive values. All these find personal embodiment in our Lord Jesus and He wants us to live like Him.

Having thought let us act, habitually practise these things and the abiding presence of the God of Peace will be ours.

(C) The grand experience, a life of sufficiency vs.10-13.

From Christian living the Apostle turns to the subject of Christian giving and these must never be divorced. The gift is viewed in relation to the recipient (vs.10-14), in relation to the giver (vs.15-17), and in relation to the Lord (vs.18-20).

(1) *His Encouragement* v.10. Revived interest in his welfare brought sunshine into his heart and he was generous in his appreciation of their care for him.

(2) *Education* vs.11-12. "Paul was a Master of Arts. He had mastered the art of being hungry without murmuring, the art of being full without boasting, the art of suffering need without impatience, the art of abounding without setting his affections on worldly things" (Shields). May we graduate in this same school.

(3) *His Enrichment* v.13. Paul was satiated with the strength of God which was proportionate with his capacity and perpetually poured into him for practical purposes.

(4) The gift enjoyed, a life of supply vs.14-20.

Sympathy and sacrifice marked their giving and it was acknowledged by Paul and acceptable to God. Giving is the law of Nature; the sun, the earth, the clouds and flowers all give. It is well pleasing to God, it meets a need, it brings fruit, it is an act of worship. The spirit uses language similar to that used of the sacrifice of Christ in Eph. 5:2, it partook of that character with God. Think of the wealth our God gives in return for our liberality, verse 19.

(5) The grace that enriches, a life of sympathy vs.21-23.

Paul cannot mention God's bounty without a doxology, this reminds us of our greatest need—to give glory to God. The last lesson sums up the victorious life—affection for every saint. This is the only place in the N.T. where the singular is used for "saint" and here it has the word 'every' before it. Unity is suggested in "spirit" not spirits. We are all one in Christ and should go forward with His grace which is enough for every circumstance in life.

FEATURES OF A LOCAL CHURCH

1. The Privileges We Enjoy

Sharing in gospel work 1:5,7,12

Suffering for our Lord's sake 1:29-30

Supplicating God for the suffering 1:19

Shining in a dark world 2:15

Showing others the way 3:17

Supporting the Lord's Servants 4:10,18.

2. The Problems We Must Face

Preachers with wrong motives 1:15-16

- People with a wrong spirit 2:3a,14,21
 - Pernicious doctrine and practice 3:2,18-19
 - Personal grievances not settled 4:2
 - Failing to practise what we know 4:9
 - 3. **The Path to Assembly Prosperity**
 - By co-operation in the gospel 1:5,27
 - By considering the humility of Christ 2:5-8
 - By continual obedience to God 2:12-16
 - By Christ-like service in the world 2:17-30
 - By condemning and crucifying the flesh 3:3-11
 - By confidence in fellow workers 4:3
 - By cultivating a lovely mind 4:8-9
 - Acts 2:47b; 1 Corinthians 3:6b.
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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN PAUL'S LIFE

1. **An Enlarged Heart** 1:7-8. "*Love*" Caring for the saints
As a saint he embraced them all v.8. As a shepherd he encouraged them v.8.
As a servant he exhorted them 2:2.
2. **An Invincible Spirit** 1:18-20 "*Joy*" Cheering saints.
Joy under affliction vs.12-18. Joy in assisting others v.25. Joy in his association with others 4:1.
3. **A Surrendered Will** 2:17. "*Peace*" Longsuffering Consecrated
Pouring out his heart in prayer 1:9. Pouring out his will in surrender 2:17, pouring out his life in service 2:17. Christ pouring in strength 4:13.
4. **His Spiritual Desires** 3:10. "*Gentleness*" Captivated by Christ
Gentle as a father 2:22, as a brother 3:15, I may know Him—Martha. Power of resurrection—Lazarus. Fellowship of suffering—Mary.
"Goodness" as a pastor 1:7. As a prisoner 1:13. As a preacher 1:18. As a plodder 3:12-14.
5. **His Clear Vision** 3:14. "*Faith*" Concentrating on the Prize
His stripping place v.8, studying place vs.9-10, training place v.12, on the track vs.13-14, watching the goal v.14a, end of the race v.14b.
6. **His Cultivated Mind** 4:9. "*Temperance*" Commending Values
"Meekness" in his service 1:1; 2:17.
"Meekness" in his appeal 4:2.
"Meekness" in his experience 4:12.
"Temperance" in his attitude to all men 4:5.
"Temperance" in his attitude to all matters 4:6.
He was controlled by the mind of the Master 2:5.

Philippians chapter 1

A Christian

- C** Committed to Christ v.1a
- H** Heavenly resources v.2
- R** Remembers others in prayer vs.3 and 4
- I** Interested in the Gospel v.5
- S** Sure of Heaven v.6
- T** Tender-hearted to the saints vs.7 and 8
- I** Interested in progress v.9
- A** Abundantly fruitful v.11
- N** Near return of his Lord v.6c.
-
- C** Controls my life, v.21 'For to me to *live* is Christ'
- H** Helps me in witnessing, v.12 'have fallen out rather unto the *furtherance* of the Gospel'
- R** Rich in resources, v.11 'Being *filled* with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ'
- I** Inspires us in living, v.26 'That your *rejoicing* may be more abundant in Jesus Christ'
- S** Stands at my side, v.19 '*Supply* of the Spirit of Jesus Christ'
- T** Translates to Glory, v.23 'to be *with Christ*; which is far better'.

Word Studies in Philippians

Suggested plan of the epistle

Key Word: "Joy and Rejoice"

Introduction: 1:1-2; **Closing Salutation:** 4:21-23.

Paul rejoiced in the Fellowship of the Saints	1:3-11
Paul rejoiced in the Furtherance of the Gospel	1:12-30
Paul rejoiced in the Fact and Fruit of Christ's Work	2:1-18
Paul rejoiced in the Fervour of Faithful Servants	2:19-30
Paul rejoiced in the Firm Foundation of his Faith	3:1-16
Paul rejoiced in the Future Glory with Christ	3:17-4:1
Paul rejoiced in the Fellow Labourers in Christ	4:2-4
Paul rejoiced in the Fulness of Divine Grace	4:5-9
Paul rejoiced in the Fragrance of Christian Giving	4:10-20

Read the epistle through several times and collect and group together the following words:—

Eight things of God

Ten things of Christ

Six things in Christ

Four things by and through Christ

Seven things in the Lord

References to "in Christ"; "in Christ Jesus"

Nine things Paul was sure of

Nine references to the gospel

Four "withouts" and four "nothings"

Four references to "fellowship"

Find eight good desires for today

Eleven references to the mind

"All things" and the word "all"

"Joy and rejoice"

"That I may"

Paul's personal pronouns

"I have" six times

Nine "lets" and twenty "yours"

Nine references to "brethren"

Twenty-nine "my"

References to "prayer"; "love"; "The Spirit".

Christian Fellowship for Today

The privileges of our fellowship	1:1-11
The problems in our fellowship	1:12-18
The power of our fellowship	1:19-30
The principles of our fellowship	2:1-4
The pattern of our fellowship	2:5-11
The price paid for our fellowship	2:12-30
The provision of our fellowship	3:1-14
The proofs of our fellowship	3:15-21
The practice of our fellowship	4:1-20
The pleasure of our fellowship	4:21-24

Victorious Christian Living

An Outline of Philippians

Chapter 1 — The Principles of Victory

- 1) *Through captivity to Christ*, vs.1,2
 - The committed servants, v.1a
 - The complete security, v.1
 - The concerned shepherds, v.1
 - The continual supplies, v.2
- 2) *Through unity and activity*, vs.3-8
 - Fellowship brings gladness to the soul, vs.3,4
 - Fellowship brings generosity in service, vs.5,6
 - Fellowship brings gratitude to the heart, vs.7,8
- 3) *Through conformity to Christ*, vs.9-11
 - A deeper love, v.9a
 - A wider love, v.9b
 - A purer love, v.10
 - A fuller, richer love, v.11
- 4) *Through serenity in Christ*, vs.12-18
 - Victory over circumstances by contentment, vs.12-14
 - Victory over the devil by commitment, vs.15-18
- 5) *Through sufficiency in Christ*, vs.19-26
 - Paul's delight, v.19
 - Paul's devotion, vs.20,21
 - Paul's dilemma, v.23
 - Paul's decision, v.24
 - Paul's discernment, vs.25,26
- 6) *Through loyalty to Christ*, vs.27-30
 - A call to consistency, v.27a
 - A call to co-operation, v.27b
 - A call to courage, v.28
 - A call to comradeship, vs.29,30

Chapter 2 — The Path and Pattern for Victory

- 1) *By manifesting unity*, vs.1-4
 - Remembering your resources in Christ, v.1
 - Rise to your responsibilities in Christ, vs.2,3
 - Respect one another in Christ, v.4
- 2) *By displaying humility*, vs.5-11
 - The Lord challenging us, v.5
 - The Lord contented, v.6
 - The Lord condescending, v.7a

- The Lord conforming Himself, v.7b
- The Lord compensated, vs.9,10
- The Lord conquering, v.11
- 3) *By accepting responsibility*, vs.12-16
 - A life of loyalty, vs.12,13
 - A life of serenity, v.14
 - A life of purity, v.15b
 - A life of testimony, v.15b
 - A life of ministry, v.16
- 4) *By persevering energy*, vs.17-30
 - Paul triumphant in sacrifice, vs.16,18,23
 - His strenuous labour, v.17a
 - His sacrificial love, v.17b
 - His sanctified wisdom, v.19
 - Timothy triumphant in service, vs.19-23
 - Genuine concern, v.20
 - Good credentials, vs.22,23
 - Epaphroditus triumphant in sickness and sorrow, vs.25-30
 - His sterlingness, v.25
 - His tenderness, v.26
 - His worthiness, vs.27,28
 - His faithfulness, vs.29,30

Chapter 3 — The Possibility of Victory

- 1) *The recognition of truth*, vs.1-3
 - It establishes, v.1
 - It exposes error, v.2
 - It encourages, v.3
- 2) *The renunciation of the flesh*, vs.4-7
 - Renouncing religious privileges, v.5a
 - Renouncing pride, v.5b
 - Renouncing performance, v.6a
 - Renouncing pursuits, v.6b
 - Renouncing preferences, v.7
- 3) *Association with Christ*, vs.8-11
 - Discovery, v.8
 - Deliverance, v.9
 - Desire, vs.10,11
- 4) *Dedication in the race*, vs.12-17
 - Determination in the race, v.13
 - Doggedness in the race, v.14
 - Discipline in the race, vs.15-17

- 5) *Denunciation of enemies*, vs.18,19
 - Disguise by enemies, v.18
 - Doom and disgrace of the enemies, v.19
- 6) *Anticipation of glory*, vs.20,21
 - An internal, external and eternal change

Chapter 4 — The Pleasure of Victory

- 1) *Generosity of Spirit*, vs.1-7
 - Shown by stability, v.1
 - Shown by uniformity, vs.2,3
 - Shown by felicity, vs.4,5
 - Shown by serenity, vs.6,7
- 2) *Tranquility of mind*, vs.8,9
 - The renewed mind, v.8
 - The right method, v.9
 - The refreshing presence, v.9b
- 3) *Sufficiency enjoyed*, vs.10-19
 - Over-ruling Providence, vs.10-12
 - Operating Power, v.13
 - Overflowing Provision, vs.14-19
- 4) *Glory to God*, vs.20-23
 - Adoration, v.20
 - Salutation, vs.21,22
 - Benediction, v.23

The Philippian Art Gallery

Introduction, ch.1:1-2

Writers v.1a
 Readers v.1b
 Our standing 'saints'
 Our security 'in Christ'
 Our sphere at 'Philippi'
 Our supply 'grace and peace'

THE WARRIOR'S ROOM, ch.1:3-30

- 1. **His happy recollections** vs.3-7
 - What he cultivated—prayer and praise vs.3,4
 - What he appreciated—fellowship v.5
 - What he anticipated—day of Christ v.6
- 2. **His humble requests** vs.8-11
 - Love's intensity v.8

Love's interests v.9

Love's inspiration v.10

Love's industry v.11

3. **His heavenly repose** vs.12-18

The progress of the Gospel vs.12-13

The power in the Gospel v.14

The preachers of the Gospel vs.15-17

The pleasure in the Gospel v.18

4. **His holy resolve** vs.19-26

The ministry of prayer v.19

The master passion vs.20-21

The mariner's problem v.23

The members' progress vs.24-26

5. **His helpful reminders** vs.27-30

As citizens commending the gospel v.27

As warriors contending for the gospel vs.27-28

As believers cheered by the gospel v.29

and all as comrades in the gospel v.30

THE HERO'S ROOM, ch.2:1-30

1. A discussion group, 'unity' vs.1-4

Unity encouraged by the Spirit v.1

Unity expected by the Servant v.2

Unity essential among Saints vs.3-4

2. **A throne, cross, kingdom**, 'Humility' vs.5-11

On the throne contented vs.5-6

As a servant controlled v.7

To the cross consistent v.8

By His God compensated vs.9-11

3. **Floodlit city** 'responsibility' vs.12-16

Its policy, obedience v.12

Its power, God in you v.13

Its principles, blameless, shining v.15

Its privileges, holding forth v.16

Its prospects, Day of Christ v.16

4. **Like father, like son**, 'sincerity' vs.17-22

Man of sympathy, love for others v.20

Man of surrender, lived for Christ v.21

Man of stability, loyal to Paul v.22

5. **Epaphroditus**, 'sacrifice' vs.25-30

This soldier was a:

very valued companion v.23

God-remembered servant v.27

highly esteemed brother v.29

self-forgetful saint v.30

THE STUDENT'S ROOM, ch.3:1-21

1. **The minister**, '*warning*' vs.1-3
 - Encouraging the saints v.1
 - Exposing the enemy v.2
 - Expounding the truth v.3
2. **The scholar** '*reflecting*' vs.4-7
 - on his associations vs.4-5
 - on his activities v.6
 - on his gain and loss v.7
3. **The theologian** '*musings*' vs.8-12
 - New attachment to Christ v.8a
 - New abandonment to His cause v.8b
 - New association with his Lord v.9
 - New ambition in his life vs.10-11
 - New apprehension of divine purpose v.12
4. **The athlete** '*running*' vs.13-14
 - His soul was energised v.12
 - His life was specialised v.13
 - His heart was satisfied v.14
5. **The leader** '*directing*' vs.15-19
 - Vigorous saints vs.15,16
 - Victorious examples v.17
 - Vile enemies v.18-19
6. **The citizen** '*looking*' vs.20-21
 - Reflection in conduct v.20a
 - Expectation of the Lord v.20b

THE REST ROOM, ch.4:1-20

1. **A united front** vs.1-4
 - The grace of steadiness v.1
 - The grace of selflessness v.2
 - The grace of helpfulness v.3
 - The grace of joyfulness v.4
2. **A garrisoned heart** vs.5-7
 - Practise moderation v.5a
 - Prayerful supplication v.6
 - Peace mounts guard v.7
3. **A beautiful mind** vs.8-9
 - Marked by consideration v.8
 - Marked by discrimination v.8
 - Marked by concentration v.8
 - Marked by manifestation v.9
4. **A contented spirit** vs.10-20
 - The signs—rejoicing v.10

The sweetness—no cravings v.11

The secret—instructed v.12

The strength—Christ v.13

The supply—ye do well v.14

The service—ye only vs.15-16

The satisfaction—acceptable vs.18,19

The source of wealth—in God v.20

The Captivating Christ of Colossians

Epistle written from Rome by Paul in A.D. 61-62

Chapter 1

CHRIST THE SOURCE OF OUR WEALTH—"OUR HEAD"

- (A) **The Glory of the Gospel of Christ** vs.1-14
 - The Appreciation it brings, vs.1-4
 - The Activity it produces, vs.10-11
 - The Association it begets, vs.5-9
 - The Assurance it bestows, vs.12-14.
- (B) **The Greatness of the Person of Christ** vs.15-19
 - His Relation to God emphasizing His Personality v.15
 - His Relation to Authorities emphasizing His Power v.16
 - His Relation to Creation emphasizing His Priority v.17
 - His Relation to the Church emphasizing His Pre-eminence v.18
 - His Relation to the Father emphasizing His Possession of Deity v.19.
- (C) **The Grandeur of the Work of Christ** vs.20-23
 - The Realm of His Work—Heaven and Earth v.20a
 - The Reason of His Work—To Reconcile All Things v.20b
 - The Reach of His Work—You, His Enemies v.21
 - The Result of His Work—To Present you Holy v.22b
 - Our Response to His Work—Be not Moved Away v.23a
- (D) **The Grasp of the Body of Christ** vs.24-29
 - Paul Preaching and Suffering vs.24,25; Paul Praying and Supplicating 1:29—2:3; The Minister of the Body v.23b; Suffering v.24; Serving v.25; Striving v.26; The Mystery of the Body vs.25,26; Hid v.26a; Manifest v.26b; Displayed v.27; The Method of the Minister vs.28,29; Preach, Warn, Teach, Present, Labour.

Chapter Two

CHRIST THE SECRET OF OUR WISDOM—"OUR FULNESS"

- (A) **The Sum of All Wisdom** vs.1-3.
 - THE MYSTERY v.2.
 - Conflict for it v.1; Comprehension of it v.2; Content with it v.3.
- (B) **The Source of Our Life** vs.4-8.
 - THE MESSAGE vs.5,6.
 - Their Enemy vs.4,8; Their Unity v.5; Vitality v.6; Stability, Maturity v.7.

(C) The Sufficiency against Error vs.9-13.

THE MEANS vs.11-12.

Fulness of Christ vs.9,10; Freedom in Christ v.12; Fellowship with Christ v.11; Forgiveness from Christ v.13.

(D) The Spoiler of Our Foes vs.14,15.

THE MIGHTY VICTOR.

The Transaction of the Cross—Guilt Removed v.14.

The Triumph of Christ—Enemies Vanquished v.15.

Victor over Gnosticism v.8; Legalism vs. 11-15; Ceremonialism vs.16,17; Asceticism vs.20-23.

(E) The Substance of Every Shadow vs.16-18.

THE MATTER.

Asserting Christian Liberty v.16;

Accepting the Reality v.17;

Abandoning Speculation v.18.

(F) The Sustainer of His Church vs.19-23.

THE MOTIVATOR.

Union with Christ v.19;

Association with Christ v.20;

Loyalty to Christ vs.21-23.

Chapter Three

CHRIST THE STANDARD OF LIFE—"OUR LIFE"

(A) Risen With Christ vs.1-4. OUR POSITION.

(1) The Fact of Union with Him vs.1-4.

Our Association v.1; Our Aspiration v.2;

Our Acceptance v.3; Our Anticipation v.4.

(B) Controlled By Christ vs.5-25. OUR PRACTICE.

(2) The Function of Union with Him vs.5-9.

Purity in our Ways vs.5-7; Courtesy in our Words vs.8,9.

(3) The Fruit of Union with Him vs.10,11.

The New Start—Renewal of Soul v.10;

The New Society—Removal of all Barriers v.11.

(4) The Features of Union with Him vs.12-17.

The Raiment we wear v.12; The Robe that Suits v.13;

The Rule that arbitrates v.15; The Response we make vs.16,17.

(5) The Family in Union with Christ vs.19-25.

In Domestic Life vs.18-21; In Secular Life vs.22-25.

Chapter Four

CHRIST THE STRENGTH OF CHARACTER—"OUR LORD"

Watching in Prayer vs.2-4, Elements and Objective**Wise Conduct** vs.5-6, Live Uprightly, Winsomely

Words of Encouragement vs.7-9, Faithful, Helpful
Worthy Companions vs.10-15, Trusted and True
Wealthy Material v.16, Study and Share
A Worker Encouraged v.17, Call to Continue.

The Colossian Epistle

The Believer's Pilgrimage

ch.1 EMANCIPATION FROM EGYPT

1. **The slavery of sin** vs.13,14 and 21

The tyranny of darkness v.13

The trend of wickedness v.21

The thought of waywardness v.21

(Deliverer Ex. 14

Redeemed Ex. 12

Giving thanks Ex.15

Made meet Ex.19)

2. **The Saviour of men** v.22

a. *The picture of His worth* vs.15 and 18

His person unveiled v.15

His power unlimited vs.16 and 17

His pre-eminence undisputed v.18

b. *The power of His work* vs.16 and 22

Creating v.16

Preserving v.16

Controlling v.17

Reconciling v.20

Presenting v.22

3. **The steward of the mystery** v.27

Interested in them v.24

Intercession for them v.21

Instruction for them v.23

Identification with them v.24 and v.29

4. **Strength for the journey** v.9

Divine power v.11

Divine pleasure v.10

Divine purpose v.9

Divine prospect v.5

ch.2 EXPERIENCES OF THE WILDERNESS

1. **Fellowship we enjoy** vs.1 to 7

Won by conflict v.1 (Ex. 15:3)

- Warmth of heart v.1 (Ex. 16:24)
- Wealth of wisdom v.2 (Ex. 15:13)
- Walking in rank v.5 (Ex. 13:18)
- Well established vs.6 and 7
- 2. **Foes we encounter** vs.8 and 23
 - Human philosophy vs.5,8 and 10
 - Jewish legality vs.11 and 17
 - Oriental mysticism vs.18 and 19
 - Carnal materialism vs.20 and 23
- 3. **Fruits of victory** vs.14,15 and 17
 - Sufficiency of His wealth v.9
 - Strength of their position vs.10 and 12
 - Sweep of His work vs.13 and 14
 - Sign of His triumph v.15
 - Sustenance for His body v.19
 - Freedom v.14
 - Forgiveness v.13
 - Fulness v.10
 - Firmness v.19

ch.3 ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE WAY

1. **The Upward look**
 - Fact of the new life v.1
 - Features of the new life v.3
 - Fellowship of the new life v.4
2. **The Inward look**
 - Judge the flesh v.5
 - Rend the garment v.8
3. **The Outward look**
 - The new state v.10
 - The new society v.11
 - The new sympathy v.12
 - The new spirit vs.13 and 14
 - The new service vs.15 to 17
4. **The Homeward look**
 - Sanctified relationships vs.18 to 21
 - Service rendered vs.22 and 23
 - Special rewards vs.24 and 25
5. **The Prayerful look**
 - For good work v.23
 - For Gospel witness v.24
 - For godly walk v.5
 - For gracious words v.16

ch.4 **ENRICHED BY GOOD COMPANY**

1. **Helpful pilgrims** vs.7 to 11
 - Tychicus, his mission v.7
 - Onesimus, his message v.9
 - Aristarchus, his compassion v.10
 - Mark, his restoration v.10
 - Justus, his distinction v.11
2. **High purpose** vs.12 to 16
 - Epaphras, man of passion vs.12 and 13
 - Luke, man of affection v.14
 - Message of instruction, vs.15 and 16
3. **Heavenly precepts** vs.17 and 18
 - Admonition, take heed v.17
 - Direction, fulfil, remember vs.17 and 18
 - Salutation v.18
 - Benediction v.18

Studies in Colossians

Introduction

Colossae named only once in N.T. lay in the Lycus Valley, within walking distance of Laodicea and Hierapolis (2:1; 4:13,16). Laodicea was the most important of the three, being the chief city of the region. Colossae was situated about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia (now Turkey), but was overshadowed by nearby wealthy Laodicea and fashionable Hierapolis. It was not a place of any great significance. Colossae was the smallest centre to which Paul wrote a letter.

It was to these saints that Paul sent this majestic summary of apostolic Christianity. Paul had not himself founded or even visited this Church (2:1). During his three year stay in Ephesus the whole province of Asia was evangelized, so they heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10). The gospel may have been brought by Epaphras (1:7), who was presumably converted to Christ through Paul's preaching.

Its Penman Most Biblical scholars agree that it came from the hand of Paul (1:1; 4:18). In favour of Pauline authorship is the obvious similarity between this Epistle and that to Philemon which clearly comes from the hand of the Apostle. In both cases Timothy is his companion, with Epaphras, Aristarchus, Mark, Demas, and Luke. In both cases the writer is in prison. The section on the treatment of slaves reflects the main theme of Philemon.

Date The Prison Epistles were written in Rome about AD 62-63. Written late in Paul's first imprisonment, he seems to be expecting an early release.

Its Purpose Paul gives no formal statement of the errors he opposes, but

there is evidence of combined Jewish practices with pagan speculations (2:11,16,17,18). These false teachers were of Jewish persuasion, pretended to be Christians, and their influence was dangerous (2:16-23).

It was clearly a heresy which attacked the total adequacy and the unique supremacy of Christ. They were trying to turn Christianity into a philosophy and thus destroy the Christian faith. The error was twofold; it was doctrinal and practical, theological and ethical. There was the peril of intellectualism and of ritualism; of mysticism on the one part and formalism on the other.

The heretical teachers had a false conception in theology, and a false basis of morals. The inspired Apostle had but one reply to both these errors, namely, that Christ is the Creator and the Redeemer. He is the connection between God and the Universe, and the Way from man to God. The answer to the first error is given in chapter one, and to the second error in chapter two.

SUGGESTIVE OUTLINE

The Salutation 1:1-2. His authority, their assurance (v.1). Service in the will of God (1a); and security and resources for all saints (1:2).

(A) **The Gospel of Christ** 1:3-14. The *pleasure of it* vs.3,4; thanks to God for the evidences of salvation. The *power of it* vs.6-8; its universality, vitality, veracity and reality.

Prayer associated with it vs.9-12. Their spiritual enrichment v.9; their experience, enjoyment and spiritual exercise.

The product of the gospel vs.13-14. Liberation, translation and redemption.

(B) **The Pre-eminent Exalted Christ** 1:15-19. His Deity; Revealer of God and Lord of Creation vs.15,16. His Dignity; Head of the Church; the Fulness of God vs.17-19.

(C) **The Reconciling Christ** 1:20-23. The Reconciler of All Things vs.21-22. The purpose of His Work. The range, reason and the reach of His work vs.21,22.

(D) **The Indwelling Christ** 1:24-29. The suffering entailed v.24; the secret revealed vs.25-27; the preaching required vs.28,29.

(E) **The All-sufficient Christ** 2:1-17. Christ the Secret of God vs.1-4. The Standard of Life vs.5-7. Our Sufficiency for error vs.8-12. The Spoiler of our foes vs.13-17.

(F) **The Satisfying Christ** 2:18-23. For philosophical error vs.8-15. For Judaistic error vs.16,17. We need no special revelation vs.18,19; we have fulness in Christ. We need no special regulations vs.20-23; we have freedom in Christ.

(G) **Our Association with Christ** 3:1-13. Union with Christ in resurrection, the fact and function vs.1-4. Rejection of the flesh vs.5-9. The members and the manners. Resemblance to Christ vs.10-17. The reminder we need; the renewing we have; the raiment we wear.

(H) **Our Relationships in Christ** 3:18-4:6. "Christ is All" v.11. Personal responsibility vs.5-17, now Relative responsibility 3:18-4:6. In domestic life vs.18-21; in business life vs.22-4:1; in secular life 4:2-6. Human relationships 3:18-4:1; Holy living 4:3-6.

(I) **Our Fellowship through Christ** 4:7-18. A group photograph of workers. Paul's messengers vs.7-8; Paul's companions vs.10-17. His salutation and desire for affectionate remembrance in prayer v.18.

(Ch.1) Christ our Head

The Product of the Gospel of Christ. 1:1-14. After the salutation, vs.1,2, Paul reminds us of our suitability to the Head vs.3-14; the supremacy of the Head vs.15-23, and service to the Head vs.24-29.

The Apostolic Greeting (vs.1,2)

Paul as an Apostle is clothed with the authority and endued with the power of the Lord Who commissioned him. His message is the authoritative utterance of the divinely appointed mouth-piece of Christ. He is consecrated to the service of God and controlled by the will of God. He did not attain his high office through aspiration, nor yet through nomination by other men, but by divine preparation and ordination (Gal. 1:1; 1:15,16; 2 Tim. 1:1). "Of Christ Jesus" R.V. He belongs to Christ as His representative, and acting for His honour. This shows his affection for Timothy and his appreciation of his fidelity. Timothy is associated with him in the greeting. "The brother," this is a fundamental necessity for Christian service.

Verse 2. "Saints" indicates what they are in the sight of God. "Faithful" indicates how they became saints; it was by believing in the work of Christ. They were "full of faith or trust". "Brethren" declares what they were to one another in Christ. They have a living relationship in Him (2:10). Worldward, they are in Colossae; Godward, in Christ, and saintward—they are brethren. For testimony in the world they need help from heaven—"grace and peace". This is the only time Paul brings the greeting from the Father alone. He is the ultimate source of this undeserved favour, "grace," and of spiritual prosperity, "peace," which results from it. We need the smile of God and the peace which only that smile can give.

The Active Graces (vs.3-5)

Trace the six references to thanksgiving and to prayer in this epistle. The Fatherhood of God only applies to believers. Paul gives thanks to the Father for their salvation and Christian growth. Here is a trinity of relationships to Christ, faith, love, hope. There are five other "trinities" in verses 1-8. Paul gives thanks for the fruits of the Gospel in these saints. Faith placed them in Christ. Paul is stressing the fact of belonging. Christ is not only the source but also the sphere of spiritual life, "in Christ". Belief is turned into

action—"love to all saints". The Christian faith is not only a conviction of the mind, it is also an outflow of the heart (1 John 4:7,12).

Both depend on the hope laid up in heaven. This is the objective content of the gospel (v.23). The Christian hope is that God's way is the best way. What is reserved in heaven for believers now exercises a decisive influence upon their daily conduct (Gal. 5:5; 1 Pet. 1:3-7). The objective certainty of hope is the motive power behind his faith and his love.

The Apostolic Church (vs.6-8)

They heard the original gospel (v.5) "at the first." They heard the good news of God, that set them in a right relationship with God. The gospel is universal, it is for all the world (v.6). The joy and peace of the gospel are open without exception to all men, Greeks as well as Jews. A vital gospel—"bringeth forth fruit" (Matt. 13:8). When the gospel is allowed to take root, it constantly reproduces and grows. The original message was true and that which contradicts it is false (Gal. 1:6,9). It is "truth" and any present deviation is error. They "fully knew" it was the grace of God in truth. This is in contrast to the commands imposed by false teachers.

Epaphras was Paul's dear fellow-servant, a faithful minister of Christ, and declared the love of these saints. His commendation—a "fellow-slave" sharing together in the gospel of Christ. He had no will of his own, was entirely under the direction of the Lord who redeemed him. Epaphras loved Christ, he preached Christ (1:7), He lived Christ and suffered for Christ. He lived for the benefits of others (v.7) and was a man of great prayer (4:12,13). Their "love in the Spirit"; by the power of the Holy Spirit their love exists, is manifested, and has its outlet. This is the only reference to the Spirit in the Epistle, probably due to the Apostle's desire to stress the absolute supremacy of Christ (vs.15-22). Trace the full teaching on the Spirit found in Ephesians.

The Appeal in Prayer (vs.9-12)

This is prayer for progress. Paul is like his Lord, he practised the holy art of intercession, praying for others (John 17:9). These saints are often in his mind, and better still in his prayers.

The Reason for his Prayer (v.9)

Their growth in grace encouraged Paul to pray. All our prayers should be mixed with praise. Their faith, love and hope inspired prayer.

The Characteristics of his Prayer (v.9)

It was marked by *Persistence*—"do not cease praying for you." Many of us do not cease to pray because we never start! We need the grace of continuance (Acts 2:42,46). See 1 Sam. 12:23. It is marked by *Intensity*

“desiring”. He prayed for them all daily, remembering their problems and needs. His prayers were passionate, filled with deep longing. Prayer is a warfare; we face subtle foes (Eph. 6:12).

Note the recurrence of the word “ALL” in his petitions. It was marked by *Humility*. The word “desire” here is the word used of an inferior making request for something to his superior. Paul was marked by humility and godly reverence when praying.

The Content of his Prayer (vs. 9-12)

Paul prayed for seven things:—

(1) *For Perception* “filled with the knowledge of His will”. “Fulness” means control, it is an inclusive word, it reaches every part of life, bringing all under the control of God’s will. His will is revealed for our obedience. That knowledge (*epignosis*) is a developed apprehension and we are convinced that a certain course of action is God’s will. We need to know what He wants us to do, and DO it (Eph. 5:17). This filling is experimental and the knowledge always progressive. The will of God known and done is the secret of all true living. Many Christians lack spiritual understanding (1 Jn. 2:12-14), “In all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Wisdom implies the capacity and faculty for adapting the best means to bring about the best ends in things spiritual. Understanding is the ability to clarify and grasp principles for the purpose of adopting the best in any course of action.

(2) *To Live Pleasing to God* v.10. Knowledge is not an end in itself, but the means to an end—pleasing God. “Walking” is knowledge translated into practice. Walking presupposes life, so it means energy, movement and progress. The verb walk is very expressive, it is equal to live. It suggests habitual tendency, daily disposition, the steady direction of life. It is the conduct and course of life in its entirety, like Enoch (Heb. 11:5). It is an attitude to life. It has two characteristics:

Worthy; it is consistent with the character of God and of the Lord.

Well-Pleasing; the word (only here) implies, “meeting all His wishes.” Moule translates, “unto every anticipation of His will.” Prayer is not escape from reality. Prayer and action go hand in hand. We are to walk worthy of our vocation (Eph. 4:1). Worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27), worthy of the saints (Rom. 16:2), worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:12). The details of this walk are brought before us in four pregnant phrases: being *fruitful* v.10; *knowledgeable* v.10; *powerful* v.11; *thankful* v.12.

(3) *To engage in Profitable Service* v.10. Our life is to be characterized by good works (James 2:17; Eph. 2:10). Christianity is a practical demonstration of positive good. It is the desire of the Lord that we be fruitful (John 15:2 & 5). Constant fruitfulness and growth is effected by the true knowledge of God (Deut. 32:2).

(4) *Progress in Knowledge* v.10, “increasing” is the operative word here. We

need to grow spiritually and morally. Notice the difference between the knowledge of His will and the knowledge of Himself: "That they might know THEE" (John 17:3); "That I may know HIM" (Phil. 3:10); Ye have known HIM, (1 John 2:13).

(5) *Endued with Power* v.11 Made powerful, speaking of continuity in that strength which is in the might of His glory (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:16). What we need is power to put our knowledge into action (Acts 1:8). God not only tells us His will, He also enables us to perform it.

(6) *Patience* v.11. Paul is praying for three great qualities; fortitude, patience and joy. God strengthens us so that we can be victorious in persecution (Rom. 8:35-39). "All patience", means Christian stickability; the power to keep on keeping on. We need the grace of perseverance (Acts 2:42).

Dare to be a Daniel (Dan. 1:8,21). "Patience" is the brave endurance which triumphs over adverse circumstances, and longsuffering is the capacity to endure the wrongs inflicted by others without being provoked to retaliation, and to receive all with Christian joy (v.24; James 1:2f; 1 Peter 4:13).

(7) *Filled with Praise* v.12. Joy is a radiant and sunny-hearted attitude to life, which not all the shadows of life can quench. "Your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:22). Give thanks to God for His provision (v.12), for His power (v.13), and for His pardon (v.14).

Our Assured Portion

vs.13-14. Paul exults in God for what He has done because of the Son (v.13). The saints are looked upon as claimed by God to be specially His own. Recall the exodus from Egypt and the division of Canaan among the sacred people. Compare these verses with Acts 26:18. Our redemption is Ex. 12; deliverance Ex. 14; giving thanks Ex. 15; the inheritance Josh. 13,14.

Spiritual Exercise "giving thanks" v.12. We can sing constant alleluias because of deliverance from the darkness of death into the inheritance of the saints in light, the citizenship of heaven and the Kingdom of Christ (Ps. 40:1-4).

Spiritual Emancipation. We are liberated from an enslaving foe. Rescued, delivered us by His strong arm, as a mighty conqueror. Thus we are qualified to share in this inheritance. Delivered out of the rule of darkness, the jurisdiction of the Devil. The Lord Jesus bowed under it so that we might come out of it.

Spiritual Enrichment. "made meet." He has allocated us to blessings in a spiritual Canaan. God has made us sufficient. It means to "render fit, qualify." This is our standing in Christ. The Father has placed us in Christ in whom we enjoy a standing which makes us the objects of His grace. "The light" is the region in which the inheritance of the saints, and consequently our share in it, is situated" (Alford). What a rich portion we have inherited.

“The Son of His Love” can mean one or both of two things: (1) The Son who reveals the Father’s love. His mission is the revelation of the Father’s love. (2) The Son who is the object of His Father’s love, and to whom therefore the kingdom is given (Heb. 1:1-8).

Spiritual Enjoyment v.14. “redemption, forgiveness”. Not only transference from darkness to light, but from slavery to freedom. Redemption is the buying back of something which was in the power of someone else. In the Lord Jesus there comes liberation, in which fear and frustration are taken away. There comes with it liberty from condemnation to forgiveness. We were slaves needing to be ransomed. The price of our redemption has been paid and the debt incurred by sin is cancelled forever. We can give thanks, we are delivered from the domain of darkness, the dominion of sin and the debt incurred by our sin. Our response to this, “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

(Ch. 1:15-19) The Absolute Supremacy of Christ

With stately words Paul now begins his exposition of the nature, glory and work of the Son of God. There is no break in his thought; and he continues with a relative pronoun, passing thus naturally from the fact of redemption to the glory of the Redeemer. In this great outburst of praise, Paul counters the unwarranted speculations of the heretics by affirming the pre-eminence of Christ in creation (vs.15-17) and redemption (vs.18-20).

The Incomparable Christ (1:15a)

In verses 15-20, the twofold Headship of Christ in creation and in redemption (vs.18-20), is set before us. They tell us that the Redeemer is the Creator, and so assure us of His POWER, also that the Creator is the Redeemer, and so assure us of His LOVE. Here three foundational truths are taught—*The Essential Deity of Christ; the Absolute Eternity of Christ; and the Creative Activity of Christ*; may we bow in adoring worship before Him.

“Who is” not was, nor shall be, He has become the image of God. “Who” speaks of Personality; “is” the eternal present; His pre-existence and self-existence (Heb. 13:8). God the Father is eternally hidden and unknowable (Ex. 33:20; Matt. 11:27; John 6:46; 1:18; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). God is transcendent, invisible and therefore unknowable.

“The Image.” Christ is God’s “image.” In Christ God becomes visible and all things else become intelligible (John 14:7-9). He is the manifestation of the Divine attributes, and the embodiment of the Divine essence; in Him the glory of God is radiated and His character revealed (Heb. 1:3; John 1:18). The ideas of representation and revelation inhere in this word, there is the abiding reality, an eternal relation of the Son to the Father. The Eternal Son sets forth the nature and grandeur of the Eternal Father.

He did not become God's Son at the Incarnation, neither when He rose from the dead (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4); though by the latter event His Sonship was fully manifested and vindicated. He is not merely like God, but IS God, and, therefore pre-existent and uncreated, absolute in His Eternity.

The Illustrious Christ (1:15b)

In personality He is the Son; in prototype the image; in precedence—"the firstborn of all creation". Firstborn, "*prototokos*", has nothing to do with time or date. This is the Son's relation to Creation. He is the absolute first. None came before Him in time or order, none are above Him in dignity, importance, or honour (Ps. 89:27). It speaks of His absolute pre-existence before ANY creation. The idea is, first in place of honour, the "highest" of the high ones, and unique among all beings in the world. He is the Sovereign Lord of all Creation. The word cannot describe the Incarnate Christ. The expression "Only-begotten" used of Christ, points to something ABSOLUTE, but "Firstborn" expresses what is relative. It refers to something coming after, His relation to the Family rather than the Father. Priority and supremacy are ascribed to Him, it denotes rank. The word is used with reference to Christ five times in the N.T. The title stresses His connection with creation.

The Inspiring Christ (1:16)

From His Essential Deity and Absolute Eternity we come to His Creative Ability. This passage sets forth Christ as the Pre-existent, Instrumental, Continuous and Final Cause of the whole Creation.

(a) The Originator of All Things

The three expressions in the R.V. "In Him"; "through Him"; "unto Him" reveal His creative power and supremacy, "In" conveys the thought and fact that Christ is the animating principle of creation, its ground and reason; "because of Him."

Lightfoot says, "He is the source of its life, the centre of all its developments, and the main-spring of all its motion."

"In Him were and have been created." The first statement, by virtue of the tense (aorist), points to a definite event; but the second calls attention to the abiding result of His work. He is not only the agent of the creation of the visible world, but also of the invisible world of heavenly beings. His creative work takes in everything everywhere. Just as Heaven and earth show the extent "in space" of His creative work, so the things "visible and invisible," show its extent "in types" of existence. He created that which is material and that which is spiritual.

There may be four orders of superior beings here. Whoever they are, whatever their rank or power, they were created by and for Him.

(b) The Controller of All Things “In Him consist.”

He co-ordinates and directs the march of the circling worlds, and the endlessly-varied forms of life. This Universe is a cosmos and not a chaos, all things are under His control, He appoints to everything its place, and combines all into an ordered whole. All things have consistence and persistence only in His existence and in His ends. His absolute sovereignty applies equally to the moral as to the material world.

(c) The Perfecter of All Things “unto Him.”

He is the Origin and the Head, but also the God of the whole Universe. “He is the Creative Cause, the Continuous Cause, and the Consummating Cause of all things” (Graham Scroggie). He is Creation’s Alpha and Omega, the First is also the Last.

The Infinite Christ (v.17)

He is the Immutable, Eternal Christ. Nothing existed prior to Him and nothing exists that is in any sense equal to Him (John 1:1; 17:5). See Prov. 8:22-26. The emphatic “HE IS” recalls Christ’s majestic claim, “Before Abraham was, “I AM.” The Son is independent of all things, He filled the unmeasured periods of an unbeginning eternity. All things depend upon His sustaining power for their continual existence (John 1:3; Heb. 1:3c). Note the expression “all things” six times. He holds together, meaning a sustaining of existence. Our glorious Lord stands far above any creature or being that may exist. He is before all in time, dignity, honour, power. He is the unifying power, the integrating principle of all creation; the Cosmic Christ.

The Indispensable Christ (v.18)

Here we see Christ’s relation to the Church and the work of salvation (vs.18-20). The same One who is Lord of Creation is also Lord of the Church. Paul passes from dealing with the Son in His eternal being to the Incarnate One in His present glorified state. He stresses the Son’s present Lordship in His Church and speaks of His becoming pre-eminent through the triumph of the resurrection. Another personal pronoun describes the supreme position of Christ in the Church. His glories as Head are the theme in Colossians, in contrast to the privileges of the Body in Ephesians.

Paul distinguishes *four great facts* in our Lord’s relationship to the Church:

The Head This refers to the primacy which belongs to Christ as the source of the church’s life, whereas the body metaphor shows that the church belongs to Christ as a wife belongs to her husband (Eph. 5:28). He is Sovereign Superintendent, the inspiring, ruling, guiding, sustaining power

of the life of the Church. The Church is the organism through which Christ acts, and which shares all the experiences of Christ.

The Beginning He is the originating power, the source of all help, and the moving power operative in the church. It involves priority in time. He is the Originator, for the Church owes its origin to Him. The Church is the new creation of Christ. He is the director of its continued activities.

Firstborn "From among the dead." This is His priority over a company. His resurrection is a Token and Type of all associated with Him (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Our Lord is alive for evermore, not a past founder, but a living presence to seal our faith and guarantee to us a resurrection. He is the Sovereign over all sovereigns.

The Pre-eminent One over every person who has ever lived. None before and none since have left the grave with a resurrection body. He is pre-eminent because He is not only the first but also in a class by Himself. He is supreme in every realm, in all respects, and at every point. He must be Lord in our lives, with a sovereignty which brooks no rival.

The Inexhaustible Christ (v.19)

His pre-eminence is proved by what the Father thinks of Him. His supremacy stems from the fact that the incarnate Son is fully divine. "Fullness" is *Pleroma*. Vincent says, "the word must be taken in a passive sense—that with which a thing is filled, NOT that which fills." It is the plenitude, denoting the totality of the divine powers and attributes. This fulness belongs to Christ as the Word made flesh for our salvation, as well as His essential Godhead (2:9). In Him the fulness of Deity, of Creation and of the Church, "and of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace." To "dwell," to abide, "to be at home." All saving fulness dwells in Christ permanently at home.

Meditate daily on the glories of His Person (v.15), His Power (v.16), His Pre-existence (v.17), His Prestige and Pre-eminence (v.18). He is Pre-eminent in the Theological realm (vs. 15,16); the Universal realm (vs. 16,17); the Historical realm (vs.20-22) and the Experimental realm (v.23).

"Our Head"

In the Colossian letter we have a totally different aspect of the Lord Jesus in relation to our Christian life. The burden and prayer of the Apostle is that the saints may come to an experimental knowledge of Christ Jesus as "The Head."

In chapter 1 there is the Contemplation of His Dignity. Ch.2 Our Conformation to His walk. Ch.3 our Concentration on His Glory. Ch.4 our Consecration to His service.

In Ephesians we view the Lord as Head of the Church seated at God's right hand. Here we consider Him as the Head of the Church in the sense that He is to have the pre-eminence in all things, governing the Body, as it walks upon earth rendering to Him devout, obedient service. Note the references to the Lord as "Head" in the Epistle, 1:18 "Head of the Body the Church." Ch.2:10 "Head of all principality and power", ch.2:19 "not holding the Head."

Trace the references to the "Body" in the Epistle, ch.1:18; 1:22,24; 2:9,11,17,19; 3:15. Think of these in the light of the teaching of 1 Cor. 12 and see how closely we are linked together with our Lord. Here the term "Body" is preferred to "Church." May it be ours to accept no other headship, no other lordship, than that of Christ Jesus our true and only Head and render to Him humble, entire, instinctive obedience.

The Supremacy of the Head

In chapter one, verses 15-24, we read with bowed heads and unshod feet for we are on holy ground. What a thrill of joy goes through our whole being as we gaze in wonder on the glories of our Lord. His supremacy is undisputed in every realm. He is superior to all, "image of the invisible"; superior in order "firstborn"; superior in creation—"in Him created"; superior in power—"holds all things together"; superior in position—"Head"; superior in rank—"first begotten"; superior in place and possessions—"pre-eminent"; "all fulness."

As we view Him in relation to God we learn something of His personality, similarity, equality and Deity, for He is the perfect representation and full manifestation of all that God is, He is the Revealer of God to man.

"He is" 1:17, is a declaration of Christ's absolute pre-existence, like the "I AM'S" in John's Gospel. Christ exists as God exists, prior in time and in dignity to all things. Relative to Creation, He is the Omnipotent One. Here He has priority of existence and supremacy of inherited right—"the first born of all creation."

He is creation's architect—His presence was necessary to its being. He is its Builder—His agency and power were exercised—"by Him." He is creation's Owner—His providence holds it together and He guides it to its destined goal—His glory filling the scene. He is Creator, Sustainer and Upholder.

In relation to unseen Spirits v.16b, He is the Eternal One. He is the originating cause and the uniting bond of every created thing in the universe. In verses 18-20 we pass from Christ the Lord of the universe to Christ the Lord of the Church.

To the Church He is the Head. His Sovereignty is marked for He is the source of the Church's life and the secret of its vitality. Its cohesion and energy are derived from Him. He is its law and its life—"the beginning." Superiority is evident as the "Firstborn." He stands supreme in right and place and is the bearer of Divine plenitude. The noblest efforts of men to make peace result in growing chaos and the Divine means is despised 1:20.

What dignity and glory is associated with our Blessed Lord and in every sphere He takes the first place. The owner and Heir of all things, the Head of the Church, the Reconciling Peace-maker, the Messiah of Israel, to the nations the King of Kings yet to reign; in Heaven He is the Lamb and the Light thereof and today Lord of our life.

The Sufficiency of our Head

By preaching, warning and teaching, Paul seeks to present every man mature in Christ Jesus 1:27,28. Provision is made for this in the resources of our Lord for the mystery of God is Christ 2:2 R.V.

In Him there is fulness of power and provision 1:19. What encouragement for us in the wilderness. The totality of the divine powers and attributes having taken up lasting abode in Him and this is the good pleasure of the Father 1:19.

Our Lord as Head is the casket in which are shut all the mysteries and treasures of wisdom, knowledge and grace. Faith in Him introduces us to this treasure house with its riches unsearchable. Thus we are weaned away from the enticing words of human philosophy and we display by an orderly and steadfast walk that He is our Lord. He is the secret of our security and growth. The Foundation Stone of our life and character. The whole glorious total of what God is resides in Him as in a settled and congenial home 2:9.

We are like a vessel dipped in the sea filled full in Him

He is superior to all ranks and order of the Unseen and we are in living union with Him. This assures us of nourishment and develops a holiness and power of which God is the Source, the Secret and the Environment 2:19.

Ritual is meaningless, philosophy is empty, and the institution of a past dispensation were only a shadow of the coming things. The solid thing remains "the body is Christ's" 2:17.

What sufficiency is ours in Him. He is our Righteousness; Phil. 3:19; our Wisdom 1 Cor. 1:30; our Strength 2 Cor. 12:9; our Life Col. 3:3; our sympathetic High Priest, Heb. 4:14; our Rock 1 Cor. 10:4; and our Hope Phil. 3:20,21.

By our association with the Lord 2:11, we learn of our deliverance from the law by crucifixion. Baptism, our association with Him in burial and resurrection. His work on the Cross has brought glorious freedom from all that would enslave and condemn us. We have nothing to do with the

elements of the world and as we daily consider our Lord we will experience victory during our earthly pilgrimage.

Since we are risen with Him, we are to seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. This is not the day of His display. We await that glorious advent when we also shall be manifested with Him in glory 3:4.

Our Suitability to the Head

There must be a work of grace in our lives in order to fit us for the Divine Presence and to incorporate us into the Body of Christ. There is a threefold work emphasized in ch. 1:14-29, telling out the fulness of Divine love and the freshness of apostolic ministry.

(A) *What the Father hath done* 1:12-14. There is specific gratitude to God for his “inestimable love” shown in our redemption. The Father hath qualified us, made us fit and given us a title for the sharing of the portion of the inheritance. Thus we are enriched by His gracious work in our souls.

Paul exalts in the God who has “transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved son” 1:13.

Released from bondage to a cruel master and now under the authority of God’s dear Son. We pass from bondage to blessing, from darkness to light, from sighing to singing, for redemption issues in song and forgiveness stirs gratitude.

(B) *What the Lord hath done* 1:20-22. What a portrayal of the Son of His love, the mighty Redeemer, the Royal Peacemaker is given to us in these verses.

Just as in His being and person, so also in His work our Lord is far above those fabulous intermediaries v.18, with which these saints were being led astray.

He is the conqueror of sin, the reconciler of all things in two spheres, heaven and earth. Here we view the mystery of His Fulness and the victory of His great work on the Cross. The accomplishment is eternal in its issues, embracive in its range, and personal in its application v.22, “you”.

The entire universe has been purchased by our Lord, and there is no part of it which the power of His precious blood does not reach. Our appreciation of all this is to abide grounded and settled on the Rock of Ages.

(C) *What apostolic ministry had done* 1:23-29. Paul is God’s representative, to present this reconciliation to the minds and hearts of men 2 Cor. 5:18-20 gives us this great ministry. Verses 23-24 give us Paul’s twofold ministry, verses 26,27 his message and in 1:28-2:3 his motive in service 2:3-7. His mandate is to deepen and confirm this loyalty to Christ as Lord, along the lines already laid down by Epaphras, namely “live your life in union with Christ.”

His teaching ministry in the Church as presented in his Epistles are full of

the glory of our risen Head and our relation to Him as such. Paul looked upon his God-given ministry as a conflict; Christ toiling in him, using him as His instrument to further His cause.

Our Submission to the Head

Do we give to the Lord the blood-bought right in our lives? Is He really Head in an absolute sense? He has purchased this place in our lives and in the Assembly for our redemption with its glorious deliverance is clearly taught in 2:14,15. Our obligations to the law have been met, the condemnation is cancelled for us, the Lord having triumphed over all our foes. His victory was absolute, the forces of Satan routed 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:54-57. He stands alone, supreme.

Having died with Him 2:20, and been raised with Him, we take our place amongst those truly alive. We have new aspirations and "seek those things that are above." We have a heavenly Object before our hearts sanctifying our desires in the wilderness.

This enables us to discard the flesh 3:4-8, our members which have to do with our sensuous life. Anything that is in revolt from subjection to God must be put in the place of death. Having shed the rags of pagan bondage, these saints are encouraged to put on the robes of splendour which belong to sons alone. Luke 15:15,21; "we are the elect of God" 3:9-14.

The governing principles of our conduct are the arbitrating peace of Christ 3:15; the word of Christ 3:16 and the Name of Christ 3:17.

Position and practice, standing and state, doctrine and duty, are not to be divorced and as we submit all to Him we shall know the benediction, the satisfaction of His word and all our service will be done out of love to His Name.

Service to the Head

Our service to the Lord and our relationships to one another in Christ are presented as Marital 3:18,19; Family 3:20,21; Business 3:22-4:1; and Social 4:2-6 with corresponding responsibilities.

The Christian home is the first sphere of service and how very important it is that we express the features of our Lord in this sanctified relationship.

Authority is to be exercised in love and those under authority should yield true obedience as to the Lord. The business life calls for consistency and consideration for the day of reckoning is coming, for master and servant alike. The Lord has taken the servants' place and is also Master, so we can count on His righteous reward in the day of review.

Service without prayer may be mechanical but it is never fruitful. May we pray with boldness and expectation in the interests of our Lord, preaching, walking wisely, redeeming the time and having our speech seasoned with salt. Like Paul may we practise what we preach 4:6.

The heart of Paul is opened to us as we gaze upon his many friends and note the characteristics of the names mentioned. What loyalty, interest, compassion, sacrifice and brotherly feeling on the part of those whose ministry comforted the Apostle's heart in his time of imprisonment.

All his fellow labourers had learned the secret of his success in life—"that in all things He should have the pre-eminence." There is no other way today.

Are we like Archippus growing tired or slack in our service? He is directed to keep at it until he has brought his ministry to a successful conclusion.

The last words, "grace be with you," are a brief yet warm salutation. May we never forget the sheer generosity of God, revealed in sending His Son to die and be raised for our salvation. This benediction of grace will sustain in sorrow and anxiety, will strengthen for sacrifice or service rendered in His Name, and cannot fail to cheer all noble saints who crown Him Lord of all.

The Grandeur of the Work of Christ (vs.20-23)

The Lord Jesus is the Reconciler of all things. Note His reconciling work both in nature and in grace. *His relation to the Moral Universe* (v.20). His sovereign act of reconciliation, the initiative was with God and effected by the death of His Son.

The Medium of Reconciliation "the blood of His Cross." The Father is the Author, the Son the Agent, and the blood the means of our salvation. This is His reconciling work in nature—"all things."

The Range of Reconciliation "all things"; universal in its reach. This is the millennial glory of Christ. By His cross-work the universe is restored to its proper relationship to God (Eph. 1:10). This excludes the Devil and his angels. For all there is a day of subjugation (Phil. 2:10); God will vindicate the Claims, the Character and the Cross of Christ.

The Reach of Reconciliation "and you" (v.21). These saints were now conspicuously brought within the scope and operation of the all-embracing purpose of reconciliation. Like them we need to be reminded of our former unconverted condition.

Insurrection described (1) Moral condition—alienated; (2) Mental attitude—enemies; (3) Active exhibition—wicked works. Reconciliation effected (1) Historical fact—in the body of His flesh. The Cross is the final proof of the love of God (Rom. 5:8; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:19). (2) Individual application—and you. This is His reconciling work in grace. In Christ the barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down (Eph. 2:14).

The Result of Reconciliation (v.22b). The Divine purpose for eternity is threefold, that we should be holy, blameless, irreproachable. "Holy"—fitted for God's presence, set apart from sin; "unblameable"—no voice to condemn, to ridicule, stain or disgrace; "unreprovable"—no accusation and no conduct to shame (Rom. 8:33).

The Evidence of Reconciliation (v.23). The reality of their interest in the reconciliation wrought by Christ will be evidenced by their continuance in the faith. Scholars differ widely on the word "faith." Some think it is faith exercised in the gospel message. Others think it is the body of revealed truth. The trend of teaching in the Epistle points to the latter. Paul is exposing heresy and the danger of apostasy, hence is cautionary "of ye" (v.23). They are to continue in the course in which they had begun. He uses three metaphors to emphasize his teaching. "Grounded" or established upon a foundation, a building which stands against every gale. The perfect tense speaks of an action completed in the past having present results. They were established upon an unshakable foundation, the rock Jesus Christ.

"Settled" is "the stability of a building," spiritual stability to enable them to remain steadfast in the face of every adversity (1 Cor. 15:58). "Moved," to surrender faith is to be moved away from the hope evoked by, and thus belonging to the Gospel (Matt. 7:24-27). Out of the wonder of reconciliation are born the strength of unshakable loyalty and the radiance of unconquerable hope.

The Grasp of the Body of Christ (vs.24-29)

Because Paul saw the true worth and significance of men and women, he was totally committed to Christ and accepted suffering as part of the "afflictions of Christ." These verses are illuminating, they describe God's method of disclosure; the new truth is called a "mystery." They define the characteristics of the Gospel—for Jew and Gentile alike. Paul's reaction to the claims of the Gospel make fascinating reading (See Rom. 1:13-16; 9:1-3; 1 Cor. 4:10-16; 9:16-27; 2 Cor. 4:7-15; 6:1-10; 2 Tim. 3:10-12; 4:1-3). His attachment to the Gospel was real, because he was captivated by the Person of Christ (Phil. 3:8). Christ was his theme because Christ was his treasure.

The Minister of the Body (v.23)

Paul tells us in these verses his office and work in the universal Church.

His Designation "a minister," a deacon, a servant (v.23e). A minister of the Gospel—an evangelist preaching the Gospel. A servant of the Church (v.24) a Teacher, communicating a revelation from God. He was a minister in accordance with the apostolic commission vouchsafed to him for the Colossians benefit (v.24). This involved suffering in a threefold way (Acts 9:16). (a) "filling up"—of the afflictions of Christ". Identification with Christ means suffering for His Name (Phil. 1:29). The word used here for suffering "*thlipsis*" is nowhere used in the N.T. to describe the atoning death of Christ. These sufferings were involved in the building up of the body of Christ (2 Cor. 1:5). They may infer those which Christ suffers in Paul because of the mystical union of the apostle with his Saviour. (b) "for

His body's sake"—the Church—a mystical Christ whose members are everywhere (Eph. 2:15c). (c) "for you" the Colossians. He was thankful for the privilege which God gave him to suffer for others. His task was from God, who was both author, giver and also owner (Acts 9:15).

His Devotion Paul's determination to preach Christ meant suffering. What a message he had—"Christ" (v.29a). He set forth the Lord Jesus in the beauty and dignity of His Person, and in the sufficiency of His work as:

- the Creating and Sustaining Christ (1:16,17);
- the Heavenly Christ (1:13c);
- the Risen and Exalted Christ (2:12; 3:1);
- the Indispensible Christ (1:20; 2:6) and Indwelling Christ (1:27);
- the Supreme, Eternal Christ (1:3,15,19; 2:3,9);
- the Triumphant Christ (2:14,15; 3:1).

What a glorious message we have; are we preaching HIM?

The Mystery of the Body (vs.25,26)

This was part of the message. The mystery was "hidden from ages." Hidden according to a divine plan (Eph. 3:5); from O.T. saints, but now revealed to His saints. Only Christians can know the truth. God has willed to disclose it to them. Paul wrote at length in explanation of it in Ephesians and Colossians. This commission was connected with a "fulfilling of the Word of God" for the mystery was consistent with the purpose of God, the completion of the canon of Holy Scriptures.

The Central Theme of the mystery—"Christ in you the hope of glory." Jews and Gentiles alike had now the same hope and as part of the Church redeemed, would be together presented in public glory with Christ (3:4).

The Method of the Minister (vs.28,29)

"Warning and teaching". "Every man" three times. Paul preached without respect of persons (1) "Warning," presenting all the claims of Christ and the Gospel, and reminding them of the judgment to come. This is the work of the evangelist and every herald of the Cross. (2) "Teaching," there was instruction as well as admonition. Teaching of God's word so that they may grow (2 Pet. 3:18). Faith needs to develop and ministry forms character. He taught them in all the truths regarding Christ and His work.

His aim was perfection—maturity in Christ. Our lives should measure up to the example of the Lord (Eph. 4:13; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6). Paul's preaching was obligatory—he preached out of a sense of his duty as a steward. It was objective and orderly, warning and teaching, and the goal was presentation, "every man mature in Christ, Paul was a man of prayer, there was (1) passion—"labour"—to work hard till one is tired out. It indicates the tremendous effort in his preaching and praying. (2) Vision

marked him, he saw the deep need of the saints. (3) It was a contest—an agony, a striving, as in Luke 22:44; like Jacob at Peniel. (4) It was prolonged. He persisted at it, he did not cease to pray for them. (5) It was earnest. There was opposition, he had foes, it made physical demands upon him. The enabling power was the inwrought power of God. He did not spare himself and was energized by the indwelling Christ. We need to have informed minds (wisdom); yield our bodies (labour), and be alive and have spirits that are aflame (striving). We can have power from God (Zech. 4:6).

(Ch.2) Christ the secret of all wisdom “our fulness”

“The experience of the indwelling Christ” (vs.1-7)

Paul’s deep concern. In chapter one Christ is preached—a call to contemplation of His glories. In chapter two Christ is possessed—our identification with Him through grace. Paul not only exposes the bankruptcy of philosophy and ritualism but encourages them to advance in the Christian life (v.6). He warns them of the errors they will have to contend with on their wilderness journeyings (vs.8-23).

The serious conflict (v.1)

“Great conflict” reveals the deep concern and soul agony of Paul’s prayer life. His heart yearned over all the saints in the Lycus valley. It was not primarily a physical conflict, it was spiritual, mental and emotional. The word “conflict” is described in language that recalls the Greek games and races. He is in the arena of contest for their spiritual well-being. It was a burden of spiritual desire that streamed forth in prayer for the blessing of God to rest upon these saints. He had a deep concern for souls (Rom. 10:1; 2 Cor. 5:13-14).

The spiritual concern (v.2)

Their condition of heart is expressed in his prayer; to be *encouraged* or strengthened in heart, confirmed in their faith. They needed assurance because of erroneous philosophy that abounded in the area. They needed courage, endurance and conviction to reach the inmost centre of their emotions. “Encouraged” is the same word as “exhort” in Rom. 1:12; 12:1, to enable a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence.

Be compacted or united—“Knit together.” Welded together in love into a unity, a harmonious oneness through instruction in the same matter. The atmosphere in which such a unity can grow is “in love.” This is the hallmark of a true Christian, and distinguishes a true Church.

To be established—“full assurance of understanding.” This is the full wealth of conviction which spiritual insight brings, instead of the trembling indecision of mere religious speculation (v.4). Paul aimed at nothing less than perfect understanding of the Person and work of Christ.

To be enlightened—"the mystery of God and Christ." To be enriched and equipped with every kind of wisdom. The power to confirm and commend the truth with wise intelligent presentation. The mystery is Christ, their all is in Him. All hidden in Him. Not out of reach but out of danger (Eph. 3:17). Christians can afford to discard worldly knowledge.

Spiritual clarity of mind (v.3)

Christian doctrine has its focal point in Christ. He is the embodiment of the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24,30). The true source of wisdom and knowledge is a deeper personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:19). Wisdom reveals God to men (1:15), The Lord Jesus is the sole repository of all wisdom and understanding (1 Cor. 2:7). He needs no supplement, He is the full and final revelation of God, and the citadel of wisdom (Rom. 11:33).

Specific delusion (v.4)

We should have such a grip of truth that we can instinctively recognize anything spurious. All deceivers are plausible, their words have a ring of truth and yet are full of error. This is the method adopted by these errorists. They deceive by false reasoning, seeking to undermine their faith.

Saintly continuity (vs.5-7)

Paul rejoiced at their attitude to error. His interest—"with you in spirit." He was absent, but he felt himself present for he prayed for them. He rejoiced because their faith had stood the test so far. Their order, a military term indicating outward discipline, a rank, or an ordered arrangement. The Church should be like an ordered army, rank upon rank, no defections. There was harmony in their ranks, they co-operated in resisting evil. They were like the men of David (1 Chron. 12:33,38).

There was solidity as well as unity; steadfastness, to make solid. They were steady, solid, firm in their faith (1 Pet. 5:9).

A call to continuance (vs.6-7). In the R.V. here are 32 words on Christian living:

(1) *A received life* (v.6a). Their initial acceptance of the gospel is to the pattern of their continuing faithfulness, "received" means to "appropriate," to "take to one's self" (John 1:11). They received the Person of Christ. They had no merit of their own, they repented of their sins and received the Lord Jesus, as Sin-bearer, Saviour and Sovereign.

(2) *A reproduced life*—"so walk ye in Him." Advance, live your life in Him. He must be the sphere of your spiritual growth and development. He has come to dwell in you, so you have come to dwell in Christ. This union with Christ is the foundation of a developing experience of Christ (Rev. 3:20).

Walking speaks of steady progress. Someone has said, "the Christian life is like riding a bicycle; if you don't go on, you will fall off."

(3) *A real life*—"rooted and built up." Their walk was conditioned by the past—"having been rooted". "Rooted" the first step taken in the new life. A tree with its roots deep in the soil draws its nourishment from it. "Built," used of a house erected on a strong and firm foundation. Christ is the source of our life and strength, and the foundation of our stability. The vitality of a tree, security—planted; capacity—streams of living water, stability, like a house "Stablished"—standing firm against every cross-wind of false doctrine. Being made firm by faith.

(4) *A rich, rejoicing life* "abounding with thanksgiving." Gratitude becomes the child of God. Thanksgiving for what Christ has done and was doing for them, in nature and in grace. As they increase in knowledge of the faith, and in their experience of its power in their lives they will give praise and glory to God. Thankfulness results in obedience. Observe that while "joy" is the note in Philippians, "thanksgiving" is the keyword of Colossians (1:3,12; 2:7; 3:15; 4:2). The Christian life is from God through Christ—received; is one of grace—walk in Him; marked by growth—rooted, built up; one of guidance—stablished and taught; and continual gratitude to God, thanksgiving.

The Fulness of Christ

In chapter 2, the Lord Jesus is our fulness: for prayer (vs.1,2); for progress (vs.3-7); the fulness of our position (vs.9,10); the fulness of His passion (vs.11-15); and of His provision (vs.16-23).

To counteract the erroneous teaching which was eating its way into this Church, Paul reminds them of their sufficiency in Christ. In verses 8-23 we are confronted with heresy; the conflict, its cause and cure. (1) Gnosticism—the creature versus the Creator (vs.8-10); Legalism—law versus grace (vs.11-17); Spiritism—demons versus Deity (v.15); Ceremonialism—shadow versus substance (vs.16-17); Mysticism—reason versus revelation (vs.18,19); and Asceticism—flesh versus the Spirit (vs.20-23). To combat these errors Paul expounds the supremacy of Christ as the sum of all wisdom (vs.1-3); and the source of our life (vs.4-7).

Warning against philosophy (vs.8-13)

Philosophy speculates on matters about which there is no finality. Christianity states what is final and authoritative about Christ. The teaching of philosophy is "not after Christ" (v.8); it does not make Christ central and supreme.

Our fulness in Christ (vs.9,10). Philosophy degrades the Person of Christ. It makes prey of Christians by leading them astray through specious arguments which resemble Christian truth, and pretend to superior knowledge. Paul says, "don't let anyone kidnap you," philosophy is empty

deception. All is based on the tradition of men, originating with men and passed from man to man with human additions. The answer is, all the fulness of God is in Christ; and Christ is in you, "in Him ye are made full." The Deity of Christ is stated—"the fulness of the Godhead." His Humanity is asserted—"bodily." Both are eternally united in one Person—"dwelleth". "Fulness" is used to describe the crew of a ship, when the ship is fully manned, the crew is complete. In Christ we have "completeness." Our resources are as inexhaustible as God.

Fellowship with Christ (vs.11,12). We have Death and Resurrection in Christ. Note our position—"in Him" and our security and sufficiency—"complete." Three statements about the Christian, and they are all in the past tense. "Ye were circumcised" (v.11); "having been buried" (v.12); "ye were raised" (v.12). Christian circumcision points to our conversion. It is spiritual, not physical in nature—"made without hands." It is associated with the death of Christ on the cross. Circumcised by virtue of our union with Christ. It is not "human" but "divine," and it achieves spiritual results, the crucifying of the old man (Rom.6:6; Gal.2:20).

Freedom in Christ (v.12). Identification with Christ in death precedes our association with Him in burial. We die to the old life and are raised to a new and holy life (Rom.6:4; Col.3:1-3). The putting away of the old nature is openly declared in Christian baptism, the symbol of our circumcision.

Our Forgiveness (v.13). We were dead in sins; utterly defeated by sin and powerless to meet the condemnation of sin. Our relationship with Christ commenced when we were "quickened together with Him." We can look back upon the grace which has already brought us to newness of life. In affecting these changes God forgave all our trespasses. Guilt must be atoned for and removed.

The spoiler of our foes (vs.14-15)

Paul joins his readers and uses the first person plural toward the close of verse 13. By means of the Cross the Christian has triumph in Christ. The Cross is related to Jews and to Principalities. (a) **JEWS**: the death of Christ, the Cross, brought to an end the obligation to keep the law as a means to justification (v.14). The debt of sin is cancelled—"having forgiven you." The guilt of sin is removed—ordinances, the Law of Moses. The ordinances were against them, but Christ bore the curse and became "the end of the law for righteousness" (Gal.3:13-14). The Lord Jesus obliterated the bond that was against them. He took it out of the midst, He threw down the wall of separation and carried it away. (b) **PRINCIPALITIES**: the Cross was the place of Christ's triumph. The powers of darkness were vanquished (v.15). The Cross was the means whereby He made a public display of the defeat of angelic foes. His victory was absolute, the forces of Satan routed (Heb.2:14,15).

“Spoiled”—to put off from him, refers back to the Cross. It could mean that at the Cross the Lord Jesus full and finally divested Himself of the combined assaults of all principalities and powers.

The substance of every shadow (vs.16-18)

There is the danger of retrogression if these saints adopt certain Gnostic practices. Whether in the matter of ceremonial eating or drinking unclean foods or in the matter of the observance of special days, they must resist any pressure to conform to legal demands (v.16).

Asserting Christian liberty (v.16). This is the practical application of v.14. Two warnings are uttered: (a) against substituting shadows for reality (vs.16,17), (b) against superstition and speculation based upon human conceptions (vs.18,19). Religions lay down rules for their devotees. Often they are systems of prohibitions. Christianity governs its adherents by a “perfect law of liberty.” Only Galatians and Colossians deal with this problem (Gal. 4:3,9; Col. 2:8,20). The Christian has been delivered by Christ from bondage to a set of rules. These traditions were about food (v.16a) and festivals (v.16b). Three kinds of Jewish festivals are named these served Israel by divine arrangement and foreshadowed their ultimate fulfilment in Christ.

Abiding realities (v.17). This is the era of fulfilment, the types are gone; the substance being come, the shadows cease. Paul points out the fallacy of urging people to turn back to customs and practices which have ceased to have any value. The Lord Jesus is the Life-Giver as well as the Law-Giver for His people (Gal. 5:1). Christian liberty is not licence. It regulates life consistent with the glory of Christ’s grace.

Abandoning speculation (v.18). Here is another admonition to keep the false teachers from successfully carrying out their campaign. “Let not man disqualify you,” put you out of the race, so that you never reach the goal of an ordered life of holiness. The reward is the prize offered for steadfastness and growth. The conduct based on a false humility is really hypocrisy. Such knowledge puffs up and is the result of fleshly mental activity. Christ is belittled; He is the source of spiritual nourishment for the Body.

The sustainer of His church (vs.19-23)

(a) We have *union with Christ* (v.19). Every member has direct contact with the HEAD, by joints and bands or ligaments. These false teachers were not in the Body. Their attachment to Christ was purely nominal. They failed to see that Christ is all-sufficient for salvation. Every member supplies something for the growth of the whole. There is no finality in the growth for the body goes on increasing with the increase of God. Its growth is in accordance with the plan of God.

(b) *We have association with Christ* (v.20). We died with Christ and were delivered from the control of spiritual powers of evil. We should not be subject to ordinances. To relapse into legalism is to become like those who live with the world as their spiritual atmosphere. We are to live out the faith we confessed in our baptism. We need no special regulations. We have freedom in Christ.

(c) *Loyalty to Christ* (vs.21-23). These prohibitions have nothing to do with the Gospel. The scrupulous legalism of heretics is condemned by the apostle. They not only forbid handling what is unclean, but even touching it. This slavery does not free a man from fleshly lusts, it only keeps them on the leash (v.23). The Christian's freedom came from the death of evil desires and the springing to life of good desires, because Christ is in the Christian and the Christian is in Christ. All this self-imposed or self-devised system of austerity is a humility which was only proclaimed—not possessed. May we ever remember that Christ our Head is the source of our service, the spring of our health and the secret of our growth. Our union with Christ is the sure way to victory; may we give Him our allegiance, "For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Psalm 45:11).

(Ch.3) Christ the Standard of our Life; Union with Him

Paul continues his theme, the believer's life of association with Christ. He was circumcised with Christ; he was buried in symbol in baptism (2:12). He was quickened (2:13). He was then given a new nature by a new birth. He then became a new creature (2 Cor.5:17). He was raised with Christ (2:12) into a new sphere of living, with spiritual affinities and spiritual capacities. A brief outline: (1) Our Association with Christ (vs.1-4)—"Our Blessings." (2) The Mortification of the Flesh (vs.5-9)—"Our Burial." (3) The Manifestation of the Life (vs.10-17)—"Our Beauteous Dress." (4) The Demonstration of Love (vs.18-25)—"Our Behaviour."

The fact of union with Christ (vs.1-4)

Our position—"Risen with Christ." This is a fact of the past. This life in Christ is supernatural (1) in its origination, for only God can quicken the dead (Eph. 2:1); (2) in its continuation, our life is "hid with Christ in God"; (3) in its culmination, for He will be manifested in glory. We have victory over the flesh by a supernatural life.

The new association—"Risen with Christ" (v.1), that is fact; since, then, "ye have been raised." Here is certainty; this is doctrine, not simply experience. It is fact, not feeling, saints accept the statement of faith, an announcement of the Spirit. It results from an exercise of identification of faith—we lay hold upon Christ. This is life on a higher plane.

The new activity—"seek the things above." This is the exercise of a function in relation to the fact. This is volitional and continuous, the activity

of faith: This action follows upon divine declaration. The radical change of spiritual environment should affect the whole mode of life. He must be totally concerned with the objective benefits secured for him, with eternal verities in heaven.

A new atmosphere—"where Christ is seated." The spiritual values that are above are resident in our exalted Mediator in glory, seated in majesty (Rom. 8:32; Eph. 1:20; 1 Pet. 3:22). Trace the references to the honour and glory of the Son in Hebrews. Having been raised with Christ we now move in a new sphere. We now see things from an eternal perspective and our life on earth should be dominated by what is seen in the glorified Man in heaven. The "right hand of God" is the place of holiness, honour, glory, of intercession and of power.

The false teachers were only concerned with the lower sphere of the world (2:20). Christians, on the other hand, through union with Christ belong already to that heavenly sphere where the Lord now lives and reigns. Fellowship with Christ leads to a more intimate knowledge of God in heaven.

New aspirations—"set your mind on things above" (v.2). Concentrate your mental powers on things which develop spiritual growth. Vincent says: "Seek marks the practical striving; set your mind, the inward impulse and disposition."

Two reasons are given: (a) our faith in Christ has severed us from "things which are on earth," we died with Christ. Not only separated from the doom of sin but also from its dominion. (b) our faith in Christ has linked us with a heavenly life. (1) Spiritual life is of a different nature. (2) It is divine for it is "in God." (3) It is heavenly in character, for it is "with Christ." (4) It is extraordinary, for it is "hidden." Being all such it must be eternal. "With Christ" denotes our relationship to Him (2:10). We are joint-heirs with Him, and are partakers of the divine life (Rom. 8:17).

The New Assurance (v.3)—"Christ is our life." He not only brings, or gives, but "is" in Himself. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is most closely united with us, and we with Him. He is the source, the strength and pattern of our life; it is abundant life (John 10:10). It is profound reality (Gal. 2:20). Christ our life was very dear to the heart of Paul (Phil. 1:21; 3:8-11; 4:13).

The New Anticipation (v.4)—Notice these phrases, "with Christ", "where Christ," and "when Christ"; He is the centre of our resurrection life. This new life is hidden, its full character has not yet been unveiled, but He will be manifested by and by.

The day of vindication will dawn. He will be revealed in a blaze of glory in which the full splendour of His divine being will be seen (2 Thess. 1:7,8; Matt. 17; Rev. 19:11-16). In the day when Christ is revealed, the life of the Christian, long despised by the world, will also be revealed and

demonstrated. Our Lord's second advent in glory will be a glorious triumph. May we live looking for His appearing (Titus 2:13).

(Ch.3 vs.5-17) Controlled by Christ

Chapter 1, The Incomparable Christ; ch.2 The Indwelling Christ; ch.3 The Inspiring Christ; ch.4 The Influential Christ.

From a call to contemplation of a Risen Glorified Man (3:1-4) there must follow mortification of the flesh (3:5-9).

The function of union with Christ (vs.5-9)

The fact of new life (v.1); its features (v.2); its fellowship (v.3); its future (v.4). Paul continues the practical application and reminds them that they died to the old life of sin. The indicative, "Ye died" (v.3), underlies the imperative, "put to death" (v.5). The Christian has a dual personality. He has, (a) an old man which is corrupt (Eph. 4:22); (b) A new man created in Christ Jesus—a new creation (2 Cor.5:17). This old nature is called the flesh. It cannot be changed. God has condemned it. In His sight it was crucified with Christ. The old "I" can be conquered. Col. 3:5-9 is one of the most important passages. There must be no compromise although it still exists in us as a "field of operation" for sin.

The deduction made—"Therefore." These functions are essential to the ordering of a holy life. From "your mind" (v.2), we turn to "your members" (v.5). No man can live a holy life unless he gives his mind to it. From the security grace bestows (vs.1-4) here is the slaughter grace demands (vs.5-9). We must consign to the sphere of death the marks of the old life (vs.5,8). Because of association with Christ in His death and resurrection, and our participation in His manifestation, there must be a practical expression of this in our life. Our response is "Reckon"—a mental assent (Rom. 6:11); "Mortify"—is active operation against the flesh (Col.3:5). Only here is this word used. Rom. 6 is the positive aspect—live a righteous life; Colossians is the negative aspect—ye died with Christ, so put to death your members. "Members" is used here of the body as the seat of sinful actions (Rom. 7:23).

The details mentioned (vs.5-7). New life means no lusts. Towards sin I must be blind and deaf. Towards Christ I must be alive and awake. The enumeration of two series of five vices, climaxed by one more (vs.5,8,9); to which correspond five virtues, crowned by love, is significant (vs.12-14).

Christians should desist from what displeases God. Sins enumerated; two kinds are stated. First, grossly immoral acts—fornication and impurity. Second, mental attitudes like inordinate affection, evil desires, sensual greed. This last is said to be idolatry because it usurps the place of God in the worship of men. All these are to be put to death, an action sudden, drastic, real. The power to do this is "Christ our Life."

The sins mentioned call forth the righteous wrath of God, now, and the final outpouring on the "day of wrath" (Rom. 2:5).

The duties imposed (vs.8-9). The second list of vices (v.8f) are those which find expression through speech. Because they display an attitude of bitterness towards others, they demonstrate the impurity of our heart (Matt.12:33-37) "Put away," as one discards filthy rags, malicious gossip, abusive words or slander directed against another are commands that must be obeyed because God wills it.

We co-operate with God. There must be purity in our ways, (vs.5-7), and courtesy in our words (vs.8-9).

The fruit of union with Christ (vs.10-11)

The sanctity God expects. The old man is what we once were in Adam, and the new man is what we have become in Christ. "The new man" has a double significance in the N.T. (a) *Corporal* as in Eph. 2:15, where the meaning is evidently communal: i.e. the Body of Christ, composed of both Jew and Gentile, with all distinctions obliterated. (b) *Individual*, as in Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10. Individuals are expected to make their lives consistent with their constitution in the New Man. "New" which means "new in time", "young," contrasts the new "Creation" in Christ with the "Old Man" which derives its nature from Adam.

The position explained (vs.10,11). Two simultaneous actions are described, "Ye did put off." We have abandoned our position—in Adam having died with Christ. "Ye did put on"—we have accepted a new position "in Christ" by new birth. The new Source of life is Christ Himself. The new Sphere of life is in communion with Him and others "in Him." The new man is continually being renewed by God, and progressively renewed in knowledge (Eph. 4:13).

Verses 5-7 deal with personal life; vs.9-10 our spiritual and social life. Verse 11, the New Society; in this new sphere the divisions which are accepted as normal by the natural man, cease to be applicable. In Paul's day there were differences of race, religion and class consciousness. The Gospel is the great leveler.

Put on Christ (vs.10-12). There are no racial barriers (Jews and Greeks); no religious barriers (circumcised and uncircumcised); no cultural barriers which shut out (the Barbarian and the Scythian); or social barriers, as between (bond and free). There are now no antipathies in the new constitution. Perhaps these eight designations, now obliterated "in Christ," indicate different classes the Gospel had reached in Colosse and show how wonderfully the grace of God had triumphed. How slow we are to learn that all distinctions are done away in Christ. When the Lord is given pre-eminence (vs.1-18), we must recognize that no basis exists for anyone to exalt himself above another in the Assembly of God. The positive description is "Christ is all and in all". "He is 'all things'—our common centre, our standard of reference, and fount of honour, the sum of all we

acknowledge, and desire; the substance of all we experience and possess as Christians.” (G.G. Findlay)

The practice enforced (vs. 12-15)

Saints are to demonstrate by their lives that they belong to the new family of faith. Having shed the rags of pagan bondage, they are to put on the robes of splendour which belong to sons alone (Luke 15:15,21f).

The basis of appeal (v.12a). A threefold description follows: elect of God, holy, beloved. These indicate God’s sovereign choice, our new nature and the sphere of love into which we have been brought.

Our beauteous dress (v.12b). Here is the new likeness, reflecting Christ’s life within us by which our attitude towards others is conformed to His own. These attractive garments are made to measure, and will be found to fit. Every one of the virtues and graces listed has to do with personal relationships between man and man. “A heart of pity.” One of the great needs of the ancient world. The Lord was ever moved by the misery of others (Matt. 9:36; Mark 1:41) “Kindness.” The Lord was not only good, He was kind (Luke 7:37-50). “Humility” was a virtue exhibited in Christ and introduced by Christianity (Phil. 2:3). A noble sense was put into the Word by the Spirit of Christ. All pride and self-importance has vanished. These are the inner garments we wear. The outer garments are—“meekness,” a consideration for others (Matt. 11:29; 1 Cor. 11:33; Gal. 6:1) and a willingness to waive an undisputed right (1 Cor. 9:18). “Longsuffering” to the endurance of wrong and exasperating conduct on the part of others. Mutual forbearance and forgiveness when one has been wronged (1 Cor. 6:7). The bond which knits all the others together and gives completeness, is love. Love blends all into a moral unity which is complete.

The peace to be maintained (vs. 15-17)

“Let the peace of Christ rule.” The achievement of unity with the larger fellowship of the Assembly is the concern of these verses. “Let the peace of Christ be the umpire in your heart.” The Lord Jesus is allowed to arbitrate in all disputes and differences (v.15). If we accept His decisions, we cannot go wrong. The reason advanced—we are called in “One Body” in which there should be no schism. Let the Word of Christ permeate (v.16). This word is to have its settled abode in the hearts of the saints so that there is submission to its demands. “Among you”—corporately as Christians. “In them” as a truth inwardly received. In all its fulness—“richly.” The media of instruction is ministry in wisdom, teaching and warning. We need wisdom as the atmosphere in which we move to build one another up in the knowledge of Christ. This should lead to worship, music which is vocal and communal. The praise must come from the heart, the expression of the

experience and enjoyment of the grace of God. Let the Name of Christ dominate (v.17). Every action and every word must be governed by the fact that we bear His Name and acknowledge His authority. The signs of progress are two, "Doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" that is, thinking always of His glory and "giving thanks unto God"—thanking God through Christ. These are the features of a saint risen with Christ. He is to divest himself of the garments of the old life; don the garments of the new life; display the moral features of Christ; let His peace arbitrate, His word permeate, His name dominate. He is to delight in worship, glorifying the Lord Jesus and ever being grateful to God.

(Ch.3:18—4:1) The Family in Union with Christ

The Lordship of Christ affects me as an individual. The old life has been abandoned for a new life "in Christ." It also affects me as a member of a Christian community (vs.12-16). Principles are given to govern personal life (vs.5-7), then spiritual life (vs.8-17) and now home life (vs.18-21) and business life (3:22—4:1).

The greatest need in the world today is for Christian homes where God is honoured. Every Christian home can be an outreach for the Gospel.

There are six relationships forming the basic structure of the home. They are in three pairs and the dependent side of the partnership is mentioned first in each case. Wives and husbands (vs.18,19); children and fathers (vs.20,21); servants and masters (vs.22—4:1). Note the occurrence of the title "Lord" in these verses.

Lordship in domestic life (vs.18-21)

Wherever the Gospel goes marriage customs and relationships are ennobled. A person is most readily found off guard at home. In this series of injunctions for the family the responsibilities are reciprocal.

Wives. If the wife offers obedience it is in the context of the husband's love. The submission required is a voluntary obedience. This ethic was an entirely new thing. The Gospel liberated women from being mere chattels in the home, and gave them dignity and status they never had before. This subjection is naturally fitting—she is an help meet for the man. Spiritually fitting—both are "in the Lord." (Read Eph.5:22-24). This denotes the sphere of responsibility to Christ as Lord. "Submit" conveys the idea of acknowledgement of authority divinely constituted.

Husbands (v.19). If husbands fulfil the injunctions of this verse the problem of "submission" will solve itself. "Love" is *Agape*, the love that was shown at Calvary. It is not fondness or affection. The love of Christ will cause the husband to sacrifice himself and his own wishes in the interest of the well-being of his wife. "Be not bitter," do not exasperate, or behave harshly, be a gentleman at home.

Children (v.20). The exhortation—"obey"; the motivation—"well-pleasing unto the Lord." The command is to listen, to accept submissively and to obey (Matt. 8:27; Acts 6:7; 12:13). Parents are divinely appointed guardians and guides of their offspring. Parents must be worthy of the confidence and obedience of the children. "All things" in everything, only of course, where such obedience does not interfere with obedience to God. What an incentive in these days of disobedience to parents, "well-pleasing to the Lord."

Parents (v.21). Don't provoke your children. A child is to be treated not as a chattel but as a personality. Do not affront the child's individuality. Unwise restrictions may discourage the child, put him "out of heart" and distress, make him despondent. Children need encouragement as well as discipline.

Lordship in business life (vs.22—4:1)

Most eastern homes had slaves. a slave could not inherit, and had few, if any, rights. The relationship of servant and master has been cheapened in our day, yet the instructions have not changed. The over-riding consideration is the Lordship of Christ, which transforms the quality of the service rendered.

Paul treats the slaves as persons, not as things. Three principles are to govern all service:

(1) *Done in the sight of God* (v.22). "Not with eye service." Working only when an overlord is present, and slacking when unnoticed. Menpleasers are those who have no interest in the job itself. Paul orders the slaves to obey wholeheartedly as an act of reverence to the Lord.

(2) *In the Spirit of Christ* (v.23). "Heartily," means work with your soul in it. A man should give his best, ungrudgingly, because he is doing it "unto the Lord" and not unto men. Not superficial service but out of loyalty to the Lord and governed by the fear of the Lord. "Throw your soul into the work as if your employer were the Lord" (Lenski). Paul relates every task to the Lord.

(3) *In the service of the Lord* (v.24). The Lord is our true Master. The title is used here as a means of encouragement and an incentive to faithful service. We have the assurance that our work will be judged by an impartial God. As heirs of God we shall receive our just due in the day of the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Notice Paul adds "Christ" to remind us of His mission and sacrifice on our behalf.

Masters 4:1. They may easily assume an autocratic spirit toward servants. Christian masters are exhorted to treat them: (1) Justly, giving praise where praise is due. (2) With equity: showing no partiality, but treating each one as a human being with the same claims upon divine grace as the master. In place of racial, religious or age prejudice, each person who works for us is to

be given impartial respect and treatment. Masters as well as slaves are alike subject to the Lord. Masters should act in fairness and remember they are answerable to the Lord.

If these instructions were followed industry would be revolutionized. (1) The standard of efficiency would rise. (2) Relationships between masters and servants would be ideal. (3) The pleasure of working would increase. (4) The attitude of “what’s in it for me,” would disappear. (5) Contentment would soon replace misunderstanding in wage bargaining. (6) The name of Christ would be honoured wherever there were Christian servants or Christian masters. The Lordship of Christ dominates the whole Epistle. Does it dominate me in all my relationships, spiritual, social and secular?

(Ch.4:2-9) Christ our Lord

In our Assembly relationships, (vs.2-6); and in our service, Christ is Lord (vs.7-18). Fellowship with the Lord (vs.2-4); features of the Lord (vs.5,6); faithfulness to the Lord (vs.7-9); friendships in the Lord (vs.10-14); and fulness in the Lord (vs.15-18).

Holy earnest prayer (vs.2-6)

Here is a call to concentrated and continual intercession for the spread of the Gospel. Isn’t it strange that the Creator of the universe must *beg* us to pray? Prayer is the first mark of Paul (Acts 9:11), and how constantly we find him longing for the prayers of others.

Watching in prayer (vs.2,3) *Be diligent in prayer*. Paul recognized that the secret of progress was prayer, and the safeguard of the Gospel was the wise conduct of the saints. “Continue”—to give constant attention to a thing, to persevere. “Watch,” to give strict attention to, be active. We need persistence, for this is a task from which we are easily deflected. We must be on our guard against spiritual laziness. Trace the five references to prayer in the Epistle.

Prayer is an exacting exercise. The word for prayer means “a pouring forth,” an acknowledgement of the demands of God upon us. “Thanksgiving” is an element in prayer, we must *be vigilant*. Thanksgiving is what gives zest to prayer. Give thanks and remember past and present blessings and praising Him for promised future ones (1:12; 3:15). Thanks suggests we *be jubilant*. This will keep the soul fresh and is an antidote to sluggishness (Eph. 6:18). The objective in prayer is the furtherance of the Gospel (v.5). Paul does not request deliverance from danger or hardship but advancement for the truth of Christ (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12). God had opened doors for Paul (Phil. 1:12-14; Phlm. 10), “I ought to” is a splendid motto for every preacher of Christ. It is incumbent upon us to tell others of Him (2 Kings 7:9; 1 Thess. 2:4). Paul requested prayer that God would assist him to speak clearly and incisively. He wants a door for the Word and the unfolding of a truth—“the

mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). Prayer should always be for power, for conquest must be the keynote of the Christian life. "I am in bonds," Paul remembers the price he has paid for the privilege of preaching the Gospel.

Wise conduct (vs.5,6). There are three elements in wise witnessing. A careful deportment "toward them that are without" (1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7). Read this chapter over to find what men are "without," seven things at least. We need spiritual wisdom in our witness for Christ's honour is at stake; our confession may be jeopardized; their salvation may be hindered. Christ is the source of this wisdom and as believers we are in touch with the wisdom that can guide our steps. We must live uprightly, honestly and sincerely. Pay careful attention to your actions and attitude towards non-Christian neighbours. A vigilant witness—"redeeming", "to buy up the opportunity for one's self." This means prompt action for "time" means fleeting opportunity, a moment. We ought to seize from the enemy the opportunities made for us to witness for Christ. A gracious defence of truth (v.6). Speak winsomely in ordinary day-to-day conversation. Our walk and our speech must be beautiful and tactful. Winsomeness springs from the heart. Our ways and words ought to correspond. Every man ought to get a sensible and suitable answer when he inquires the way of Christian truth. Speak faithfully—"seasoned with salt." Food is seasoned in order to make it appetizing. Well-seasoned speech, so as to arrest corruption, advance godliness and whet the appetite for the truth of God. Let our defence of the Christian truths be reasonable and robust as well as kindly.

Helpful Pilgrims (vs.7-11)

Paul has shown our attitude in our dealings with God (vs.2-4); our dealing with non-believers (vs.5,6); and now with fellow-workers. Paul was an ideal servant and had a genius for friendship. What a wide circle of friends he had and how earnestly he prayed for each one. Some so-called friends deserted him but he was also surrounded by some close and true friends. Eight names are mentioned, two are Paul's messengers and the other six are his companions at Rome.

Tychicus (v.7), who carried the three letters to the Lycus Valley, and Onesimus who accompanied him. He is first mentioned in Acts 20:4 as one of the company with Paul who came to Troas. He shared Paul's imprisonment and hardships (2 Tim.4:12; Titus 3:12). Paul mentions three interesting things about him. (a) *A beloved brother*—relationship. The apostle's affection for him is reflected in the titles of honour by which he is introduced. He was a Gentile convert, probably converted during Paul's labours in Asia Minor. He was in the family of God and national prejudices were abandoned. (b) *A faithful servant*—stewardship. He was a trusted helper. "Diakonos," means "one who serves another" who is his superior.

He was a trustworthy “understudy,” and followed and served Paul loyally. Not only was he a delightful brother, he was a dependable brother. (c) *A fellow-bondman*—fellowship. “Sundoulos,” expresses the relationship in which both Paul and he stood in Christ. Both were slaves of the same Master. He was a slave of Christ, co-worker with God in the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:9). He could carry a faithful report of Paul’s circumstances, and comfort the hearts of the saints. He was a committed messenger; faithful to the Lord.

Onesimus (v.9), the personal worker. His history is given in Philemon. He was a transformed man. His conversion revolutionized his life (Phlm. 13-16). He was true to God—“faithful.” Proof of the reality of his conversion was his willingness to return to “slavery” in his master’s house at Colosse.

Here Paul makes no attempt to cover the complex issues involved, but refers to Onesimus as a Christian of honourable standing. His return home would be a triumph for the Gospel, a tribute to the faithfulness of Paul, and a test to both slave and master.

(Ch.4:10-18) The Lordship of Christ in Personal Matters

Paul has called for prayerfulness (vs.2,3); for carefulness in living (vs.4,5); for graciousness in speech (v.6), faithfulness in service (vs.7-16), and for thoroughness in every detail of our lives (v.17) and all are sustained by the richness of Divine grace (v.18).

Worthy companions (vs.10-15)

Names of honour. These fellow-workers were a comfort to Paul. Three of them are Jews “of the circumcision,” and three are Gentile.

(a) *Aristarchus* (v.10a). Is this the man from Macedonia? I think so. He was a good man to have about in a tight corner. He joined the apostolic band of travelling preachers and suffered for the Gospel (Acts 19:29). He was present with Paul at Troas (Acts 20:4). He accompanied Paul on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:2). He was with Paul in Rome when this letter was written. His steady faith, strong affection, and loyalty in his stand for the “true grace of God” made him a dependable brother.

(b) *Mark* (v.10b). The man with a surprising career. Peter called him his son (1 Pet. 5:13). He had a good start as a believer. He was brought up in a godly home. His mother was a keen Christian. His father is not mentioned. Prayer meetings were held in his home, giving him contact with many of God’s servants (Acts 12:12). He was the special care of his kinsman Barnabas with whom he accompanied Paul on his first missionary tour (Acts 12:25; 13:5). He suffered a spiritual relapse and quit and went home (Acts 13:13). This action caused friction between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37). He made a good recovery and was appreciated by Paul, and vindicated his kinsman’s confidence in him (Phlm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11).

(c) *Justus* (v.11), an unknown believer. He bore a name common among Jewish boys till it named the Man of Calvary. It was then dropped by unbelieving Jews. These three Jewish believers were a comfort to Paul and their loyalty warmed his heart.

(d) *Epaphras* (v.12), the man who prayed. A local brother—"one of you." A loyal brother—"a slave of Christ." A lovely brother—"a beloved fellow-worker." He ministered to God's honoured, suffering Apostle. Do we pray for such servants? Do we sacrifice anything to help them? Do give them thought, and pray for them. Epaphras was a priestly man (v.12b). His prayers were *numerous*—"always in his praying." They were *continuous*—praying often like Elijah (Jas. 5:8). His prayers were *strenuous*—"labouring fervently, great zeal" (vs.12,13). He prayed *seriously*—toiling means effort and exercise, he *agonized* in prayer. He prayed *unselfishly*. He thought not only of his local Assembly but also of those in the district (v.13b). He prayed *purposely* (v.12c), not only persistent and agonizing prayer, it was intelligent. These saints needed: *Stability*—"stand fast" and *Maturity*—full Christian growth (Eph. 4:15; Phil. 3:12,15; Col. 1:28) to stand firmly against false teaching. He prayed for *certainty*—conviction, fully convinced, "complete" in every detail of the will of God. Our Assemblies are not short of preachers and teachers, but what a lack of men who pray. Why? This praying costs, and because it costs, it counts. Continue in prayer.

(e) *Luke* (v.14) These are only three references to Luke in the N.T. yet how choice—as a physician, companion and friend. The "we" and "us" passages of Acts beginning in chapter 13 suggest close companionship and devotion in the service of the Lord. He loved to hide himself away. Although the writer of two valuable books, yet his writings are anonymous. He was a man of culture. Medical scholars admire the accuracy with which Luke used technical terms, Philippians 2:4, was true of this dear man of God.

(f) *Demas* (v.14), the only name without some comment of praise and appreciation attached. He was a co-labourer with Paul during his first imprisonment (Phlm. 24) but when things got rough during the second he forsook him (2 Tim. 4:10). The reason given for his defection, "he loved the present world." He succumbed to the temptation to take life easy. He put more value on things of this life than on those of eternal import. Watch this alluring world (1 John 2:15-17).

(g) *Nymphas* (v.15), who was this person? Some maintain that the name is feminine and refers to a lady. "The Nestle text has the personal pronoun in the feminine gender, indicating that Nymphas was a woman" (K.S. Wuest). The A.V. treats the name as masculine; the R.V. gives the pronoun as "their," most manuscripts leave the question unsettled. The whole Epistle is about the Headship of Christ, so why mention a woman by name. This man was a person of outstanding character, probably because of his social position which, however, did not affect his confession of faith in Christ.

Some MSS. read "their house," implying that both husband and wife were Christians.

(h) *Archippus* (v.17) was perhaps the son of Philemon and Apphia. He had a special ministry which he received "in the Lord." He was in danger of forgetting the demands made upon him by his duties. He is given a gentle but firm reminder to get down to business. Are we fulfilling the ministry given to us, or standing idle? May we have the grace of continuance.

His closing words are touching. His "own hand," proof of the authenticity of the letter (Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17). They reveal his profound humanity "my bonds," how he felt them. They express the power of sympathy in prayer—"remember." The All-Sufficiency of Christ—"grace be with you."

Christ in the Prison Epistles

INTRODUCTION

The object of all Bible study has in view the exaltation of our Lord, the enriching of our lives, and the empowering of our labour. We must translate into factors of power every living promise made to us by God in His Word. That the Prison Epistles are eminently suited to this purpose cannot be gainsaid, for in a convincing and challenging way the Spirit presents our Lord Jesus to our hearts. These Epistles have been aptly described as the "Contemplative Epistles" (Dr. Scroggie), and the "afternoon" of Paul's life" (Dr. Griffith Thomas). The theme is "Christ in us", making good in our lives now all that He procured for us at Calvary through His atoning death.

They fall into two pairs, one pair being doctrinal; Ephesians, Colossians; and one pair, personal; Philippians, Philemon. Other contrasts could be noted but this is not the object of this study. A careful reading of each book (ten times) impresses upon the heart the importance of this absorbing subject now before us; Christ in the Prison Epistles.

The Lord Jesus is directly named fifty-five times in Ephesians, forty-nine times in Philippians, thirty-seven times in Colossians and eleven times in Philemon. These facts indicate that the Lord Jesus was central in the life of the apostle, and He must be preeminent in the life of the saint, and of the church. The many titles used emphasize His greatness, His government and His glory; He must be owned as Lord, for His Lordship is absolute. Where His Lordship is acknowledged it sanctifies our relationship, Eph. 5:22; 6:9; it strengthens our fellowship, Phil. 1:14; 2:19; it stimulates fidelity in stewardship, Col. 4:7; and it sweetens life's hardships, Philemon 9,24.

The Person of the Lord Jesus dominates these letters: His presence is real; His passion is clearly seen; His position in glory is emphasized; His provision for us is inexhaustible; His pre-eminence is indisputable and the purpose of God is that Christ should be all in all.

In Philippians and Philemon we see Christ in the individual; in Ephesians and Colossians—As a humble pilgrim—His death—Peace Offering aspect. In Philemon—A fellow-worker and sufferer—His Lord as the Perfect Example.

The Holy Spirit

Ephesians—The prominent factor—indwelling the believer.

Philippians—The powerful influence—supplying daily needs.

Colossians—The producing agent—directing us to Christ.
 Philemon—The personal guide in difficult matters.

Characteristics

Ephesians is doctrinal—instruction in righteousness.
 Philippians is practical—reproof for lack of unity.
 Colossians is philosophical—correction of evil teaching.
 Philemon is ethical—guidance in domestic matters.

The Cross

Ephesians—it is the symbol of unity—manifest it.
 Philippians—the standard of conduct—honour it.
 Colossians—the secret of victory—appropriate it.
 In Philemon—it is the strength of brotherhood—share it.

The Church

Ephesians—its constitution declared—an established church.
 Philippians—its co-operation in service—an evangelical church.
 Colossians—its comely deportment—an enriched church.
 Philemon—its care for the members—an exemplary church.

Suggestive Analysis

Ephesians—Christ our Leader—“In Christ”—unified—no division. **THE INESTIMABLE CHURCH.** Origination, 3:9; Foundation, 2:20; Unification, 4:4-6; Revelation, 3:9-11; Ministration, 4:11-16; Obligations, 5:16 to 6:9; Opposition, 6:12-18; Consummation, 5:27.

Philippians—Christ our Life—“In Christ”—no disappointments. **THE IMPERISHABLE CROSS.** The subject of the gospel, 1:5,15,18; the symbol of humility, 2:5-7; the standard of sacrifice, 2:8; the secret of unity, 2:25; the sign of surrender, 3:7-9; the sifter of character, 3:18; the stimulant in giving, 4:18.

Colossians—Christ our Head—“In Christ”—satisfied—no deficiency. **THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST.** His inherent glory, 1:17; His intrinsic worth, 1:15,18; His infinite fulness, 2:9; His indisputable victory, 2:15; His inspiring position, 3:1; His indefatigable ministry, 1:23-29.

Philemon—Christ our Example—“In Christ”—reconciled—no distance. **THE IMPRESSIONABLE CHRISTIAN.** Lordship acclaimed, vs.5,16,20; Fellowship appreciated, vs.1,5,6,23,24; Worship accepted, vs.6,22; Sonship assured, v.10; Discipleship attested, vs.11,13; Stewardship acknowledged, vs.18,19; Relationship adjusted, v.16.

EPHESIANS—Christ our Leader and our Lord

There is, perhaps, no writing in the book of God so majestic and so wonderful as the Epistle to the Ephesians. Here we reach the very pinnacle of spiritual knowledge, the summit of revealed truth, the coping-stone of doctrinal structure and a masterpiece of revelation, in its setting forth of the unveiled purpose of God. There are twenty-eight references to Christ as “Lord”, and in measure as we daily own Him as such He will lead us into the vast field of truth in this letter. In chapter 1 He leads us into the “dining room” where we have a feast of good things. His eternal purpose, His enriching gifts, His enduring riches. His excellent working and the exceeding greatness of His power.

We pass into the “reception room” in chapter 2 and feel at home among His saints knowing the joy of regeneration, relationship, reconciliation.

We enter the “throne room” in chapter 3 and present our petitions “unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”, and are assured of His almighty power.

Being thus blessed we view the “jewel room” in chapter 4, gazing with wonder and reverent humility on some of His jewels in the church, love, humility, unity, grace, forbearance, growth and righteousness.

The strains of harmonious music are heard in the “music room” of chapter 5 where the fulness of the Spirit is expressed in tunefulness, thankfulness and thoughtfulness in the various relationships of life.

We visit the “armoury” in chapter 6 and are led out in victory by the Conqueror of the hosts of hell, and are reminded that persevering prayer is the secret of victorious living in our heavenly Canaan land.

Chapter 1—He Leads us into the Heavenly Sphere.

Here we desire security, and are viewed “in Christ Jesus”. This assures us of the abundant blessing now and forever—all in Him. All the wealth of God is ours in our glorious Lord and He desires us to be enriched daily as we walk up and down the land, Gen. 13:14-17. We pass into the liberty of life, “life in Christ”, beautifully expressed in that striking preposition “in”, occurring over ninety times in this book. The gracious purposes of love—“accepted in the beloved” and God’s amazing grace in redemption, Eph. 1:7, bring unspeakable comfort to every true believer. As we view our allotted portion—“an inheritance”, v.11, apprehend His will for us, v.9, meditating on the lovely expression “according to”, repeated ten times in the Epistle, it engenders gratitude in the soul as we richly appreciate the great things God has brought us into through the work of His Son, and the operation of the Spirit in us.

As the illumined mind surveys the whole horizon of glorious truth thus unveiled, we wonder how it can ever be ours, v.19. Like Moses on Mount

Pisgah, we view the good land and rejoice in the Lord in whom we have security, v.1; provision, v.2; blessing, v.3; election, v.4; sonship, v.5; acceptance, v.6; redemption and forgiveness, v.7; and ultimate glory in association with Himself, v.10. We share an inheritance, v.11; will bring Him pleasure, v.12; await the realization of our hopes, v.14; and by the Spirit rise to heights of contemplation, vs.17-21. At the same time, we bless God for the position of honour our Lord now occupies, v.21, and bow in adoring worship at His feet as we think of all His fulness made available for, and used in, the strengthening of His blood-bought church.

Chapter 2—He Lifts us from the Horrible Pit.

From the wealth of God for us in chapter 1, we now have the work of grace for us in Christ. Where did God find us? In the graveyard of sin surrounded by trespasses. In verse 1, man is viewed at the beginning at his very lowest and worst, and at the close of the chapter at his highest and best. We are reminded of what we were by nature, but also that from which we have been delivered.

We have life from the dead and are elevated by God. The transition is made by two dynamic words, “But God”, v.4. He loves us, was merciful to us, exercised His sovereign power on our behalf and by His grace saved us, v.5.

Only God can raise the dead, and His ultimate purpose is to exhibit in the Church, to men and angels throughout endless ages, the exceeding riches of His grace, v.7.

From ruination to reconciliation—not by works, v.9, since these accomplish nothing for God or for ourselves. Grace brings us into divine favour in Christ and we enjoy nearness to God, v.13. This great transformation has been accomplished at tremendous cost—that of His precious blood, v.13. Think of the accomplishment of Calvary, vs.14-16; we are acceptable to God, v.13; barriers have been broken down, Godward and manward, v.14; peace has been procured, v.15; reconciliation effected, v.16; and access to God as Father becomes the privilege of every believing soul, v.18.

The assurance of all is given in the Living Lord, v.17; the joy of fellowship and citizenship becomes ours, v.19, all bringing glory to our God in the household and in the sanctuary, vs.20,22. All is supplied by sovereign grace.

Chapter 3—He Lives Within our Hearts.

The key that unlocks the door of the Throne Room is found in verse 17. The blessings of Christianity rest on a Trinitarian foundation, vs.14,16,17. Are we conscious that the Lord Jesus lives within? What is the purpose of His residence in our hearts? Surely He desires to unfold to us His treasures, v.8. Paul had a glorious mission and was fitted for his task by divine

authority and equipment, vs.2,4. He had an exclusive privilege bestowed upon him, v.8, and had effective power to enable him to unveil the mystery of the Church, vs.7,9.

Who can fully understand the inconceivable riches of the Christ? We require the revelation of the Spirit in this as in other great things, v.5, leading to humility of mind, v.8a. The divine purpose has been revealed, vs.11-12; His wisdom is being exhibited, v.10; and celestial beings are being instructed through the Church, v.10. Such is the heavenward side of our mission in the world. This calls for power, so we are introduced to the fulness of God, and the love of Christ by His Spirit within, v.16. We are informed of the measure of these—filled to overflowing.

In verse 16 we reach Pisgah's vision viewed from the high and holy range of the heavenlies. For this we need strength to climb, v.16; sunlight to reveal, furnished by the indwelling Christ, v.17. Our present heritage is to be filled with the fulness of God and to be pervaded and penetrated by divine joy and glory.

These new attitudes and associations surpass knowledge and overshoot the range of human thought, vs.18,19. All is guaranteed to us for He is able. What a promise; what a plenitude of power! May we appropriate the divine fulness, apprehend the divine purpose, assimilate the divine love, and ascribe all glory to our God, vs.20,21.

Chapter 4—Lavishing Gifts upon His Church.

Dignity conferred upon us calls for humility of mind and a walk that is worthy of the Lord. Trace the sevenfold walk of the Christian life in the Epistle. The features of this walk mean conformity to Christ, v.2. These are the requisites for unity, displayed in our Lord and expected from all who follow Him. The recognition of this unity is vital; it must be preserved, vs.3-6, leading to worship of our God for His transcendence, providence and presence, v.6.

The variety of gifts bestowed upon the church are the fruits of His achievement and ascension. They are given for the edifying of the Body and to equip the saints for their work, yet not to do the work for them. Only a Spirit-filled ministry will promote development of a Spirit-filled church. His enthronement leads to enduement and enrichment, vs.10,11. This equipment is for the adjustment of the saints, leading to God's ideal for us in the stature of the fulness of Christ, and we look forward to the day of realization, v.13.

Principles obeyed enable us to advance as we follow the new model, vs.20,21; to have a renewed mind, v.23; and to express a new morality, seen in sincerity in speech, v.25; industry in labour, v.28; and sympathy which is practical and productive, v.32.

Chapter 5—Leading us along the Highway of Love.

Another beautiful expression in this Epistle—"in love"—reminds our hearts of the love of our Lord Jesus for us. "Love" (ten times as a noun and ten times as a verb) is an enriching study. His love expressed itself in sacrifice and surrender, v.2, and in this He is our inspiration and Example. We are called to be imitators of God, followers of Christ and abstainers from sin and selfishness. Love expresses itself in purity of living as opposed to social immorality, idle prattle and baseless levity, v.4. Let nothing dull our sensitivity to the leading of the Spirit whose nature is holiness. We need to walk in the reality of light for the sake of the testimony. No shadow of inconsistency should cast a shade over our profession, vs.7,8.

Like our Lord, our life should be fruitful, and we should give first priority to the perception and performance of the will of God, vs.9,10. Love expresses itself in song, in refusing excesses, and in speaking to edification, vs.18-20. A Spirit-filled life implies the displacement of all that is unspiritual.

Chapter 5:22 to 6:24—Lord in Every Realm.

The Spirit-filled Christian is submissive rather than self-assertive, and his conduct is regulated by the love of Christ for His Church. Nevertheless, while there is equality, there is difference in status, so the wife is subject to her husband, "as unto the Lord", v.22. The standard for the Christian is a selfless, sympathetic, sacrificial love "as Christ also loved the church".

We look back to the Lord's act of sacrifice, we look up to His sanctifying ministry through the Word of God, and look on to the final day of satisfaction, when we shall be "presented", vs.25-27.

Children are to be dependent and obedient, displaying a willing submission to authority, 6:1. The "rightness" of obedience lies in the fact that God has commanded it and the Christian home commends it. Masters and servants are to trust one another rightly, all rendering service as to the Lord.

The Christian soldier is engaged in a fight against the devil and his armies. For such warfare we require spiritual qualities, and armour befitting such a grim conflict. The enemy is strong, resourceful, wily and intangible, and so we must be personally strong, v.10. We must appropriate the Lord for victory. He is our impregnable fortress and Captain, so victory is assured. We must be perpetually safeguarded, vs.11,13. We have the protection of the girdle of truth—reality; the breastplate of a righteous life Godward and manward; the large shield of faith—trust in God; the helmet designed to prevent evil thoughts; and the sword wielded by the Spirit to foil the enemy.

Persistent prayer is necessary to defend us from the adversary, and for this the mind must be stayed upon God.

As we crown Him "Lord of all" we will possess our possessions, ch.1;

prize our privileges, ch.2; propagate the Gospel, ch.3; put away all evil habits, ch.4; please Him in everything, ch.5; prevail against the enemy, ch.6.

Like Mary, Thomas and Paul, may we daily say, "My Lord". This will be exhibited by giving earnest heed to the Word of our Supreme Commander.

PHILIPPIANS—Christ our Life

The Philippian letter breathes the atmosphere of heaven, and as we view our Lord Jesus under different titles (telling us of His grace in birth, His greatness even in death, the glory that is now His, and the government of the universe committed into His hands in a future day) we gladly say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ", 1:21.

Here we bow in worship as we ponder our Lord as: co-equal with God—His eternal nature in the form of God, 2:6; the humble Servant, 2:7; the perfect man, 2:7; the exalted Son of man, 2:9; the glorious Potentate, 2:11; the acknowledged Lord, 3:8; the winsome Captor, 3:12; the expected Saviour, 3:20; the Guardian of the heart, 4:8; the Channel of all goodness, yea, the bountiful Giver, 4:19,23; and the absolute Monarch, 2:11; 3:21b.

The Giver of Life.

As Paul unfolds to us, and longs to share with us, his glowing experience of the Christian life, he reminds us of our position—"in Christ", 1:1.

"In Christ" means security, sufficiency and satisfaction; this is our spiritual location. Joy permeates the life of the soul thus blessed. We are satisfied "saints" and should be holy in character and in aspiration; we should be committed Christians. Study the things "in Christ" and "in the Lord" in this Epistle. What an impregnable position we are in, a veritable fortress—in Christ. It means we have a righteousness untarnished, 3:9. This righteousness is divine in its origin, associated with Christ, preached in the Gospel, bestowed in grace and on the condition of faith in the Lord Jesus. In Him we have a peace undisturbed, peace mounting guard, 4:7, keeping the mind calm and the heart steady when we are assailed.

"In Christ" we have an acceptance that cannot be questioned, Eph. 1:6. "In the beloved" we are graced, highly favoured, suited to the Father. This happy position began at conversion and will be completed in that day of glory and joy, Phil. 1:6b. This work cannot be frustrated and He will not fail, nor will He rest till He brings us to glory.

We have an unbroken relationship, namely, that of "children of God", 2:15; what honour and dignity has been conferred upon us, John 1:12. As children, our behaviour should be "blameless"—no blame attached to our Christian lives; "harmless"—no injury to others; "without rebuke"—from God.

“In Christ” we have life unending—names “in the book of life”, 4:3b. We are citizens of a heavenly city, a colony of heaven down here, with all our needs met by the Lord of life and glory.

The Guide of our Life.

The One who is the source of our life in chapter 1, becomes the standard, pattern and guide of our life. He calls to us. Be ye followers of Me; Come ye after Me.

Life *in* Christ is salvation; life *from* Christ is satisfaction; life *for* Christ is service and surrender and life *like* Christ is sanctification.

Paul loved others with the sympathy, warmth and affection of His Lord, Phil. 1:8. He can call God as witness to his love for, and to his yearnings over, the saints. They held an abiding place in his affections.

Love to the Lord is expressed in service, obedience, and sacrifice. The Lord is looking for fruit in our lives, and love leads to character and fruitfulness, 1:9-11. Paul wants heart and head to grow together, with a righteous life, cultivated in the soil of divine grace, bearing fruit on every branch, showing fertility, variety, vitality, and glorifying God. Unswerving devotion to the will of God is an evidence of the enthroned Lord having His rightful place in our hearts, 1:20,21. Paul lived by Christ; therefore he determined to live for Christ. He was everything to Paul in life and all he desired after death.

Is a surrendered life possible today? Can I be sustained daily in the pathway? Yes, divine supply is available, rich, free and adequate, 1:19. This brings purpose into the life, 1:20: Christ “magnified”. It leads to blessing for others, 1:25,26, inspires godly deportment, 1:27, and united service brings victory, 1:28. Let us follow our Conqueror; He will subdue every foe, 3:21.

The standard He raises is high. His life was marked by dependence—“the form of a servant”; consecration, humility and obedience—even to death. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are the hall-marks of the Christian life, and Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus displayed these features among the saints. Trace the eightfold contrast between Adam in Genesis 3 and the Lord in Philipians 2:5-9a.

The Governor of our Life.

Only when the ark of the covenant occupied its true place in the camp of Israel was the nation victorious. As we hand over the reins to our Lord, giving Him complete control, so shall we know power and blessing daily.

In our Personal Life there must be surrender, 1:21; 3:8. Paul forfeited all for the priceless privilege of knowing Christ as his Lord, and there is no other pathway to success in the Christian life. What sacrifices men make to reach the heights of their profession—scholastic honours and distinctions in

the world, and we follow them readily. Yet in this the greatest of all services, with enrichment now and His approval in that day, we hesitate and sometimes refuse to surrender ourselves to Him.

Our Thought Life will be marked by purity when He takes possession, 4:8-9; 2 Cor. 10:5. A clean mind leads to a clean life. Like our Lord may we ever think on the lovely and excellent things in life. The saint who has learned the blessed secret of the pure in heart finds thinking his holiest and happiest occupation. These things in verse 8 are not given for our admiration only, but also for our emulation.

In Public Life there must be sincerity, Phil. 2:15. Character and conduct must agree, for men watch every movement and expect a high standard—"blameless", in all who profess the Name of Christ. In these verses there are echoes of the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Paul is thinking of himself as a Moses who has led these Philippians out of their captivity to the promised land of faith in Christ. The Israelites in the wilderness failed; they began well but they looked back regretfully to the fleshpots of Egypt and turned aside from their goal, Deut. 31:29; 32:18. We are His children and are expected to shine out distinctly, Matt. 5:16.

Our Assembly Life is marked by unity when we display the mind of Christ, 2:1-5. When His authority is acknowledged and the grace and gentleness of His mind characterize each member, dissension thus disappears. "Work out" means co-operate with God in producing the fruits of the Christian life, 2:12. This salvation is communal and not personal in this passage. It is not only what we do that matters, but also the way in which we do it. The power to solve our problems is divine, and the product will be freedom from murmurings and disputings, 2:13-14.

Our Prayer Life. Under His control prayer will be characterized by simplicity, 4:6. Time spent in waiting upon God will free us from corroding cares, and enable us to serve the Lord without distraction, Matt. 6:25; Luke 12:22. "Prayer" is our general approach to God; "supplication" the cry of personal need. We must unburden our soul in prayer with thanksgiving, and thus enjoy the assurance of God's guardian peace over heart and mind. If we have not God's peace in our hearts we cannot have His song on our lips.

The Glory of our Service.

Life is expressed in service particularly in relation to the gospel. What a thrill passed through these saints as Paul mentions the "first day" of gospel fellowship, Phil. 1:5. This fellowship involved mostly their very tangible expression of fellowship which had evoked this letter—their gift of money, 4:18.

Why did Paul spend himself in this great work of evangelism? His vision of the Lord was the secret of his consistency. His Lord was all to him, and he gave his all in serving the Lord of glory, Acts 26:16-19; 27:23. We need to recapture the spirit of the apostles who rejoiced in serving and suffering for their Lord, 5:41; 15:26.

Paul saw the cause of the gospel prospering among the household soldiers at Rome, Phil. 1:12,13. What an absorbing theme is ours: "preach Christ", 1:15; co-equal with God, 2:6; humble in life, 2:7; reaching the needy, 3:12b; His ignominious death, 2:8; His supremacy on the throne of God, 2:9; His soon coming again as Saviour and Conqueror, 3:20,21.

Paul was captivated by His excellency as Lord, 3:8; and he rejoiced in being poured out upon the sacrifice and service of others, 2:17. Complete consecration marked the local brother sent from this church, and he was upset when he learned that they knew of his illness, 2:25-30. The Lord give us grace to maintain fellowship one with another in this grand work of spreading His fame, His love, His matchless provision and His emancipating power as Redeemer and Lord. Our service should be free from envy and strife, 1:15. We should serve Him unitedly, 1:27; courageously, 1:28; 4:3; humbly, 2:3; continuously, 1:5; and with sincerity, 1:10.

The Goal of our Hearts.

Paul lived his life in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, 1:10; 2:16. His eye was ever on the prize, and this inspired him to greater effort in the Christian race, 3:14. Till that day our resources are grace, peace, prayer, thanksgiving and service to the Lord, 1:2-5. Man has his day now and its salient features are selfishness, pride, arrogance, disobedience and godlessness. The Lord Jesus is coming into His day of glory, power, honour, joy, abundance and liberty, and this stirs our hearts to worship and service now.

We anticipate that day, stretching our neck and standing on the tip-toe of expectation, for we long for the Saviour. He will complete His work, and give us bodies of glory, 3:21.

The Christian life is one of happy memories 1:3; joyful prayer 1:4; united service 1:5; radiant hope 1:6,23; 3:21; real affection 1:7-8; discriminating judgment 1:9,10; choice fruit 1:11; strange success 1:12; sincere preaching 1:15; fresh supplies 1:19; sanctified ambitions 1:20,21; selfless aims and consideration 1:24; 2:4; and dignified conduct 1:27. For its development there are heavenly resources 2:1; its secret—the spirit of humble, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing service 2:3,4,8,17; its incentive—the coming of the Lord 3:14,20. His immediate presence day-by-day 4:5, will make all the difference and enable us to rejoice 4:4; to pray 4:6; and to be gentle 4:5. It will save us from anxiety 4:6; keep the mind pure 4:8; the heart willing 4:9,18; the

spirit contented 1:11, and ensure that the church is generous towards missionary enterprise 4:15-16.

To the end of the journey we will give God glory 4:20, and the grace of the Lord will never fail 4:23. Amen.

COLOSSIANS—Christ our Head

As we pass into the Colossian letter we have a totally different aspect of the Lord Jesus in relation to our Christian life. The burden and prayer of the apostle is that the saints may come to an experimental knowledge of Christ Jesus as "The Head".

In chapter 1 there is the Contemplation of His dignity; in chapter 2 Our Conformation to His walk; in chapter 3 Our Concentration on His glory; in chapter 4 Our Consecration to His service.

In Ephesians we view the Lord as Head of the Church seated at God's right hand. Here we consider Him as the Head of the Church in the sense that He is to have the pre-eminence in all things, governing the Body, as it functions upon earth, rendering to Him devout, obedient service. Note the references to the Lord as "Head" in the Epistle: "head of the body, the church", 1:18; "head of all principality and power", 2:10; "not holding the Head", 2:19.

Trace the references to the word body in the Epistle: 1:18,22,24; 2:9,11,17,19; 3:15. Think of some of these in the light of the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 and see how closely we are linked together with our Lord. May it be ours to accept no other headship, no other lordship, than that of Christ Jesus our true and only Head, and render to Him humble, entire, instinctive obedience.

The Supremacy of the Head.

We read paragraph 1:15-24 with bowed heads and unshod feet, for we are on holy ground. What a thrill of joy goes through our whole being as we gaze in wonder on the glories of our Lord. His supremacy is undisputed in every realm. He is superior to all—"image of the invisible"; superior in rank—"firstborn"; superior in creation—"by him were all things created"; superior in power—holds all things together; superior in position—"head"; superior in place and possessions—pre-eminent, "all fulness".

As we view Him in relation to God we learn something of His personality, similarity, equality and deity, for He is the perfect representation and full manifestation of all that God is; He is the Revealer of God to man.

"He is", 1:17, is a declaration of Christ's absolute pre-existence, like the "I am's" in John's Gospel. Christ exists as God exists, prior in time and in dignity to all things. Relative to creation, He is the Omnipotent One. Here

He has priority of existence and supremacy of inherited right—the firstborn of all creation.

In relation to unseen spirits, v.16b, He is the Eternal One. He is the originating cause and the uniting bond of every created thing in the universe. In verses 18-20 we pass from Christ the Lord of the universe to Christ the Head of the church.

To the Church He is the Head. His sovereignty is marked, for He is the source of the Church's life and the secret of its vitality. Its cohesion and energy are derived from Him. He is its law and its life—"the beginning". Superiority is evident as the "first-born". He stands supreme in right and place, and is the bearer of divine plenitude. The noblest efforts of men to make peace result in ever growing chaos, and the divine means is despised.

What dignity and glory is associated with our blessed Lord as in every sphere He takes the first place. He is the Owner and Heir of all things, the Head of the Church, the reconciling Peace-maker, the Messiah of Israel, to the nations the King of kings yet to reign, in heaven the Lamb and the Light thereof, and today Lord of our life.

The Sufficiency of our Head.

By preaching, warning and teaching, Paul seeks to present every man mature in Christ Jesus, 1:27,28. Provision is made for this in the resources of our Lord, for the mystery of God is Christ, 2:2 R.V. In Him there is fulness of power and provision, 1:19. What encouragement for us in the wilderness! The totality of the divine powers and attributes have taken up lasting abode in Him, and this is the good pleasure of the Father, 1:19.

Our Lord as Head is the casket in which are contained all the mysteries and treasures of wisdom, knowledge and grace. Faith in Him introduces us to this treasure store with its riches unsearchable. Thus we are weaned away from the enticing words of human philosophy, and we display by an orderly and steadfast walk that He is our Lord. He is the secret of our security and growth; the Foundation Stone of our life and character; the whole glorious total of what God is resides in Him as in a settled and congenial home, 2:9.

He is superior to all ranks and orders of the unseen, and we are in living union with him. This assures us of nourishment and develops a holiness and power of which God is the source, the secret and the environment, 2:19. Ritual is meaningless; philosophy is empty and the institution of a past dispensation was only a shadow of the coming things. The solid substance remains: "the body is of Christ", 2:17.

By baptism we learn of our association with Him in burial and resurrection, 2:12. His work on the cross has brought glorious freedom from all that would enslave and condemn us. We have nothing to do with the elements of the world, and as we daily consider our Lord we will experience victory during our earthly pilgrimage.

Since we are risen with Him, we are to seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. This is not the day of His display. We await that glorious advent when we also shall be manifested with Him in glory, 3:4.

Our Suitability to the Head.

There must be a work of grace in us for the divine presence, and to incorporate us into the Body of Christ. There is a threefold work emphasized in 1:14-29, telling out the fulness of divine love and the freshness of apostolic ministry.

What the Father has Done, 1:12-14. There is specific gratitude to God for His inestimable love shown in our redemption. The Father has qualified us, made us fit and given us a title for the sharing of the portion of the inheritance. Thus we are enriched by His gracious work in our souls. Paul exults in the God who has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 1:13. Released from bondage to a cruel master and now under the authority of God's dear Son, we pass from bondage to blessing, from darkness to light, from sighing to singing, because redemption issues in song, and forgiveness stirs gratitude.

What the Lord has Done, 1:20-22. What a portrayal is given to us in these verses of the Son of His love, the mighty Redeemer, the royal Peace-maker. Just as in His Being and Person, so also in His work, is our Lord far above these intermediaries, v. 16, with which the saints were being led astray. He is the Conqueror of sin, the Reconciler of all things in two spheres, heaven and earth. Here we view the mystery of His fulness and the victory of His great work on the cross. The accomplishment is eternal in its issues, all embracing in its range, and personal in its application, v.22.

What Apostolic Ministry has Done, 1:23-29. Paul is God's representative, to present this reconciliation to the minds and hearts of men; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 gives us this great ministry. Colossians 1:23-25 give us Paul's twofold ministry; verses 26,27 his message, and 1:28 to 2:7 his motive in service. His mandate is to deepen and confirm this loyalty to Christ as Lord, along the lines already laid down by Epaphras, namely, "live your life in union with Christ".

Paul's teaching ministry in the church as presented in his Epistles is full of the glory of our Risen Head and our relation to Him as such. Paul looked upon his God-given ministry as a conflict, with Christ toiling in him, using him as His instrument to further His cause.

Our Submission to the Head.

Do we give to the Lord His blood-bought right in our lives? Is He really

Head in an absolute sense? He has purchased this place in our lives and in the assembly through our redemption with its glorious deliverance. Our obligations to the law have been met, the condemnation is cancelled for us, the Lord having triumphed over all our foes, 2:14-15. His victory was absolute, with the forces of Satan routed, 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:54-57. He stands alone supreme.

Having died with Him, Col. 2:20, and been raised with Him, we take our place amongst those truly alive. We have new aspirations and “seek those things that are above”. We have a heavenly Object before our hearts sanctifying our desires in the wilderness. This enables us to discard the flesh, 3:4-8, namely, our members which have to do with a sensuous life. Anything that is in revolt from subjection to God must be put in the place of death. Having shed the rags of pagan bondage, those saints are encouraged to put on the robes of splendour which belong to sons alone; we are “the elect of God”, 3:9-14.

Service to the Head.

Our service to the Lord and our relationships to one another in Christ are presented in the sphere of marriage, 3:18,19; in the family circle, 3:20,21; in business life, 3:22 to 4:1; and in social matters, 4:2-6, all with corresponding responsibilities.

The Christian home is the first sphere of service and how very important it is that we express the features of our Lord in this sanctified relationship. Authority is to be exercised in love, and those under authority should yield true obedience as to the Lord. The business life calls for consistency and consideration since the day of reckoning is coming for master and servant alike. The Lord has taken the servant's place and is also Master, so we can count on His righteous reward in the day of review.

Service without prayer may be mechanical, but it is never fruitful. May we pray with boldness and expectation in the interests of our Lord, preaching, walking wisely, redeeming the time and having our speech seasoned with salt. Like Paul may we practice what we preach, 4:6.

All his fellow labourers had learned the secret of Paul's success in life—“that in all things he might have the preeminence”. There is no other way today. Are we like Archippus, growing tired or slack in our service? He is directed to keep at it until he has brought his ministry to a successful conclusion.

The last words, “Grace be with you”, are a brief yet warm salutation. May we never forget the sheer generosity of God, revealed in sending His Son to die and to be raised for our salvation. This benediction of grace will sustain in sorrow and anxiety, will strengthen for sacrifice or service rendered in His Name, and cannot fail to cheer all noble saints who crown Him Lord of all.

PHILEMON—Christ our Example

One of the first impressions we obtain on reading this Epistle is that of the recurring references to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is directly mentioned eleven times in these twenty-five verses. Surely the apostle has a definite design and purpose in the use of this lovely name which Philemon had learned to revere and love.

This letter of Christian courtesy shows us Christian fellowship in action: love in social relationships; the Lord working through the saints; His love wooing, working and winning.

Let us look at the Person and character of our Lord, praying for divine illumination and refreshment, as we ponder over the references to Himself in this brief letter.

The Possessor of Saints, vs.1,9,23

“Prisoner of Jesus Christ”. There is none better fitted or more eminently suited to this high office of Possessor than our glorious Lord.

This humble prisoner whose name means “little” is full of self-depreciation, as he is deeply conscious that there is divine purpose and design in his imprisonment. Here we find Paul fully consecrated to the service of his Lord. Whether extended spheres of service or protracted suffering, Paul was at his Master’s call, happy to follow the divine voice. “Outwardly he is Nero’s prisoner, inwardly Jesus Christ’s”, (H.C.G. Moule).

Never ashamed of his bonds, behind Rome Paul saw the Lord; he was there by divine permission, and his allegiance to Christ was unqualified. The Lord was his Keeper as well as his Saviour, and the loving eye of his Master was ever upon him. It all turned out to make the gospel known and Paul was thrilled, Phil. 1:12,13,18.

Paul was controlled by the Spirit of Christ. Like his Lord, he was never marked by resentment or bitterness in trial. He was completely surrendered to the blessed Spirit, and prison life enlarged his capacity for sympathy and deepened his love to the Lord, the Keeper of saints, Psa. 121:4,5.

He was conscious of the presence of the Lord, sustaining, providing, refreshing, protecting and entering into his trial and confinement. The Lord had passed this way; “He was taken from prison and from judgment”, Isa. 53:8. Paul was content throughout his confinement in prison, Phil. 4:11. He knew that the disposing of all things was in the powerful hand of his Lord and he could wait His pleasure. Confidence also marked him in verse 22, and he had companions in trial, trusted fellow-prisoners sharing his joy in God. Are you shut in, confined to a sick-room, cut off from friends? Your Lord is your Keeper and your Friend. Lean hard upon Him for He does not fail.

The Channel of Grace and Peace, vs.3,25

Into what a large place grace brings us, and what rich provision it affords for our earthly pilgrimage! The divine blessings of grace and peace are the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus. Paul knew Philemon would need grace upon grace and tranquility of soul. Whatever our station in life and regardless of circumstances or time, our needs are met by the God of all grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. With this dual provision we have enough to satisfy every longing desire, to strengthen the life for service and equip us for the tasks that lie to our hand—or for suffering, should we be called to pass that way.

In Paul we see the sobriety that grace brings into the life. Onesimus portrays the transformation that grace has wrought. Philemon exemplifies the influence of grace in the home, in the church and in business. His deportment was comely because grace was reigning through righteousness.

The Object of Faith and Love, v.5

Our Lord desires our confidence, and is worthy of our love, John 14:1; 21:16; He is the File-leader of the heroes of faith, Heb. 12:2.

Faith in God, and in the revelation given to us in our Lord Jesus, introduces us into the realm of spiritual realities. What precious unveilings of the purpose of God belong to the child of faith. Faith is placed over against worry, Matt. 6:30; fear, 8:26; doubt, 14:31. These are the things that try us in the daily round of life, and by these apparent hardships we learn to trust the unseen hand of our Lord who is ever near to help us. Faith is the root, and love the fruit of Christian life. Faith appropriates all that the Lord has provided, and love appreciates the gift and thanks the Giver. Faith is a bountiful grace, and is communicative in its very nature. Love proceeds from faith, even love to the saints, 1 Thess. 1:3. The Lord Jesus is to be loved in the saints, who are to be loved next to Him no matter what the character or disposition of each may be.

The Source of all Good, v.6

Philemon's faith was neither theoretical nor merely quiescent. It was energetic, for the Lord was in perfect control of his life. He was deeply conscious that any good work wrought by him among the saints had its origin in the heart of the Eternal One. Goodness was the essence of our Lord's nature, John 10:11; it was the expression of His character, Acts 10:38. This was evident in all His work, and it was enjoyed by His saints as seen in this Epistle.

Philemon manifested his Christian love by distributing to the necessity of the saints; Paul expected this to result in their greater appreciation of all their blessings in Christ; Philemon's love brought blessing to others rather than to himself. Paul desired that Philemon's sphere of usefulness should be on the

increase, for this was glorifying to God and brought enrichment to others. Whatever the cause of joy and consolation it is always just cause for thanksgiving, vs.4,7. What Philemon had done for the saints was reckoned as having been done unto Christ, Matt. 25:40.

The Enabler of his Servants, v.8

He gives boldness and abundant freedom to His sent servants. Paul could have exercised his authority in the following verses 9-11, but he preferred to plead on the grounds of love. The book of Acts gives to us vivid pen pictures of men who were made bold by their God. They had boldness to stand true to their Lord, Acts 4:13, to speak His word, 4:29,31, and fervent prayer ascended to God for this divine enablement to be their portion. Stephen with holy boldness faced his accusers, and died rather than deny his Lord or shrink from the path of duty.

As an apostle, Paul had the authority to command, but he preferred to beseech. Love as a principle motivated his life and he desired Philemon to reciprocate that love by acting in the manner here stated. Here is love that "seeketh not her own", as Paul suppressed his authority, and provoked love in his friend Philemon. Love won the day and Onesimus was received back as a brother beloved.

The Transformer of Lives, vs.11-16

As we ponder over the names of those mentioned in this letter, we thank God for the transformation wrought in each life. Our Lord is the greatest transformer of human lives, and He begins in the heart. Onesimus, the fugitive debtor, crooked in his ways, is made straight, just as the raging persecutor, the injurious person, Saul, becomes gentle as a nursing mother, Paul. The gentleman master is now a beloved brother, Philemon. The good doctor is not ashamed to labour for the Lord, Luke. The home of Philemon becomes a place of meeting of a church; a sanctuary for God and His people.

Onesimus is the outstanding example here of what grace can do for any son of Adam's race. His name means "profitable" and there is a play on the meaning of the word in verse 11. Grace had wrought a mighty change in his life, and it was evident for all to see. The transformation was permanent, so Paul heartily commended him to his old master. The apostle discerned the overruling hand of God in the escapade, Rom. 8:28. Maybe Onesimus was separated from Philemon for a while, so that his master might have his complete and permanent service, Philem. 15.

How courteous Paul was in his appeal, "But without thy mind would I do nothing", and he desired a willing-hearted and warm-hearted response from Philemon, v. 16. A. Maclaren sweetly puts it: "In the flesh, Philemon was to have a brother for a slave, and in the Lord he was to have a slave for a brother". How encouraging to all who labour for the Lord. The recovery of

the lost is a work of grace, and we need never despair of any when we have all the resources of the mighty God of Jacob at our disposal.

The Bond of Union, vs.16,20

We are brought into a new relationship at conversion; it is spiritual, divine, eternal. Our conduct should be governed by our relation "in the Lord". Paul learned this lesson the day he was converted, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?", Acts 9:6.

(a) *Here is the union of life*, vs.15,16—"for ever". How precious we are in His sight; how blessed this new life is to us now. Spiritual relationships do not annul legal responsibilities, but a new spirit is brought in—the love of Christ.

(b) *The union of love* is also here, vs.7-8. Love expressed in hospitality, sympathy and care for others. What wonderful fellowship grace brings us into with the banner of love overhead, Song of Songs 2:4. The love of Christ is the inspiring motive of all our service—free, willing service prompted by the love of our Lord who died for us at Calvary, 2 Cor. 5:14.

(c) *Union of loyalty and labour*, vs.21-23. The teaching of the Prison Epistles on fellowship is beautiful, as exemplified in this letter. There is *family* fellowship in verse 1, all happy to serve the Lord and the saints, leading to the development of Christian character. *Assembly* fellowship is in verse 2, the delight of Christian fellowship with its privileges, joys and responsibilities. Fellowship in *warfare*, v.2, means sharing in the defence and declaration of the gospel. The *fellowship* of substance, v.6, refers to practical faith in helping others. The fellowship of *sympathetic consideration* for each other appears in verse 14. The fellowship of *suffering*, v.23, shares in the reproach of Christ and the gospel. Fellowship in *service*, v.24, is a happy partnership in the work of the Lord.

Paul and Philemon had a common bond, and spiritual values were uppermost in their estimation. Paul had been instrumental in reaching Philemon as well as Onesimus, v.19. Love in return could be shown in the warm reception granted to the servant now before his master, vs.17-20. As Paul prayed, doors were opened unto him, and he believed that the prayers of Philemon would be answered, v.22; Col. 4:3. He expected God to deliver him, and looked forward with joyful anticipation to seeing his friend again face to face.

The Enricher of Saints, v.25

In the closing salutations we have expressions of Christian sympathy and kindness. How helpful all these staunch labourers had been. What suffering was entailed in serving Paul and their Lord! How were they strengthened for their tasks? What sustained them in the conflict? There was the abundant, assuring grace of our Lord Jesus Christ daily.

May Paul's simple but beautiful desire be granted in all our lives, and may we daily respond in devotion by crowning Him "Lord of all", that He in fuller measure may come into our meditations, our homes and our assemblies.

Outline on 1 Thessalonians

Written from Corinth, Date: A.D. 51-52. Message: Gain and Victory

Purpose Written to:

- Confirm their faith, 1:4,9,10
- Commend them, 1:6,7
- Correct evil reports, ch.2
- Counsel them, 2:11—3:13
- Chastise them, 4:12,13
- Comfort their hearts, 4:13-17.

Ch.1 PERSONAL *The Reception of the Gospel*

- Its design, vs.1-3 An assembly of God
- Its demonstration, vs.3-4 In activity for God
- Its dynamic, vs.5-8 In the authority of God
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THE MESSAGE FOR MY HEART TODAY

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I Thessalonians

Some Suggestions for Study

Read the epistle through once each day for a month. Reading aloud is most profitable. You can read through this Epistle in less than twenty minutes.

1. Find seven reasons why Paul wrote the letter.
2. Gather together its teaching about God. Classify the 36 references thus;
 (a) Things 'of God', (b) 'in God', (c) 'to God', (d) 'our God', (e) 'from God'.

3. Trace all references to 'Christ', 'Jesus', 'Lord', 'the Lord', 'Lord Jesus Christ'. There are fully 30 references.
4. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
5. Consider the mentions of 'your faith'.
6. Trace the subject of the Gospel; its power, reception, facts, subject, preachers, effect, propagation, fruits.
7. Note the various descriptions of God's people; there are 12-14 words used. The more subtle references are 'pedestrians' 2:12; 'pupils' 4:9-11; 'mourners' 4:13; 'watchmen' 5:6; 'crown' 2:19. Find the others.
8. Carefully weigh the references to 'affliction', 'suffering', 'persecuted', 'persecution'.
9. What are the characteristics of a local church? What is its constitution? How is it ruled? How is it formed? What are its activities? How should its members behave? Answer these questions with chapter and verse from this Epistle. Is this a picture of your assembly? What can you do to help?
10. List all the passages where reference is made to the coming of the Lord. Ponder the practical force of these.
11. Note the many occurrences of 'ye' and 'yours'.
12. What can we learn of the character of Paul from his writing, preaching and living as seen in this letter?

Suggested Analysis

CONVERSION, 1:1 to 2:20; *'ye turned to God'*.

1. His gratitude for progress, 1:1-4.
2. The Gospel he preached, 1:5-10.
3. His gripping message, 2:1-6.
4. His gentle manner, 2:7-12.
5. His gladdening hope, 2:13-20.

CONSECRATION, 3:1 to 4:12; *'to serve God'*.

1. Expressing his feelings, 3:1-13.
 - a. Paul's regard for the saints, vs.1-5.
 - b. Progress reported for Timothy, vs.6-8.
 - c. Paul's requests in prayer, vs.9-13.
2. Exhortation to his followers, 4:1-12.
 - a. Living to please God, vs.1-8.
 - b. Loving all men, vs.9-12.

EXPECTATION, 4:13 to 5:22; *'to wait for His Son'*.

1. A word of comfort, 4:13-18.
 - a. Anxiety for loved ones, v.13.
 - b. Assurance from the Lord, vs.14-18.
 2. A word of counsel, 5:1-22.
 - a. Need for watchfulness, vs.1-10.
 - b. Need for thoughtfulness, vs.11-15.
 - c. Need for steadfastness, vs.16-22.
- Prayer, vs.23-25. Salutation, vs.26-27. Benediction, v.28.

Studies in First Thessalonians

Introduction

Thessalonica was the most important and populous centre in Macedonia in the first century. It was a free city, boasting a popular assembly for the transaction of public business and civil magistrates elected by the people (Acts 17:6,8). It was in the course of his second missionary expedition that the Apostle Paul planted the standard of the cross in Europe, probably early in A.D.50.

Dr. Luke explained how Paul came to Thessalonica and how the church was founded (Acts 17:1-5). The foundations of the European church in three cities, Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, were suitable centres for the gospel. The Macedonians became the cream of Paul's converts, and to them he ever turned for help and encouragement (Acts 16:6-40; 14:1-10; 20:4).

Compelled to leave Philippi after his illegal imprisonment they travelled the hundred miles to Thessalonica. Paul, as was his custom, preached in the synagogue for three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2). He preached a threefold message: (1) That the Messiah of Scripture was to suffer. (2) That He was to die and rise again. (3) That Jesus of Nazareth was that Messiah, having satisfied the conditions and proved His claims.

The converts included Jews and many devout Greeks, some from the upper class but most were apparently of the working class. Many of the Jews were prejudiced and fiercely rejected his teaching. They incited the scum of the city to riot and a charge of treason was framed against Paul and his companions. These men were working to overturn society, and introduce a new king (Acts 16:6,7).

Date

Meeting with opposition Paul and his helpers moved to Berea (Acts 17:14). Then Paul left for Athens, leaving behind Silas and Timothy to care for the infant church at Thessalonica. These two fellow-helpers came on to Athens (Acts 17:15). From there Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1,2) and Silas to Philippi (Acts 18:5). Paul himself went on to Corinth where both Silas and Timothy joined him, bringing financial help (2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:19). The good tidings refreshed Paul and he wrote this letter of cheer, counsel and comfort to his children in the faith approximately A.D.51-52.

Purpose

Paul was full of good cheer because of what God had wrought during the short stay of three weeks in Thessalonica. Its first purpose is to express his thankfulness and give encouragement to the saints.

Yet there was an intermingling of hearty approval and heartache. Dangers

had arisen which threatened to corrupt the doctrine he had taught, so one of his purposes was to correct and convince (ch.2:14-19). He was being *defamed and slandered*.

He wrote to confirm their faith (1:4,9,10; 5:9); to guide and counsel them as a father would his children (2:11-14; 3:1-13); to chastise them for their behaviour (4:1-12); and to comfort them in their sorrow (4:13-17). There was a doctrinal question in the church concerning the fate of saints who had died before the ushering in of Christ's Kingdom.

The problems they faced were not peculiar to their day. We also realize that the inspired answers they received are valid for all time. The chief object of this letter was to fix the attention of the church on the radiant hope of full conformity to Christ's image which is to be realized at the second coming of our glorious Lord. (See 1:10; 2:19,20; 3:13; 4:14-18; 5:23).

Message

Summarized, it is bright and beautiful. Live for your Lord (4:1); labour for the Lord (1:3); love one another (4:9; 5:11-22); look for the Lord from heaven (1:10; 4:16-18). The subject of the Lord's return was used for the purpose of establishing believers in the cardinal graces of the Christian life. Faith and love are like twin workers that labour together. Hope is like the herald that runs on before the chariot of the coming king, to announce the approach of the coming one.

Each chapter refers to the great event of our Lord's return for and with His saints.

(ch.1) A Personal Hope linked with our salvation.

(ch.2) A Practical Hope leading to service.

(ch.3) A Powerful Hope bringing us strength.

(ch.4) A Precious Hope comforting in sorrow.

(ch.5) A Present Hope effecting our sanctification.

Live "looking for that Blessed Hope" (ch.5).

Features of a Local Assembly (ch.1)

Every church may be assessed from five points of view, its influence on outsiders, its interest in the gospel, its initial progress in Divine things, its individual piety, and its internal harmony. This chapter stresses almost all the cardinal truths of the Christian faith, and consequent consistent living and a missionary spirit which ever marked Paul and his associates in the gospel.

Established by God (v.1b) A Solid Church

In this chapter God is the giver of security (v.1); the provider of grace and peace (v.2); the recipient of praise (v.2); the beholder of values (v.3); the executor of election (v.4); and the object of services (v.9).

(a) *Its Constitution* "In God the Father." The form of address is unique, "IN" God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." These saints, while locally in Thessalonica and circumstantially in persecution were spiritually secure in God. This assembly gathered in the twofold name, confessing God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord.

Being "in God as Father" it was non-pagan and "in the Lord" marked it as being non-Jewish. As Christians they knew and owned themselves God's children and acknowledged the divine Sonship, human birth and resurrection glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This wonderful relationship and new environment throbbed with tenderest affection and paternal care.

(b) *Its Confession of Faith* They believed in the equality of the Godhead, the oneness of the Father and the Son, the unity of the body of Christ, the reality of God—"true and living God," the supremacy of Christ—"Lord," the sufficiency of His work, the glory of His resurrection, the dignity of His person, full title given (v.1), and His second Advent.

(c) *Companions in Labour* (v.1a) "Paul, Silas and Timothy." Here is the first of many trinities of truth in this chapter. Paul was an apostle, Silas was a prophet (Acts 15:32) and Timothy did the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). The three men who had evangelized the city now join in sending this epistle. Paul was a man of prayer and love, Silas a man of hope and Timothy a man of faith. These graces are still necessary in the servant of the Lord. Respect them for their character, recognize their gift and remember them for their service.

Enriched by Grace and Peace (v.1c) A Sustained Church

The two blessings they needed most. The qualifying words "from God the Father" are omitted in the R.V. Being "in God the Father," they need not to be told from whom these gifts come. Grace is God's favour toward men; peace is the result to all who receive that favour in Christ. Peace is more than the absence of hostility and disorder; it denotes health and harmony of nature, inward tranquility and well-being, our greatest need daily. These resources are rich, reliable and refreshing; assured to every saint, ever abundant, and available for daily living.

Encouraged by Praise and Prayer (v.2) A United Church

Paul and John praise six out of seven churches to which they wrote, the exceptions being Galatia and Laodicea. Paul was marked by thankfulness and prayerfulness. Thanks is an evidence of good health in the spiritual realm; we should be thankful when we behold saints making progress in divine life. Paul's appreciation was not simply a general, indefinite thing, but fervent thanksgiving to God as he thought of what His grace had wrought in the lives of these saints.

Prayer for others extinguishes doubt and fear, it expands our sympathy, and increases our spiritual influence. The expression “without ceasing” (1:3; 2:13; 5:17) occurs three times in the message. The words appear but once elsewhere in the N.T. (Rom. 1:9).

The immediate reason (v.3); the ultimate reason—“election” (v.4).

Exemplary in Living (vs.3-4) A Practical Church

The vigour and vitality of the life of this young church was expressed in the three fundamental qualities of faith, hope and love. The three graces, exhibited by these saints, are inseparable, and the three greatest evidences of salvation. Faith works; love toils; where faith might pause, love, though wearied, continues the fight. Hope endures; the steady continuing, the perseverance, even in persecution, that springs out of hope—the final victory of Christ’s coming (v.10). Faith looks back to a crucified Saviour, love looks up to a crowned Saviour and hope looks on to a coming Saviour.

Faith evidences itself in work as Hebrews ch.11 testifies. “Work” tells of the thing done, as a matter of achievement, but “labour” of the effort expended in doing it, as a matter of exertion. Hope reveals itself in patience, tenaciously clinging to God’s Word, it will be disappointed. When those things about service is not considered an obligation to a command but as glad obedience to a delightful will.

Election (v.4). Read this verse in the R.V. Every word is full of meaning. God chooses, elects, because He loves. The word occurs in the N.T. seven times in all. This is an eternal election of God (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13) to final salvation (1 Thess. 5:9; Eph. 1:11), of a people whom He gave to Christ “before times eternal” (2 Tim. 1:9; John 6:38,39; 17:2-12), the grand purpose of which is to redound to the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6). “Election” here must be understood of the brethren individually, and not of the church collectively. As “beloved” they were the objects of a peculiar affection, recipients of special grace. We are accepted and loved in the beloved, because of the acceptability of the beloved (Eph. 1:6).

Enjoyment of the Gospel (vs.5-6) A Receptive Church

Paul knew that these saints were elect of God because of the change in their lives through acceptance of the gospel. Those whom God chooses He changes, Paul had the consciousness that the Spirit of God was at work and he describes his matter as “our gospel.” The fourfold manner in which the gospel came also expresses the method of its approach. It was presented faithfully, “not in word only,” firmly—“in power,” no hesitation and no trepidation on his part. They spoke fervently “in the Holy Ghost.” They experienced the supernatural energy of the Spirit of God. That power explains the joy of believers in spite of affliction (v.6). They behaved in a manner worthy of the gospel (v.6). They set an example to others so

effectively that they were being imitated in both Northern and Southern Greece.

The Apostle gives three illustrations, drawn from the world of art, of what the grace of God had made them. (a) "Followers" or "imitators" is derived from the drama, and is used four times in these epistles (1:6; 2:14; 2 Thess. 3:7,9). It means to copy someone else's activities. Trace the word in Eph. 5:1; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:14; Heb. 6:12; 13:7.

(b) "Examples" or "Types" v. 7, is derived from sculpture or engraving. It suggests not a temporary likeness, but a permanent form. We are not only letters printed by Christ, we are pages of type. See Phil. ch. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:2, all referring to conduct "We are His workmanship."

Evangelical in their Endeavours (vs.8-9) A Missionary Church

(c) "sounded out" v.8. This is taken from the art of music. Their attractive character was a vital thing (v.6); it was a vocal thing (v.8). They are like trumpeters, sounding a clear note that carries far in all the region round about. Like the sounding of the trumpets by the priests of the Lord to Israel (Num. 10:1-10). The missionary spirit was paramount with them and they longed to share their blessing with others. Where men's deeds speak and commend men, words may be silent. Their faith was a visual thing (v.9); "show what manner of entering in we had unto you." The neighbours became well aware of the change wrought in their lives. They were both "receivers" v.5 and "transmitters" of the Word. They testified faithfully with their lips. "Sounded out," trusted fully with their heart. "Word of the Lord," and translated clearly in their life—"we need not speak." The transformed character of their lives was a visible witness to the gospel (v.9b).

Expecting the Lord from Heaven (v.10) An Expectant Church

Separation from their evil ways—"turned to God." They forsook the shadow and sin of idols for the abiding substance of Christ. "Unto God" is the secret of the change. Unto the God of truth, of love, of holiness, of power, of grace, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. Consecration to God—"serving". They had become the happy bondslaves of a God who was living and real, and not a dead sham. While they worked they waited and centred their thoughts on the Deity of their Saviour, "His Son." Here we are reminded that Christ is not only Divine, but that He is Deity, namely one with God in every sense of the word.

"To wait." Three Greek words in the N.T. are translated waiting—all in connection with the Second Advent.

(1) In Luke 12:36, means to wait with patience; (2) in 1 Cor. 1:7 means to wait with expectation; (3) Here in 1 Thess. 1:10, it means to wait with certainty, assurance, and therefore with joy. They were waiting up for the Lord.

Our Lord will come as the SAVIOUR to complete our salvation; as BRIDEGROOM for His bride; as LORD to reward His servants, and as the BRIGHT and MORNING STAR to gladden our hearts.

The word "deliver," implies rescue by a superior force one day from the presence of sin. It is clear that the believer is delivered from all divine wrath (2 Cor. 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10). So then God's wrath at the great Tribulation cannot fall on Christians of the church. It falls on the unbelieving world in general and the Jew in particular. Wrath is to be understood of the calamities wherewith God will visit men upon the earth when the present period of grace is closed (Jer. 4:7; Zech. 14:2; Matt. 24:15-21). He will surely come again. Our Lord pledged it. His Word assures it, the Spirit confirms it, the church proclaims it, and our heart desires it (Rev. 22:20c).

Features of a Loyal Servant (ch.2)

From the blessings of the gospel and its accompanying responsibility we pass to the biography of Paul as a faithful pastor, proud of his sheep, labouring with sincerity and sacrifice and looking forward to the day when he will present the sheep to the Chief Shepherd when he comes. Here Paul nurtures these babes in Christ and leads them to maturity.

The Arrival of the Missionaries (vs.1,2)

We have here an expansion of the statement in 1:5, but the tone is altogether different. Here Paul is standing upon his defence, and as the herald of a glorious hope he was a courageous missionary who hazarded his life in proclaiming the gospel. The hope of the coming of the Lord made him courageous in suffering (1-12), and concerned about the saints (13-20). His preaching was boldly in speech (v.2), honestly in exhortation (v.3), pleasingly to God (v.4), generously to men (v.5), independently from others (v.6), tenderly to the saints (v.7), fatherly to all (v.11), effectively for good (vs.13,14) and confidently for the future (v.19).

Undismayed by Sufferings (vs.1,2)

Paul was a steward of God's message and used everything that belonged to his master, (1 Cor. 4:2; Gal. 1:11,12). The heroic endurance of Paul and Silas when arrested at Philippi is described in Acts 16:19-24.

They had much conflict, were beset on every hand with difficulties, but were strengthened by God and were courageous in spreading the gospel. His mission lacked neither purpose nor power, his labour was not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). The fruit of this mission was permanent, his answering loyalty proved successful, their work was not void of substance or power.

Undisturbed by Insult (v.2a)

They were shamefully entreated but were emboldened to declare the gospel of God with great confidence. Their sufferings brought them into closer fellowship with their Lord (Luke 18:32). These heroes were undaunted by their sufferings; they “sang praises to God at midnight.” “Boldness” was a mark of the early church and we need this outspokenness as we face our opposers in the delivery of God’s message.

Undeterred by Conflict (v.2b)

These servants were neither cowed or silenced, persecution spurred them on to greater liberty and power in preaching. Their scarred bodies and smarting spirits proved they had been in a contest.

An Acceptable Manner (vs.3-6)

Paul assured them that his message was true. The message of Christ’s death and resurrection is the only true gospel (Gal. 1:6-12). The malicious charges made against those servants by the Jews are here refuted. Their preaching did not spring from some delusion or mistake. He defends his manners (v.2), his motives (v.3), his message (v.4), and his methods as a conscientious evangelist (vs.5-8). He deals with the verity of his message and affirmed that it was not of error (v.3a). The purity of his method was not of uncleanness, he did not appeal to base desires (v.3b). No impure motive prompted these servants, there was integrity of heart in all they did for God. Truth and purity go together and these ministers had pure minds and pure hearts. It is possible to preach the right message with the wrong motives (Phil. 1:14-19). Reliability marked these servants (v.4). They were not novices, they have been tested and approved by God and thus permitted to engage in this great work. He proved himself through disappointment (Acts 13:13), through danger (Acts 14:19), and dispute (Acts 15:7-13).

“Reality” is another feature of these servants. Paul abhorred flattery (v.5). The choice is between pleasing God and pleasing men, and our Lord Jesus is the pattern (John 8:29; Rom. 15:3). Their ministry was devoid of flattery, greed (v.5), and self-importance (v.6). Paul always endeavoured to prevent himself from being disapproved (1 Cor. 9:27).

The spirituality of Paul was most evident for he did not make his apostolic labour a veil, under cover of which he could gratify his love of gain (v.5). He was free from ambition and selfishness. They sought the blessing of these saints, not theirs but them for God’s glory.

There was complete self-denial and devotedness to Christ in all their service.

An Affectionate Mother (vs.7-8)

Instead of selfishness there is love, and nothing but love. The tenderness of the Apostle was that of a mother warming and nursing her babe at her

breast. How gentle he was and as skillful as a qualified nurse showers real love upon her own child. This gentleness stands in contrast with the airs of authority of selfish and vain glorious men in like circumstances (vs.5,6).

It is because we fail to cherish our spiritual children that so many of them suffer from chronic weakness. The fondness of a mother's love led him to sacrifice on their behalf and for their blessing. Paul acted like his Lord cherishing His church (Eph. 5:29). Tenderness and willingness from a heart of real affection throbs with impulse and yearns with solicitation (v.8).

An Active Brother (v.9)

He played a brother's part, strong to support and willing to work his fingers to the bone in order to maintain himself. There is no laziness in the makeup of this servant. Paul and his companions toiled to the point of weariness and struggled constantly against hardship. There are too many lazy people in our churches today, their chief contribution being their cold criticism instead of constant co-operation. Men are perishing, saints are hungering for the bread of God, let us arise and work in His vineyard and study to set dainty meat before His own beloved people.

An Able Father (vs.10-12)

In verse five, the witness of God and of men were distinguished; here in verse 10 they are combined. In his duties manward, Godward and churchward he had been marked by grace and truth. In motherly deportment he had nourished his children and in fatherly dignity he had counselled them, so his exhortation was paternal, but urgent. He was wise in his counsel and marked by educative wisdom as one by one he dealt with the disciples. The excellency of his life was unquestioned (v.10). His object in all this, as they knew, was ideal and spiritual, "to walk worthy of God." The threefold need of this church is still present in every assembly of God, we must be stimulated, cheered and directed in the ways of God. We should be holy, for God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15). Our walk is here vitally linked with the blessed hope of kingdom glory. Paul made them want to do better.

An Authoritative Pastor (vs.13-16)

Paul's confidence as a steward is seen in his concern for this church. "For this cause" looks back over the whole of the last section (vs.1-12). Here he renews his thanksgiving as he considers the fruit of his labour. He has two grounds for confidence; (1) their faith in the word of God (v.13); (2) their firmness while suffering persecution (v.14). They stood true to God in the hour of conflict. Truth supplies an impregnable fortress the ramparts of which can never be overthrown by the enemy.

Paul was exposed to the bitterest persecution from the unbelieving Jews, and he employs against them language more severe than is to be found in any

other of his writings. What an ugly catalogue of sins is here associated with the opponents of the gospel in vs. 15, 16. The Lord Himself represented His death as the culmination of the murders of the ancient prophets (Luke 11:47-52; 20:9-16). Now the Apostle takes up the accusation. In persecuting the Church of God they acted in consistency with all their past history. The crowning sin of the race is put in the forefront; they slew the Lord Jesus; but before, they had slain His prophets; and after the Lord had gone, they expelled His apostles. The cup of their iniquity was filling all the time, and side by side with this cup was the cup of judgment, "Wrath arrived" may refer to the scattering of the Jews as a nation, for within 20 years of the writing of these words their temple and city were destroyed. Perhaps a fulfilment of Deut. 28:15-68.

An Assuring Hope (vs. 17-20)

Here is the abounding joy that the worker will experience and the compensation that is to be meted out at the judgment seat of Christ. The parousia or presence of Christ is one of the key words of this wonderful message.

Paul was not ashamed to state his affection for these saints. He was a real lover and his separation from them was a bereavement, which he hoped would only last for a short time. "Taken from you" might be translated "orphaned or bereaved." "Torn away from you" the very strongest expression the Apostle could find, occurring only here in the N.T. How keenly he felt being parted from them, and how strenuously he had endeavoured to see them again but he was frustrated by the adversary (vs. 17, 18).

"Hindered" literally means Satan was "breaking up the road and putting up obstacles." Satan has power to distress the people of God. See Dan. 10:13; Job 1:6-12; Acts 5:3; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 5:15; Rev. 2:13; and many other passages.

There was direct interference by Satan to prevent the progress of these saints. As the Devil, his work is "destructive"; as Satan his work is "obstructive." We are not ignorant of his devices.

Paul's heart overflows and in the closing verses we learn how proudly he thought of these saints before the Lord. Paul lived his life in the future tense. He lived this day in the light of that day (v. 19). His future was not dreary or desolate; it was bright with the light of the coming of the Lord. These converts would be his rich reward, as they would also be his highest exultation.

The fact that we shall one day stand at the judgment seat of Christ ought to motivate us to be faithful in spite of difficulties. That day will be one of review, recognition and reward (1 Cor. 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Rom. 14:10-12). May we have cause to rejoice in that day. "Crown" is the "victor's crown" at

the races, not the royal crown of the king. They are a “chaplet of victory of which he may justly make his boast.” He is prouder of them than a king of his crown, or a champion in the games of his wreath. The joy of the Lord’s coming for His saints made Paul courageous as a soldier (v.2), humble as a servant (v.6), tender as a mother (v.7), strong as a father (v.11), and devoted as a lover (v.17). With such a glorious prospect may he abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

The Church Inspired to Make Progress (ch.3)

Paul was deeply concerned about the sufferings endured by these saints. They were a persecuted Church (vs.3,4), were being tested (v.5), remained faithful (v.6a), were affectionate (v.6a), persevering (v.8), encouraging (v.8), remembered in prayer (v.10), growing in love (v.12), united and expectant (vs.13,14). To establish and encourage them, he writes, he sends Timothy (v.2), and prays for them regularly (vs.10-13).

There are four things that bind the saints together.

(1) *The Bond of Association (vs.1,2)*: Paul’s feelings for the saints and his fellowship with a servant of God.

(2) *The Bond of Affliction (vs.3-6)*: This is part of the purpose of God, appointed to privation and persecution (v.3). It is the portion of all saints (v.4), to prove our perseverance (v.6) and produce love for others (v.7).

(3) *The Bond of Affection (vs.7-10)*: Love encourages others (v.7), it enriches life (v.8), it engages in worship (v.9) and is exercised in prayer (v.10).

(4) *The Bond of Anticipation (vs.11-13)*: The coming of the Lord gives a sense of direction (v.11), it strengthens devotion (v.12), and sanctifies our lives (v.13).

Paul’s Concern for the Saints (v.1) An Affectionate Man

The division of chapters at this point is unfortunate. The import of verse one lies in its connection with vs.17-20 of chapter 2.

“Wherefore”—because of his affection for them, and the frustration of his attempts to return to them. Here we have an insight into the character of this man of God. It reveals his human temperament, his local trial and noble triumph over difficulties. There is an interesting correspondence between the Upper Room ministry and this chapter. The Lord being taken away for a “little while” (John 16:19) sent the “Comforter” (John 16:7) to his “orphaned disciples” (John 14:18). Paul being taken away for a “little while” (2:17) sent Timothy to be the “comforter” (3:2) of the “orphaned” church (2:17).

The second Advent of the Lord is the saints’ stimulus. We should allow the ultimate goal to grip our attention and govern our activities that it will

give new vigour to our faltering steps and fresh vitality to our service. Paul's concern is shown in "The sacrifice he makes" (v.1).

"Forbear"—no longer bearing up, his pent up feelings, protracted separation and repeated disappointment was more than he could endure. We see and admire his unselfishness in being willing to remain in solitude for the benefit of these young saints (2 Cor. 12:15).

The Servant He sends (v.2) Timothy was well equipped to establish these saints in the faith. His relationship—a "brother," telling of union with Christ and our relationship as the servants of God. His rank—God's minister—appointed by God and responsible to God. With W.E. Vine's N.T. Studies, meditate on the word "minister," the servant's relationship to his work, to his master, his public duties.

"Establish" in v.1, v.13, is rendered "strengthen thy brethren" in Luke 22:32; to make stable, fix firmly (Rev. 3:2). Souls need confirmation (Acts 14:22); and so do churches (15:41; 16:5). The means used to effect this is ministry of the Word (Acts 15:32; 2 Pet. 1:12).

These saints were new to Christian life and needed establishing and encouraging and Timothy had the necessary qualities (1 Cor. 16:10,11), he was faithful (Phil. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:9). He had a twofold relationship, saintward and Godward. "Moved" (v. 3) means to disturb, to cause disquiet. It is an illustration drawn from the wagging of a dog's tail, allured from faithful following by a tempting bait. This danger threatens converts in every church at home and abroad.

The Stability He Desires (vs. 3,4) "Faith" is mentioned 13 times in this book. Without faith in God we are defeated (1 John 5:4; Heb. 11). We need unwavering faith in God's Word and unceasing fidelity in God's work (1 Cor. 15:58).

"Appointed" (v.3), is a military metaphor for a sentry posted by his officer. Note the same idea in Phil. 1:16; Matt. 5:14. Paul feared a successful assault by the tempter in overthrowing their faith (v.5).

Faith has been described as the creeper that clings to and lives upon Christ, as the ivy adheres to the oak, and lives upon it.

Timothy is sent in order to learn about their faith, proved by their willingness to endure tribulation.

Paul's Cheerful Spirit (vs.6-9) An Appreciative Man

This cheer is described as "glad tidings," the familiar words used of the evangel itself, so the seed sown produced fruit of similar nature. He was cheered by *their healthy faith* (v.6a). Their faith was expressing itself through love (Gal. 5:6). The gospel Timothy brought back comforted Paul in all his necessities and distresses; it brought him new life; it has been an indescribable joy. Faith is the cement that consolidates us, so that we are unmoved by the afflictions that beat upon us (v.3).

Cheered by *their harmonious love* (v.6b). There was a glad report of their love: love to Christ; love for Christ and love for others. These two graces of faith and love are the very soul of the Christian life.

We should remember how expressively, extensively and how expensively our Lord has loved us (John 15:12; Ezek. 16:6,12). As our Kinsman He became one with us, as our Sacrifice He bled and died for us. The cloud of depression lifted when Timothy returned with good news of their love for and interest in this dear servant.

Paul received *heavenly strength* (vs.7,8). He was encouraged and enabled. They stand because Christ lives; Paul lives because they stand. Standing firm is the key to spiritual health. It is the antidote against all error. Study "IFS" of Holy Writ, find the message in these: Luke 9:23; 11:36; 12:26; 13:17; 14:15; 15:7. We need to be steadfast in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13); in the liberty of the gospel (Gal. 5:1); in conflict (Eph. 6:11); in one spirit (Phil. 1:27); in the Lord (Phil. 4:1); in the will of God (Col. 4:12); in the truth (2 Thess. 2:15); and in the grace of God (1 Pet. 5:12 RV).

Paul's Communion with God (vs.10-13) An Ardent Intercession

In these two Epistles 24 verses are occupied with prayer or teaching on prayer. These verses are like the altar of burnt offering; they are foursquare. They contain the notes of thanksgiving, joy, prayer and faith. They tell us that Paul was a man of peace, contentment, praise and prayer and his toil on their behalf is a delightful service.

(1) He prays for divine guidance to be given to the writer (v.11). Incessant prayer—continued day and night. He sought their welfare and requested God for a directed path. Direct is "pilot" the helm of Paul's vessel on a course laid down on a heavenly chart.

Paul senses a unity of action between Father and Son in the response to prayer. Intense prayer—"praying exceedingly." (See Eph. 3:20, beyond measure). Paul always reaching boiling point in his prayers for others. How many of us reach boiling point in our prayers for saint and sinners? How importunate he was—"may see your face." Paul pleaded the more because he was kept waiting (Luke 11:5-8). It was intelligent prayer, for he knew the deficiencies in their lives and they required teaching. True prayer is hard work (Col. 4:12).

(2) He prays for divine grace to be given to his readers (vs.12,13). That they may abound in love towards all men. This love will turn one away from selfish concerns and open the way to that moral perfection which is the condition of holiness. We need an increase in both the quality and quantity of our love; this is the noblest thing we can pray for. The Director of our lives—"Our God and the Lord Jesus." Note the unity of the Godhead here. The Directing is by the Holy Spirit through the scriptures, the Lord never guides contrary to His Word, so live in close touch with the Lord. In seeking the Lord's direction, seek His glory alone.

Note the source of love—"the Lord"; the power of love—"make." It is abundant rain that causes the river to overflow its banks. The progress of love—"to increase." As some plants fail to flourish because of their environment, so we need to live in the sunshine of God's love (Jude 21).

Increase refers to the inner life, and "abound" to the outer life of Christian activity—the overflow of love. The exclusiveness of love—"one toward another"; the inclusiveness of love—"toward all men." An illustration of this love—"even as we do toward you."

We need a fixed heart (Psa. 57:7; 108:1); and an established heart—"stablish you," by His truth and grace (Col. 2:7). How very desirable it is to have our hearts established in holiness. A saint is one who is pure in mind and motive, true in character and conduct and loving in word and deed.

His coming proves a curb to selfishness and a spur to sacrifice (v.13).

Like Enoch, Live to Please God (ch.4)

Here may we learn as Christians (1) how to face life (vs.1-12), and (2) how to face bereavement (vs.13-18). Things lacking in their faith are taken up in this practical section (chapters 4 and 5) (1) Concerning their conduct is dealt with in 4:1-12; (2) Concerning their hope in 4:13-5:11; (3) Concerning their relationship is dealt with in 5:12-22, and a prayer for their sanctification vs.23-28. The believer is expected to walk in holiness (4:1-8); in harmony (vs.9,10); in honesty (vs.11,12); and in hope (vs.13-18).

Pleasing to God (vs.1,2) A godly life

Here we view the church in its walk before God. Paul's prayer for their holiness, (3:13) cannot be effective without their co-operation. Paul's standard of conduct was the law of Christ and he exhorts others to do likewise. Difficulties could be expected among converts from paganism, and the need for practical instruction in such important areas as personal morality and holiness (vs.1-8), love and mutual respect (v.9), social conduct and work (vs.11,12; 2 Thess. 3:10).

The apostle's ultimate concern is that his converts may "please" or satisfy God (4:1; cf. 2:4,14). Because of mutual relationship in Christ, the apostle asks and exhorts them to follow their Lord. The life of Enoch is echoed in this chapter. He walked with God; he pleased God; and was translated that he should not see death (vs.1,17). "Have" tells of obligation and "abound" of opportunity. Study this word "overflow" with its shades of meaning in 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Cor. 7:4; Eph. 3:20; 1 Thess. 3:10. Note the "things of God" in this chapter and the 38 references to this title in the Epistle. The "charges" has a military flavour and refers to orders handed down from superior officers (2 Tim. 2:4). These charges were delivered unto them on the *authority* of the Lord Jesus. This authority comes from the exalted Lord Himself.

Purity of life (vs.3-8) A clean life

Consecration to the living God is both religious and moral in character. Personal sanctification is the will of God for every Christian. Fornication is any sexual intercourse before marriage. Immorality is incompatible with commitment to Jesus Christ—then and now. The Christian faith raised the standard of morals because it introduced new knowledge—the knowledge of God. To be enslaved to the passions of lust, to enter marriage merely for sexual convenience or to commit adultery, is to imitate the heathen and to invite divine judgment (vs.5,6). Sanctification is a moral state in conduct corresponding to the position into which God brings every believer in Christ by the gospel (v.7). This is God's will specifically as it relates to sexual purity, (vs.4-8).

The demand involves the separation of the spirit from all that is impure and polluting, and a renunciation of sins towards which the desires of the flesh and the mind lead us. The "vessel" here means "wife" (1 Pet. 3:17) and is supported by the context which forbids fornication (v.3b) and adultery (v.6a), (with Gen. 1:28; 2:24; 1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4).

Impurity is dishonouring to God (v.5); it defrauds my fellow-believer (v.6); and despises man and God (v.8). What incentives to holy living in these verses (a). Members of the family of God (v.1); (b) Numbered among Christ's followers (v.2); (c) Severed from Gentile habits (v.5); (d) sobered by divine judgment (v.6b); (e) marked by Christian vocation (v.7); (f) indwelt by the Holy Spirit (v.8). The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, to degrade the body is to dishonour God. Holiness is to be the pervading element in which the Christian is to move (v.8; 1 Cor. 6:19).

Progress in love (vs.9,10) A courteous life

God's love is a holy love and the more we live like God, the more we will love one another. What a kindly approach and courteous method Paul uses. One can never have too much love. He calls them brethren, and praises them for loving all Macedonian saints. We should not only abound in abstinence (vs.1-8); we are to abound in love (vs.9,10). The early church was marked by the purity of the lives of its members and love that abounded to all men. Brotherly love is a fruit of regeneration (1 John 3:14; 4:8); a token of true discipleship (John 13:35); it is obedience to Christ's new commandment and enforced by his own example (John 13:34; 15:17; Eph. 5:2); and is essential to the spiritual growth of the church (Eph. 4:16). Paul instructs them to cultivate the family spirit. The word "God-taught," occurs only here in the N.T. God-taught Christians will abound in love. Doctrine leads to devotion to God and deeds of kindness towards His saints.

Piety in conduct (vs.11,12) A consistent life

"Study to be quiet" has been translated, "and to make it your ambition to have no ambition." Ambition is a word often tarnished with mean

associations, but with Paul the word acquires nobility and lustre. Here is a wonderful ambition—studying to be quiet while in quest of a life of holiness. This signifies a whole-hearted energetic pursuit of its object—to mind your own business. Those who meddle with other people's business, commonly neglect their own; and idleness goes hand in hand with officiousness.

Paul had a three-fold ambition: To preach the gospel (Rom. 15:20); to please the Master (2 Cor. 5:9); and to practise the life of holiness (1 Thess. 4:11). There can be no better preparation for the coming of Christ than to be faithful in ordinary duties. Considerateness should move us to honest labour which commands the respect of outsiders and frees the labourer from dependence upon others for support. The idle need to recognize the practical dimensions of Christian love.

Comfort in sorrow (vs.13-18) A cheerful spirit

Relative to the Christian's business, Paul encourages personal integrity (v.11) and public honesty (v.12). Now he deals with the belief of the faint-hearted concerning bereavement. There is no need for distracting sorrow—for the dead in Christ are "fallen asleep." This did not mean that they would be at some disadvantage. The figure of sleep is used because it signifies continuity—repose—and awakening. They will surely rise again. Believers may leave this life—either by death or by translation.

Paul based his encouragement and comfort on five fundamental facts: revelation (vs.13,15a); return (vs.14,15); resurrection (vs.15,16); rapture (v.17); and reunion (vs.17,18). For those who have "fallen asleep" (v.13f), death is no ultimate catastrophe.

With his favourite expression for introducing some new instruction (v.13; Rom. 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8) he calls the attention of the sorrowing saints to the contrast between Christian hope and pagan sorrow. A pagan knows no comfort in death; a Christian knows nothing else. His grave is like an inn at which his body rests on his way to the New Jerusalem. Verse 14: Look at the authority of this declaration. The reason for Christian certainty is the divine action in Christ's death and resurrection. Our Lord's resurrection makes the resurrection of saints not only a possibility, but a necessity. Death cannot sever the believer's union with Christ (Rom. 8:31-39). Because the Lord Jesus endured the full horror implied in His death, He has transformed death for His followers into sleep (John 11:11-13). Sleeping saints will be brought with Him at the coming.

Three miracles will take place when Christ comes for His people.

(a) *Resurrection* sleeping saints, they shall rise first. The Athenian philosophers mocked when Paul preached the doctrine of resurrection. The dead body is the "seed" that is planted in the ground; the resurrection body is the "flower" that comes from that seed (1 Cor. 15:47-57). Morality loses its hold—even over the dust of the departed dead.

(b) *Renewal* (v.17) “for those who are alive.” We shall change this body of our low estate for the likeness of His body of glory (Phil. 3:20). We shall not take precedence of sleeping saints, but rather they of us, “Himself” and not an Angel or Archangel, we are too precious to Him, for anyone else to rapture us into His presence. Three great sounds will be involved all telling of our Lord’s victory. The Lord’s shout, the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the archangel. The Lord’s shout of command will be heard by all His saints, (John 5:28).

(c) *Rapture* for both classes. It means “caught up” “to seize, to carry off” (Acts 8:39; 2 Cor. 12:4). The Lord will claim us for Himself, we are His bride.

One day we shall vanish, leave the old routine and be raptured into a full realization of Christ’s presence. This meeting in the air will show the complete supremacy of the Lord in His victory over evil spirits, (Eph. 2:2).

“*Reunion*” (with them). This is the only reference to our fellow saints who share with us the rapture, compared with many references to our being united with the Lord. What a gathering of the ransomed that will be, a royal, glorious, eternal meeting with our Lord. Sufficient is stated for hope to appreciate and confidence to clasp—“forever with the Lord.” Our consolation is sweeter and stronger because it rests on such a sure basis.

They and we have genuine comfort to offer which is unlike the empty condolences of the heathen in the face of death.

There is a day of reckoning and reward, called the “Judgment Seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:16; 2 Cor. 5:10). May we live “this” day in the light of “that” day and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28).

His Coming Leads to Complete Consecration (ch.5)

Some teach from this passage that the meeting in the air (4:17) is preparatory to the Lord’s return to earth for final judgment. “But” connects with the teaching given in chapter four (vs.13-18). There Paul speaks of the Day of Christ, linked with heaven, here in 5:1-11 it is the Day of the Lord, which always has to do with the earth. In the former he is addressing ignorance (4:13), here he speaks to knowledge (5:1-2). The former concerns departed Christians; this chapter deals with the practical application of the coming in its relation to believers living on the earth.

Its practical message for today is: Be ready (vs.1-5); be separate (vs.6-10); be obedient and united (vs.11-15); be practical (vs.16-24); and be thoughtful (vs.25-28).

Advent Privileges (vs.1-11)

The message of comfort for the bereaved is followed by a warning to the self-confident. In one case he writes of Christ’s presence; in the other of His absence.

(a) *Problems answered* (vs.1-3) Paul allays the anxiety of the faint-hearted that the day might find them unprepared to meet the Lord (vs.1-11). Here Paul proceeds to give attention to the matter of date. The word rendered "perfectly" is accurate and is used in a variety of ways. It means "carefully" in Matt. 2:8; "tracing the course of all things 'carefully'" (Luke 1:3,4); "instructing 'carefully' and accurately" (Acts 18:25); "looking 'carefully' as to how we are to walk" (Eph. 5:15).

"Times" implies duration and "seasons" to the characteristics of a period. Here "times" refer to the length of the interval before the Parousia takes place, while "seasons" denotes the critical nature of events before, during and after the Parousia (Acts 1:7).

That day will come unexpectedly (v.2), and suddenly (v.3). The believer can be restful because he has certain information to rely upon. To the unbeliever the "day of the Lord" is unforeseen—and is described "as a thief in the night." That day is unexpected—"then sudden destruction," and it is unavoidable, "they shall not escape." Trace the word "escape" in Luke 21:36; Acts 16:27; 19:16; Rom. 2:3; 2 Cor. 11:33; Heb. 2:3.

The day of the Lord, will be sunshine for the believer, but one of sorrow for the world—like the shock of a burglary—and the "birth throes" of the age to come will seize upon him (v.3). They fall into a deadly apathy; anything that is not immediately visible to their eyes they consider to be mythical.

(b) *Privileges accepted* (vs.4-8) We must be aware of danger (vs.4,5); and be alert to duty (vs.6,7). The sons of sunshine will welcome that "day"; like tired sentinels greeting the light of the morning (Psa. 130:6). The contrast here is emphasized, "but ye brethren," and marks the complete contrast between the destiny of Christians and that of the unbelieving world. Here we are told what true saints are not, what they must do; namely "watch and be sober." The believer, being "a son of light," is illuminated; and "as a son of the day" he is industrious. We must be awake—no indifference (v.6); be alert—no intemperance (v.8); and be armed—no unpreparedness (v.8b). We are expected to behave in this way, the assurance of salvation is the nerve of all ethical endeavour. The soldiers of salvation are armed to meet the emergencies of that day—defended by faith, hope and love.

(c) *Public appointment* (vs.9-11) The outer surface of our breastplate gleams with faith; its inner lining flows with love; and the helmet of salvation protects the thoughts, for our strength and safeguard is the Advent hope. In contrast to the terrible fate of the lost (vs.3,4,5). God has appointed us to obtain salvation as a treasured personal possession which is invaluable to us (v.9). Our wonderful salvation is planned, provided and bestowed by God. It was won for us at Calvary, through "His blood," and will be fully realized when we "live together with Him."

"Death", as in the case of Lazarus, is not the end God has determined. His

final objective is the display of His glory in resurrection and complete ascendancy and victory at that day.

We wear the garments of light (v.8) and belong to a fellowship of light (v.10).

Advent Precepts (vs.12-22)

On these verses there are 21 precepts, arranged in five groups: (1) Two commands to the ranks (vs. 12,13); (2) Four counsels to the leaders (v.14); (3) Five laws for all (vs.15-18); (4) Five cautions for those who minister the word (vs.19-22) and (5) Paul closes his letter with five desires to all members (vs.23-28).

(a) *Social duties* (vs.11-15) The expectation of our Lord's return is the greatest incentive to devoted loyalty and holy living; and the weightiest argument for unselfish service and diligent labour. Our helpfulness is to be expressed to six classes in the church.

(1) The elder; "know the worth of"—"appreciate the value of" those who are over you; your leaders, who are labouring, and take the lead among you. Accept and recognize them who admonish, teach and warn you. They need your love and support, appreciate them, try to estimate the amount of varied work demanded of them. You should obey them (Heb. 13:17).

(2) Fellow-members (v.13), respect the fellowship and promote peace. Look for the best in everyone—then act for the best of everyone. Where overseers exercise their "authority in the Lord," tactfully, there will be no rivalries and party-making in the Assembly. "Peace" is translated "rest," once only (Acts 9:31). Our work is to fight the foe, not one another.

(3) The Unruly (v.14). Leaders have special responsibilities to reprove the disorderly. There are always some in the church who will not march with others and cannot "keep rank." Paul deals with this problem again (2 Thess. 3:6,11).

(4) The faint-hearted (v.14). Those who lack courage need to be refreshed and their confidence needs renewing. They may be sensitive to criticism, dread persecution (3:3)—apprehensive concerning the future and need encouragement. Revive their failing strength and drooping spirit.

(5) The Weak (v.14c). Those who are weak spiritually need special attention. Do not despise but help the weak. They were spiritually immature rather than morally weak. The ministry of encouragement is greatly needed among us today.

(6) All Saints and Men (v.14d). It may also mean "all kind." It is easy to lose patience with one's fellows and we are to restrain all tendency to impatience and to act forbearingly.

Refrain from every appearance of evil (v.15) and resolve to follow that which is good (v.15; Rom. 12:19-21).

(b) *Spiritual Duties* (vs.16-22) The word of counsel is:

(1) Be joyful—rejoice at all times. Paul states the possibility of unceasing joy, if it be centred in the Lord (Phil. 2:18; 3:1; 4:4). Paul and Silas set the example of singing songs at midnight (Acts 16:25). Joy is not dependent upon circumstances, but enables us to rise above them and rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:9-11). Joy takes the burden out of services (Neh. 8:10).

(2) Be prayerful (v.17). This is an attitude of soul that engages in the exercise of this sacred ministry of intercession. Pray without gaps. Organize your prayer-life, for prayer brings joy and a clearer understanding of God's will. Our prayer-life is the weakest link in our Christian life and witness.

(3) Be thankful (v.18). We need a grateful frame of mind. Paul taught this by example as well as precept. Thanksgiving is also a vital element of worship (Eph. 5:19). Gratitude to God is the fruit of grace and it stands in marked contrast to the heathen (Rom. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:2).

(4) Be careful (v.19) "Quench not the spirit." To neglect the promptings of the Spirit is to quench Him. Beware of spiritual constraint; the Holy Spirit is a fire. Do not pour water on the spiritual flame in another's heart (2 Tim. 1:6,7). Don't be too cruel or critical.

(5) Be helpful (v.20). Do not despise the ministry of truth which is for edification. Avoid spiritual callousness. Inspired preaching should lead to obedience, never disparage preaching.

(6) Be dutiful, and "prove all things" v.21. Test all that claims to be of God, especially the spirits (1 John 4:1). We must avoid spiritual credulity. We need the judicial discernment, in order to discriminate between things true and false, and between the better and the best (Phil. 1:9). Let us hold fast to Christ, (Luke 4:42), to the Word (Luke 8:15), to the hope (Heb. 3:6), and to our confession (Heb. 10:23).

(7) Be watchful (v.22). There is need for alertness if we are to avoid evil in all its disguised forms.

(c) *The servants duty* (v.23) Here is the secret of spiritual progress and the source of spiritual power—"the God of peace." His absolute power, perfect knowledge and intrinsic holiness assure the end of the process of sanctification and spiritual prosperity. Paul wants them to be utterly God-possessed men. His own experience of the faithfulness of God assures him that his prayer will be wonderfully answered (v.24).

Advent Provision (vs.24-28)

The closing words of Paul's letters are interesting and instructive. He exercised His apostolic authority to command (v.27). These words are intended for those who had the rule, the elders.

(1) Attitude to missionary work, "Brethren pray for us" (v.25). He could appeal for prayer-help on the ground that he constantly prayed for the saints (ch.1:2). The subjects of the appeal—"us." He acknowledged his indebtedness to the help of Silas and Timothy. The scope of the appeal—

“Brethren.” They had a common source of spiritual life, and a community of interest in the work of the gospel. The substance of the appeal—“pray.” Sustain us through daily intercession, we need divine help. There is work for us all.

(2) Attitude to the Assembly (v.26). His affection for all is expressed thus, “give all the brethren a kiss from me.” Then each brother, when they met, embraced each other and the sisters did likewise. This verse does not suggest that the brethren embraced the sisters. The greeting was to be sincere—“a kiss of holiness.” “Fellowship in the Lord” is strong and deep (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12).

(3) Attitude to the scriptures (v.27) “Holy” is absent from the best MSS. The word of God is for all the people of God. To neglect the daily reading of the Word of God is carnal and fatal (Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:11-14). The provision in view of the Advent ends with “grace.” This seals the letter.

What resources we have and what responsibilities we share. Divine faithfulness (v.24), definite prayer (v.25), respect for each other (v.26), the daily reading of the scriptures at home, as well as in and to the Assembly (v.27), and grace in abundance (v.28).

“Perhaps today your Lord may come.” Amen.

Studies in First Timothy

This epistle was written after the first Roman imprisonment. Paul was released from his imprisonment in A.D.63, and possibly revisited Philemon (v.22) and his Philippian friends (1:25). He had been recently at Miletus, Troas, Crete, and possibly Corinth. He left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3) and Trophimus at Troas sick (2 Tim. 4:20). His cloak and books he left at Troas with Carpus and in his house may have written first Timothy. Some suggest it was written from Corinth. It was Paul's intention to winter in Nicopolis, but he was rearrested, taken back to Rome, and probably in the spring of A.D.68 was martyred. First Timothy may have been written with Titus in A.D.66; Second Timothy in A.D.67.

Purpose: The main purpose is stated in 3:14,15 R.V. "how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God." A literal translation is, "how it is necessary to behave in the house of God."

Here are clear instructions as to the conduct of members of an assembly, a local church which is "the pillar and ground of the truth."

The pastoral epistles are written to fellow-workers concerning the discharge of their responsibilities of oversight, particularly in the churches of Ephesus and Crete. Their primary interest is in the preservation and propagation of the truth of the gospel, and in the promotion and healthy maintenance of consistent Christian conduct. There was deep concern because of the prevalence and harmful influence of false teaching.

Paul writes to caution because of error, and to confirm and encourage Timothy and every saint of God to continue in the truth. We need a pure gospel, a worthy life and a faithful ministry.

Suggested Analysis

The Salutation (1:1,2); The writer v. 1, the reader v.2a, the greeting v.2b.

A. THE CHURCH OF GOD (1:3-3:13) Extent of Timothy's Mission

1. Its Doctrine to be Preserved (1:3-20)

Concern for the truth (vs.3-5); a corrupt conscience (vs.6,7); a concern for law (vs.8-11); conversion to God (vs.12-17); continue in the faith (vs.18-20).

2. Its Devotions Practised (2:1-15)

(a) *The Practice of Worship in the Church* (vs.1-8): The priority of prayer (v.1); procedure in prayer (vs.1b-2a); purpose in prayer (v.2b); the provision for prayer (vs.3-7); the practice in prayer (v.8)—"men only."

(b) *The Place of Women in the Church* (vs.9-15): The public prayers are to

be led by men, not women (v.8). To live in sobriety, positive and negative features (vs.9,10); To learn in silence. The place of authority belongs to men, not women (vs.11-15).

3. Its Duties Presented (3:1-13)

(a) *Sound Elders* (vs.1-7): Desirability of office (v.1); suitability of character (v.2); capability (vs.3-5); maturity (v.6); and integrity (v.7).

(b) *Suitable Deacons* (vs.8-13): Personally (v.8); spiritually (v.9); fidelity (v.10); be exemplary (vs.11-13).

B. THE MAN OF GOD (3:14-6:19) Exercise of Timothy's Ministry

(a) His Walk in the Assembly (3:14-4:16) Personal Behaviour.

1. *The Value of Truth* (3:14-16). The Mystery of Godliness. Apprehension of divine teaching (vs.14,15a); obligation of reverent behaviour (v.15b); recognition of divine manifestation (v.16).

2. *In View of Apostasy* (4:1-16) The Manifestation of Godliness. The peril of false doctrine (vs.1-5); the profit of sound doctrine (vs.6-12); the power of a good example (vs.13-16).

(b) His Work in the Assembly (5:1-6:19) Official Business.

1. *His Attitude to the Saints* (5:1-6:2); Fellowship with all (vs.1,2); fairness to widows (vs.3-16); faithfulness to elders (vs.17-25); features of slaves (6:1,2).

2. *His Attitude to Substance* (6:3-19): The description of evil teachers (vs.3-5); the deceitfulness of riches (vs.6-10); the dedication of Timothy (vs.11-16); dangers to be avoided (vs.17-19). Contrast, a great store, a good foundation (v. 19).

Conclusion (6:20-21) A further charge (v.20); a final blessing—"grace" (v.21). If we trust in His grace every day, every hour, every minute, we will not fail.

Chapter One: Defending the Faith

A simple analysis of the chapter: Salutation to Timothy (v.12) standing for truth vs.3-11; sterling testimony, the calling of Paul vs.12-17; the charge to Timothy vs.18-20.

Introduction (vs.1,2) In verse one Paul's God-given credentials; in verse two his genuine child in the faith, blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Verse 1: How Paul was called—"by Christ Jesus." He could not stop thinking of his great privilege; he had been called and sent by God to preach Christ (Eph. 3:8). Because Christ had sent him he was a man under authority (Acts 22:10). His apostleship was derived from and relates to Christ Jesus (Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 15:5,8). His office was conferred by "the commandment of God." It had been thrust upon him by the master, he will speak with divine authority. Where he was sent he must go; what he was commanded he must do.

The one who sent him was the only "Saviour" of men, and the Lord Jesus was the only true "hope" that he could offer to men.

"*God our Saviour*" used of the Father six times. (1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). Used of the Lord Jesus four times (Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10).

This title is given to God here rather than to Christ as a kind of counter-active to the false teaching (Eph. 2:4; 5:8; Phil. 1:28; Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:19). In the pastorals the Saviour is both God and Christ.

How Paul is cheered, "Christ Jesus our hope." Not only that He gives us hope, but He is our hope. He is the object of the assured expectation of believers (Acts 28:20; Col. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:10 R.V.).

He is the author, the foundation and the substance of our hope; personally, nationally and internationally. Here Paul is thinking of the relations of the persons of the Godhead to believers.

"*Our*" speaks of the believers acceptance and confession of a personal relation to both.

Verse 2: speaks of relationship and resources. For two reasons the apostle could call Timothy his "true child in the faith." He brought Timothy to birth in Christ and to find life in Him, like the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4:14,15; Gal. 3:28. This may have happened on that first visit to Lystra. Then he could say concerning him, "as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2:22).

Timothy joined Paul as a "brother" in Christ, a full colleague and fellow worker (Col. 1:1).

Timothy's name occurs 17 times in 10 different Pauline epistles, more than any other companion of Paul (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).

"True" in Phil. 4:3, the only other place where it is found in the N.T. and translated "True" in the A.V. and the R.V. Child—a term of tenderness and endearment; son—the idea of maturity and responsibility.

Verse 2b: Resources for Christian life and service. This greeting is characteristically Pauline and distinctively Christian. This invocation of a threefold blessing upon the reader occurs elsewhere only in 2 John 3.

Grace pardons—God's love for the guilty; mercy commiserates—God's love to the wretched; peace consolidates—God's love to the restless.

We need grace for the soul, mercy for the conscience and peace for the heart. By grace we, though sinful, are received by God, pardoned, strengthened, blessed with every blessing. Mercy is the personal pity of God, his willingness to forgive, so richly experienced by Paul in verses 12-14. Peace settles the heart and gives strength for the future. We have everything in Christ (Rom. 8:31,32). The bestowal of these blessings is by both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, a testimony to the Deity of Christ.

Because of these abundant resources we should never be over-awed by the power of the enemy; never over-driven by the pressure of our circumstances;

never over-strained by the problems of the task; and never over-weighted by the perils of the way. The Lord Jesus is the mediator of all the blessings which the Father bestows.

The charge to Timothy:

1. To preserve the purity of the gospel (vs.3-5)

Verse 3: Spiritual Authority. The apostle recalls the commission already given to Timothy for the younger man's encouragement. Timothy is left at Ephesus because of the danger of false teaching (Acts 20:29,30).

"Charge" a military term which literally means to pass commands from one to the other. Because other doctrine was projected, true doctrine must be proclaimed; Paul's doctrine of free salvation by faith (Acts 20:21).

"Some" possibly Judaizing teachers who were constantly seeking to bring Christians back under the law of Moses (vs.3,4,6,7).

Doctrine inconsistent with the nature of the gospel becomes false doctrine. Timothy must confront these people, to check and suppress the strange teaching being propagated.

Verse 4: Sinful Activity "neither give heed," means do not attach oneself to, to adhere to, not merely give attention to

(a) *The content of error* fables with no historical reality. In 4:7, Paul characterizes the teaching as "profane and old wives fables" (Titus 1:4). They gave their own meaning to names and lists of names in the O.T.

(b) *The course of error* An unprofitable business marked by utter futility, endless questions. They had gone astray in the very essentials of the gospel.

(c) *The corruption of error* "no godly edifying." The irrelevance of the spurious doctrine is in direct contrast to the edifying ministry of true Christian teaching. Occupation with error furnishes occasion for arguments and disputes, neither are they practical (Titus 3:9).

Verse 3 is wrong teaching, verse 4 wrong thinking.

"Godly edifying" is divine training in verse 4 the same word as in Eph. 1:10 where it is translated "dispensation." It is God's arrangement of things for His world, His plan and "purpose" that Paul is speaking about here also (Eph. 3:2; 3:9; Col. 1:25; 1 Cor. 9:17, translated stewardship).

Verse 5: The Standard of Purity. This is the aim of the charge, heresy refuted by consistent living. The goal of all exhortations in practical affairs is love. "Pure heart" pure in affection, single in purpose. A life of active love and union, honestly growing in righteousness (2 Tim. 2:22).

"Good conscience" a thankful, grateful realization that there is nothing to spoil our fellowship, either with God or with man.

Conscience is the monitor of self-judgment; the response of man's moral consciousness to the divine revelation concerning himself, his attitudes and his activities (Rom. 2:14,15).

"Faith unfeigned" true and genuine, not mere playacting. The sincere trust and confidence of the heart, unhypocritical.

2. To Present the Purpose of the Law (vs.6-11)

The false teachers have left all three—the pure heart (6:5); the good conscience (4:2); and unfeigned faith (2 Tim. 3:8).

(a) **Deviation from the law** (vs.6,7). There is the failure of false teachers. They wandered away, turned aside and missed the true destination, the final goal—“love.”

Their movements (v.6) like travellers who leave the high road for a path that leads nowhere. Their failure in the moral realm led to their perversion of the gospel. Sin blinds the spiritual perceptions and perverts spiritual judgment (Gal. 1:6,7).

Their motives (v.7a) “desiring to be teachers.” They yearn to be “law-teachers” (v.7) in reality they are nothing but “novelty-teachers.” They aimed at being professional interpreters of the law, but were unfitted for their task.

Their ministry (v.7b). They are both unintelligent and ignorant. They failed to apprehend the real significance of the law in its relation to the gospel. They failed to understand the very subjects on which they lectured with such cocksureness (Titus 3:8). They were insincere and misguided and did not speak from inner conviction.

(b) **Description of the law** (v.8a). It is an excellent thing if one makes lawful use of it. The law is in accord with divine holiness, truth and justice (Rom. 7:12-16; Gal. 3:24) “The law is good” if it is allowed to exercise its salutary ministry of conviction of our true state and our great need.

(c) **Design of the law** (vs.9,10). The purpose of the law is considered both negatively (v.9a) and positively (vs.9,10). The law has little relevance for law-abiding people, but to correct evil-doers (Rom. 7:2).

The righteous man is the Christian, a man who has been declared righteous through faith in Christ.

(d) **Defiance of the law** (vs.9,10). The list of sinners is viewed as falling into two groups: (1) Sinners as arrayed against God (v.9a) (2) Sinners as arrayed against society (vs.9b,10). They are named in three pairs apparently all condemned by the first table of the law. They are marked by disobedience, irreverence and impurity. These represent states of mind; what follows are examples of violations of specific commands, crimes against fellow-man as listed in the Ten Commandments.

These verses are not a theological argument, but a piece of practical moral instruction.

Verse 11: Into this world there came the Christian message. God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do (Rom. 8:3). The word translated doctrine (v.10d), occurs fifteen times in the pastorals and only four times elsewhere. Here and in 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1; it means the body of doctrine, what is taught. The word “sound” does not refer to its correctness or accuracy but rather describes its nature as healthy and wholesome.

Christianity is health-giving, it is the moral antiseptic which alone can cleanse the life. It is in contrast to the diseased teaching of the ignorant law-teachers, who are destitute of the truth (6:5).

Verse 11 is a noble eulogy of the gospel: (a) The gospel of the glory. Good news of God's mercy (Tit. 3:5). His provision (Eph. 2:8) and His power (Rom. 1:16).

(b) The great source—"the blessed God." It is not something which man created or discovered, it is something which God offers and God supplies. It is rich in resources and reliable in supply.

(c) The God appointed minister—"to my trust," God entrusted Paul to bring the good news to others. Paul was the messenger of the glorious news of Jesus Christ.

3. To Praise the Power of the Gospel (vs.12-17)

(a) **Paul rejoicing in his call to the ministry.** (v.12)

Engaged by God, chosen by the Lord. The Lord Jesus laid His hand upon Paul's shoulder and arrested him in the way (Acts 9:3-5; 22:14; 1 Cor. 9:17; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Employed by grace "counted trustworthy." He was not only forgiven but trusted by the Lord with the message. The persecutor of Christ has been made the ambassador of Christ.

Enabling grace "who hath enabled me." Paul directed his gratitude to God. Paul served in the strength of the Lord (Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:1; 4:17; Heb. 11:34) "Faithful," the word is used eleven times in this Epistle (Eph. 3:7,8; 1 Cor. 4:2; 2 Cor. 12:9).

(b) **Paul remembering the mercy shown to him.** (vs.13,14)

Paul knew emancipating grace. "I obtained mercy." He was a profane person who ridiculed Christ. A persecutor, brutal violence inflicting injury. Injurious, a ringleader among the enemies of Christ and he had actually damaged the cause of Christ. His confession of gratitude (v.12), is followed by his confession of guilt (v.13).

Exceeding grace with faith and love. Without God's grace, we also have nothing and are nothing. The grace abounded along with the responsive faith in Christ. Faith and love replaced unbelief and hatred in Paul's life. We need a growing faith and God wants us to live in love, to increase and abound in love.

(c) **Paul recalls the expression of grace.** (vs.15,16)

The message of the gospel—"the saying is sure." The first of five occurrences only found in these Epistles (3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8).

It is trustworthy and claiming implicit credit. "Acceptation" carries the idea of approval and welcome; without reservations and without hesitation. Worthy of universal acceptation. This message is authentic, acceptable to all and adaptable to meet the needs of all people. The mercy of Christ—"came

into the world.” Jesus came to save us and give us new life. He was born to be our Saviour (Matt. 1:21). His advent was mysterious as well as merciful.

The “coming into the world,” includes incarnation, suffering death, for our salvation (Tit. 2:11-14) Jesus coined the phrase and John preserved and translated it (John 3:19; 12:46; 16:28; 18:37).

This mission of Christ—“to save sinners,” “In the original the word ‘sinners’ immediately follows the word ‘world,’ meaning, came into the world sinners to save.” (Wm. Hendriksen)

Salvation is our greatest need. He died and rose again to accomplish our salvation. The nature of the sinners Christ came to save is shown in verses 9 and 10. He accepts us as He accepted Peter (Luke 5:8). The coming of the Saviour was after all, fully justified and gloriously motivated.

(d) The reproduction of delightful graces. (v. 16)

Paul could say, “Not to us, O Lord, but to thy name give glory” (Psa. 115:1). In this biographical passage Paul merges promise with his evangelical proclamation (vs.15,16). The career and conversion of Paul afforded the Lord Jesus the occasion for an exemplification of “all longsuffering.” His conversion had world significance. It was a witness to the power, the grace and love of the Lord.

“Pattern” an outline sketch, a model of the type of work sovereign grace was going to perform in the lives of all those who through its efficacy would come to rest their faith on Christ (Matt. 7:24,25).

(e) Revelling in adoring praise. (v.17)

“The King eternal”. This title pictures God as the sovereign controller and dispenser of all the succeeding ages and all in them. Paul had a deep sense of the majesty of God. “King of the ages.” (J.N.D.) The designer who determines the course of events through all the years. He frames the laws of the universe, fashions the ages, forms the stage for human activities and furnishes the actors in a universal drama.

“The immortal one.” Incorruptible, imperishable. It speaks of His unchanging nature in contrast to the beings of earth. “The invisible one” sets Him in contrast to the visible creation. “The incomparable one,” the “only God;” there is none like Him, He is alone, God our God is worthy of veneration, reverence, deference, because He is unique.

The only God, Lord over all, has stooped to lift me from my selfishness and sin and self-will. He has made me His child, His ambassador, His fellow-worker. Give Him the glory (2 Cor. 5:20; 6:1).

4. To pursue the pathway of faith. (vs.18-20)

“This charge” recalls verses 3 and 5, and the theme is continued. Paul now has strong words to say to Timothy, to make sure that he does not turn aside from the safe paths of Christ’s service. “Commit” means “to deposit, to intrust,” as with a treasure that must be guarded. There are three important things to which Timothy must give attention.

(a) *Remember your calling.* (v. 18) Paul takes Timothy's thoughts back to the early days of his Christian life (Acts 14:19).

"Timothy, live up to your name," which means "Honour to God" or honouring God. The "prophecies" marked him out for his office and for special duty.

Prophetic utterances were among the gifts ministered by the Holy Spirit in the churches in apostolic times until the scriptures were completed. This supernatural gift ceased, as indicated in 1 Cor. 13:16.

The memory of these prophecies from the Lord are to inspire and strengthen Timothy in the performance of his service.

(b) *Realize your warfare* "the good warfare" (v. 18b; Eph. 6:10-20). Life is one long campaign. Life is a service from which there is no release. Our warfare is against the mighty forces of evil, and we need God's armour and strength and be ready to fight and stand our ground (6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). The word rendered "good" is *kalos*, that which is intrinsically good, admirable. In verse 19 the word "good" is *agathos*, that which is beneficial in its effect, useful in its action. Trace the word "good" in the Pastorals, a beneficial study.

We need to retain faith for it leads to abstinence from sin which produces a good conscience. Religious error has its roots in moral rather than intellectual causes.

(c) *The risk of Shipwreck* (vs. 19, 20) The apostle changes now from the picture of battle to that of a ship at sea. He likens "faith and a good conscience" to the stars that sailors use for navigation. Paul gives a stern rebuke to two members who have injured the church, grieved himself, and made shipwreck of their own lives. He has three complaints against these men.

1. They had rejected the guidance of conscience (v. 19b). They had made their will, not God's will, the dictator of their lives. "Thrust from them," implies wilful violence against conscience (Acts 7:27, 39; Rom. 11:1, 2).

Paul stresses here the value of these moral and spiritual elements, necessary to steer our lives by and avoid shipwreck.

Both "having thrust" and "made shipwreck" are in the aorist tense, pointing to definite acts.

2. They released into evil practices. They played fast and loose with the scriptures, abandoned God, and their lives became soiled and debased. Paul gave examples and warnings of this (Phil. 3:18, 19).

Like casting away the compass it means wrecking the vessel "The faith," the body or sum of Christian doctrine. The faith is the basis of faith. Indulgence in evil is in itself a denial of the truth.

3. They resorted to blasphemy (v. 20) They were actually blaspheming the truths of God in order to establish their fables (v. 4). These two men were the ring-leaders of those who made shipwreck (vs. 3, 6, 7). Hymenaeus was

probably the same as in 2 Tim. 2:17. What they suffered—"delivered to Satan." This was a very real tragedy (see 1 Cor. 5:5). Both acts involved excommunication from the church. Here it is doctrinal error, there it is moral evil.

Paul stresses here his apostolic authority exercised in discipline. Satan's activities are ever under God's permissive will in disciplining His saints.

"Taught" here means to chasten, correct, discipline, chastise whether by man (Luke 23:16,22; Heb. 12:7,10) or by the Lord (1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). The discipline was not merely punitive but remedial in its intention to be led to repentance, it was always meant to cure, "that they learn not to blaspheme."

Let us cultivate a tender conscience, a sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit, a virile faith and a willing obedience to the Word of God.

"Seven Features of the Lord's Servant"

1. **His Experience of Mercy** (v.13) Here we must all begin in our Christian life and service. Mercy needed (v.13) because of his character and cruelty. Mercy obtained (v.16) from God. In spite of our sin yet He offers His salvation to us (Eph. 2:4,5).

Mercy enjoyed (v.13b) "was shown me." This thrilled his soul. Mercy appreciated (v.12) "I thank God," he thinks of his own life, changed and transformed by the power of the risen Lord.

2. **His Engagement by God** (vs.1,11,12) He was called by the Lord Jesus and made a messenger of the gospel (v.1a; Eph. 3:8).

He was controlled by divine authority and responded by willing obedience (Acts 9:15) He was counted faithful (v.11b); trustworthy. God accepted him, not for what he was, but for what he might become.

3. **His exemplary life** (vs.5,16) Love emanating from the heart is a vital factor in our service to the Lord (John 21:15). Love regulated by a good conscience, energized by the Spirit and expressed in forbearance (v.16).

4. **His excellent message** (vs.11-15) "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

(a) Its character. It manifests the glory of God (v.11). It magnifies the grace of God (v.14). It mentions God as Saviour (v.1), the fount of salvation.

(b) Its content, the person of Christ—Christ Jesus, the work of Christ—to save sinners.

(1) *His personal worth*—"Christ Jesus." His pre-existence in glory (Phil. 2:5); His incarnation—"came into the world." His suffering and death inferred.

Before He came, living in heaven (John 3:13). Leaving the glory (John 16:28); Living the life (Acts 10:38); loving sinners (Luke 19:10); laying down His life (John 10:17); and living forever (Rev. 1:18).

(2) *His perfect work*—"sinners to save." His work is adequate (Acts 4:12);

it is acceptable—"worthy of all." authoritative—"faithful, true"; abundant grace (v.14); appropriated—I obtained mercy (v.13).

5. His enemies in warfare (vs.3,4; 6-8; 19,20). We need to be men of conviction, with a clear grasp of the truths of the gospel. Facing evil doctrine (v.3b); endless genealogies (v.4); empty legalism (v.7); and evil men (vs.19,20).

6. His encouraging support (vs.1-2). Like Paul we have abundant resources (vs.2,14); He was aware of commitment (vs.11,12); assured of his message (vs.11,15). Appreciative of his child in the faith (v.2).

7. His expression of praise (v.17). He sang of the sovereignty, supremacy and the sufficiency of his God (2 Cor. 12:9,10).

Duty and Deportment in the Church (ch.2)

This chapter has two main sections: (a) the privilege of prayer, its subjects, scope and sequel (vs.1-7); (b) the practice of godliness in our gatherings: moral deportment and true adornment (vs.8-15).

The place of prayer in the church (vs.1-8) Verse 4 is the key to this chapter for it is God's will that men should be saved and instructed in the truth. Assembly order has to be safeguarded in the matter of prayer (vs.1-7) and the manner of women (vs.8-15).

Paul had given general admonitions in chapter one, now in the remaining chapters he gives in detail. A fundamental fact of Christianity, conduct and belief are linked.

Modes of prayer (v.1) Four different words for prayer are grouped together, each of them showing us the way of prayer. *Supplications* gives prominence to a sense of need. Prayer begins with a sense of need, of our inadequacy to deal with life ourselves.

In the N.T. it is always used of an address to God. This is prayer of particular import, definite requests in difficult situations in which God alone can furnish the help that is needed (Acts 12:5; 2 Cor. 12:8).

Prayer is a general term and broadly covers all aspects of approach to God. It is used only of prayer to God, suggesting reverence in manner and content. There are certain needs that only God can satisfy, and which can only be brought to Him.

Intercessions is prayer of wider import, the usual word for petition to a superior. It means approaching God on behalf of someone else. It tells us the way to God stands open to us, we can talk intimately with God. "Thou art coming to a King large petitions with you bring."

Thanksgiving is prayer of grateful import: Prayer also means thanking God for things. Joyous thanksgiving is praise and it should accompany all prayer (Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2). We should not be asking God for things all the time, but praising Him for who He is and what He has given us (Psa. 100:4).

Matters for prayer (v.2) General—"all men." Prayer should be offered for all people; friends and enemies, rich and poor, because the gospel is for all. No one is beyond the reach of prayer. Special—"for kings and all that are in dignity." This passage definitely and distinctly commands prayer for kings and emperors and for all those set in authority. The monarch of Paul's day was the wicked Nero, yet the saints were to pray for him (1 Pet. 2:17). The Church brought even her persecutors before the throne of grace (Acts 4:29). Local and national—"all in authority." Such is the suggested scope for assembly prayer. We need to pray for the government and its members, they have grave responsibilities, making decisions that affect the lives of many. Prayer should be national and patriotic.

Motives for prayer (vs.2b-4) Here are spiritual motives to exercise the assembly prayer life. (a) That leaders be led aright—"a life that is tranquil," free from anything that would disturb the peace of the realm. (b) That we may live aright. This may refer to our assembly conduct. This is the true motive. Pass one's life in restfulness unmarred by disturbance. Our great ambition should be to live "godly and respectful" in every way. We can never treat lightly the things of God, or the standards of God. (c) The ultimate purpose is the salvation of souls. The Godward attitude—"well pleasing," the manward attitude characterized by gravity and honesty. Trace "godliness" in the pastoral epistles. This mode of life is acceptable to God, in accord with His will (v.4).

"God our Saviour" relates prayer for all men to the saving character of God. No one is beyond the reach of prayer because no one is beyond the reach of God's love (John 3:16; 14:6; 17:3).

We should desire that all who are saved come to a full acquaintance with the truth (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:10; Matt. 28:19,20).

Means of grace (vs.5-7) Prayer is not only in accord with the saving purpose of God, but the way of approach to God is through Him who is both Redeemer and Mediator. "One God." The unity of God is asserted to show that there is only one God of all men (Rom. 3:30; 10:12; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6).

The unity of the mediator is asserted to show that there can be no other way to God, but also that this is a way for all.

The method of the gospel (vs.5,6) "There is none other name." (Acts 4:12). God's Son became man, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Son of Man. So He is the "Mediator" between us and God. A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are at variance in order to reconcile them.

This mediator (v.5), must have in his life features that identify him with both God and man. Christ Jesus is such a Mediator.

The word "man" is not *aner*, a male individual; but the racial term *anthropos*. The Lord Jesus is viewed here as the representative of all men, for in Him all men are summed up. "It is not *the* man nor *a* man, but *man*, humanity exalted to true manhood by the union with God in the person of Christ Jesus." (Harvey)

Verses 5,6 give three key doctrines of the Christian faith; the unity of the Godhead; the Mediatorship of Christ, the atoning sacrifice of the cross.

Verse 6 is a precise declaration regarding the atonement. There is no other way, it is the perfect way, for people of every nation (Heb. 10:19; John 14:6). A ransom for all; this forms the basic act of His mediation (Gal. 1:4; Titus 2:14). The word "ransom" occurs only here in the N.T. The statement attests the substitutionary nature of the death of Christ both by the noun and the preposition. The noun "ransom" is a compound form made up of the substitutionary preposition *anti*, "instead of," and the word *lutron* meaning a ransom price (Matt. 26:28; Mark 10:45) that of substitution.

The ministry of the gospel (vs.6,7) Christianity involves preaching and teaching and no assembly can prosper without it. Paul claims for himself four offices: (1) a herald of the story of the Saviour, a divine appointment (1:12). He bore testimony to the sufficiency of the work of Christ, available for all men, its universality. The herald makes a public announcement as ordered by another, he proclaims the truth. (2) An apostle, tells of his mission, the authority of the worker. Preacher, or herald is indicative of the nature of his work. (3) A witness—"I speak the truth." He tells not only the story of Christ, but also what Christ has done for him.

In contrast to the false teachers his message was marked by verity and purity. He explains the truths of the gospel, what they meant to the believing soul.

The manner of prayer (v.8) "I desire" has in it a note of authority. It is a positive apostolic direction: "The men" the definite article is used to indicate men in contrast to women. It is the duty of men, in the normal way to give leadership in the work of the church, and especially in its ministry. In verse 8 the apostle says that it is the men who should lead the prayers of the saints when they meet together. In verse 11 the women are to learn in silence. Prerequisites: (1) a reverent posture—"lifting up hold hands." Not the posture of the body but upon the conduct and life. A righteous life possessing the qualities both of grace and truth, clean hands (Psa. 24:3-5; 26:6). (2) A pure heart—"without anger or quarrelling," without resentment. A man cannot lead others in prayer if he is full of anger towards them, or if he has just been quarrelling with them (Matt. 5:23,24; 6:15; 18:35). (3) There must be faith, "without doubting or disputing." The inner disposition of ill-will and resentment finds expression in controversy and contention (Phil. 2:14). The conditions of effectual praying are, purity (selfward), peace (manward) and faith (Godward) (Psa. 66:18).

(ch.2:9-15)

The women are to be modest in dress and moral deportment (vs.9,10). Not to be a public teacher but a submissive learner (vs.11,12). Not to usurp

authority in the church (v.12). God intends man to have the place of leadership and this is shown clearly in the order of creation (v.13), and the story of the fall (vs.14,15).

(a) **To live in sobriety** (vs.9,10) Their adornment (v.9). The point of likeness is for men to lead in prayer with moral suitability; for women to attend in quiet dress and quiet behaviour. The Apostle is not giving directions as to the oral prayers of women in the churches (1 Cor. 14:34).

He is saying that a women's true beauty is not in her dress but in her character. Their proper glory is to be found, not in active leadership in public worship, but in the beauty of her personality, and unique God-given qualities.

"Apparel" may have a wider meaning than simply dress and may denote deportment exhibited externally whether in look, manner or dress. They were not to copy Greek society, whose life consisted in elaborate dressing and braiding of the hair (1 Pet. 3:3; Rom. 12:2).

Their deportment (v.10). They should dress modestly and be marked by spiritual dignity. They may find their best and richest adornment in that beauty of character achieved through "good works." God is to be revered and they should apprehend they are in the holy presence of God.

Beautiful works are beneficial to others and are glorifying to God (Matt. 5:16). A life of selfless devotion to others may well enhance the appearance.

(b) **To learn in silence** (v. 11-15). The reference is still to the public assembly. Here is the woman's position in the worship service. The believer of whichever sex, should always be a learner (Matt. 11:28, 29; Luke 10:39,42).

Paul issues a command concerning the woman (v.11), sets forth a restriction on her activity (v.12) and gives two reasons for the restriction (vs.13-15).

The word "silence" denotes quietness. The woman's share is to learn or at least to "listen quietly" (1 Cor. 14:34,35). Paul gives clear instruction with respect to the relation of women to gathering and imparting knowledge. Let not a woman yearn to exercise authority over a man by lecturing him in public worship. A woman should not enter a sphere of activity for which by her creation she was not suited. "To teach" denotes not a single act but a process and means that Paul does not permit a woman to assume the office of a public teacher in the assembly (v.12). "Man" is "aner," the male sex in distinction from the woman.

The position of teacher or preacher in the assembly implies authority over those taught. The woman who steps into the place of the man is violating the very word she should try to teach to both women and men. This restriction is based not on temporary circumstances but on two facts that have meaning for all time. (a) Man's priority in creation (v.13; 1 Cor. 11:3,9) (b) The woman's frailty in transgression (v.14). The woman left her God-given place

in an exercise of unwarranted leadership; she fell into sin and led Adam into it (v.14).

The woman is viewed here as the typical representative of the race. Her true natural distinction as a wife and mother is her function in child-bearing. She can be preserved from the snares and allurements of the world by continuance in personal faith and love and the resultant sanctification of life.

It stands in opposition to the sphere of public teaching which was closed to her. The salvation referred to in v.15 is not that of the soul but rather of her life and service for God.

It is the responsibility and privilege of the woman to build the home. She does not have her greatest influence when she tries to dominate, when she competes with man, but in the quiet, steady influence of her God-given position as wife and mother in the home and a fellow-helper in the church.

“Prayer” in Chapter Two

P—Provision for Prayer “Who will have all men to be saved” (v.4).

R—Reality in Prayer “lifting up holy hands” (v.8).

A—Approach in Prayer “through Christ Jesus” (v.5).

Y—Yearning in Prayer “the salvation of men” (v.4).

E—Encouragement in Prayer “acceptable in the sight of God” (v.3).

R—Range of Prayer “for kings, for all men” (vs.1,2).

Qualifications for Leadership (ch.3)

The Bible reveals that it is the plan of God that in every group of believers some should be responsible leaders. Such leaders in the New Testament are called apostles, bishops and deacons. A local Church is under the pastoral care of a number of elders, or bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1), and their necessary qualifications are given here. Even though the church is an organism, it must be organized to give better leadership to the ministry of the church. Paul gave 16 qualifications for a man to meet to be an elder (vs.1-7); and eight things that should mark a deacon (vs.8-13); then three pictures of what a local church is (vs.14-16).

(a) The Qualifications of Bishops (vs.1-7)

The chief emphasis lies upon his moral and spiritual qualifications and one aspect of his work, a spiritual aptitude for imparting knowledge—“apt to teach” (v.2).

The dignity of the work (v.1) “Faithful or true” is linked with the dignity of the elders’ office. Paul believed in the leadership of character, for oversight in the church is a matter of solemn responsibility. To aspire to overseership, “to reach, stretch out,” stresses the character of the service and devotion to

the work (1 Pet. 5:1-3). "Bishops" and "elders" are descriptions of the same person but with a difference in connotation. "Bishop" points to the function of the officer and the character of the work. "Elder" man of mature spiritual experience and understanding. Paul credits the aspirant with the noblest ideals—"a good work." "Good" expresses the excellence, "work" the difficulty involved. He must bring to that task demonstrable qualities of moral leadership.

Consistency (vs.2,3). He "must be without reproach." He must give no cause for blame, not justly open to censure or criticism. There must be nothing in his life that Satan or the unsaved can take hold of to criticize. Not only of good report but deservedly so. A one-wife man, not an adulterer, divorced or polygamous. His home life is very important, and especially his marital status. He must show an example of strict morality. The next three relate to personal qualifications. "Temperate" literally means "unmixed with wine." In a wider sense, a man sober and fully rational, in possession of the full use of his faculties. This was a weakness of some members of the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 11:21). "Vigilant," watchful, careful, alert to danger. Sensible judgment in all things. "Orderly," a well ordered man organized in his thinking and living. The word is translated "modest" in 1 Tim. 2:9, referring to women's clothing. "Given to hospitality," means "loving strangers" (Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9). Ready to entertain strangers. This was most important to entertain Christian travellers as well as those who might be in flight because of persecution. This is a quality on which the New Testament lays much stress. Overseers should set an example for others to follow. Without this willing hospitality the expansion of the early church would have been seriously retarded (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 3 John 5-8). The seventh quality "apt to teach" describes mental achievement, the ability to pass on counsel and doctrine to enquirers. He should be a careful student of the Word of God. This implies the qualification of having himself been taught. This is the only indication of the work of an elder. The teaching ministry of the church has not been exercised as it should be. The most effective teaching is not done by *speaking* but by *being*; to show men Christ. A saint has been defined as someone "in whom Christ lives again."

Verse 3 mentions qualities that are negative. Note the four "NOTS," "Not given to wine"; a person who sits long with the cup and thus drinks to excess. "No striker," not a brawler. He must not be quick-tempered and ready for physical violence. "Not a lover of money"; it is possible to use the ministry as an easy way to make money. He must be free from avarice, a man of integrity (1 Pet. 5:2). "Gentle" a fair, forbearing, moderate man, always patient. Mild and considerate of the feelings of others. "Not a brawler." Not quarrelsome in nature, avoiding strife, not doing things in a harsh, contentious spirit. "Not covetous," the desire for money must not be a ruling motive in his life, "not money-mad," not mercenary.

Power can easily corrupt and an elder must be strong enough not to use the authority his position gives.

In his domestic relations, a *man of authority* (vs.4,5). One who controls his own family well, having his family well-disciplined. If a man's own children cannot obey and respect him, then the members of the Assembly are not likely to respect and obey his leadership. Happy the man who combines authority with benevolence (Titus 1:6). The elder cannot be one thing at home and something else in the church. "Take care of" (v.5) a loving interest in the welfare of the members of an assembly (Luke 10:34,35).

Maturity (v.6) Not a new convert whether old or young. The word novice means "to spring up" and is used of newly-planted palm trees. A new convert can become "blind with pride or conceit." He becomes wrapped in smoke through his exaggerated sense of self-importance and would fall into "the condemnation of the devil." This can be interpreted in two ways. (1) the condemnation effected by the devil; (2) More probable the condemnation which the devil himself incurred because of his blinding pride (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:17; John 8:44).

With the community (v.7) Does he have a good reputation among unsaved people in the midst of which he lives? (Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12). There should be nothing blameworthy in his character, outside opinion should not be unfavourable to him. How important is a good reputation.

(b) Requirements for a Deacon (vs.8-13)

The work of the elder is spiritual, that of the deacon "material" and "practical." The trouble today is that some elders are only doing mundane work and not caring for the flock, dictators rather than as loving shepherds (1 Pet. 5:3). "Deacon" means "servant," in any capacity, a servant in relationship to his work. The first deacons were appointed to be assistants to the apostles (Acts 6:3,4).

Similar requisites were necessary in respect of character and conduct to those regarding an elder (vs.8,9).

Personal qualifications (vs.8,9). "Grave," worthy of respect, a man of Christian character worth imitating. It combines the thoughts of gravity and dignity, self-respect in conduct.

Three negative qualifications. "Not double-tongued." He does not say one thing to one person, and something entirely opposite to another. You can depend on what he says. "They were to be straight." "Not addicted to wine." the word "given" is used five times in these Epistles. "The use of strong drink is entirely incompatible with a fully developed Christian character." (Lipscombe); e.g. Noah, Lot, (Gen. 9:18-27; 19:30-38).

"Not eager for base gain." Deacons handle offerings and may be tempted to use funds in selfish ways. Men with insatiable appetites for base gain are exposed to this temptation. The acquisition of gain may become his prime object, rather than the glory of God (John 12:6; Acts 8:18-24).

Doctrinally sound (v.9) He must possess a vital spiritual life, know the content of the Christian gospel, "The Faith." Commend the truths of the Gospel by conscientiously exemplifying them in his own conduct. The mystery of the faith and other doctrines are made known only to those who believe. A deacon who does not know the Word of God and live by it, cannot manage the affairs of a local church.

Tested and proved (v.10) Is this done today? "Also" indicates that elders and deacons must be tested before being placed in office. Tested like metals to show their genuineness, then approved for the office (Matt. 25:21; Phil. 1:10). Their character and conduct must be "blameless" in the judgment of the Assembly (1 Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22).

"Women in like manner" (v.11) suggests the introduction of a separate class, each group alike must meet certain qualifications; they correspond to some of the personal qualifications required of deacons. Some think the word refers to deaconesses like Phoebe in Rom. 16:1.

These women as a group by themselves are here viewed as rendering special service in the church, as do the elders and the deacons. "One and the same verb coordinates the three; the overseer, deacons, women, they are not the wives of the deacons." (K.S. Wuest, Wm. Hendriksen). Such women workers should be warned against slanderous gossip and should be absolutely reliable.

The reward of faithful service (v.13) They acquire for themselves "a good standing." Paul is not speaking of advancement of the deacon to the overseership, nor of future reward in glory. It is the community standing and recognition of their having rendered good service.

(c) **The Character of the Church (vs.14-16)**

Paul gives Timothy guidance in practical matters, his behaviour in the local church. "Behave," describes a man's walk and conversation. His whole life and character; but it specially describes him in his relationships with other people, a true fellowship. Paul gives three pictures of a local church.

The house of God (v.15b; Gen. 28:17) God's church is a family, a "household," not a material building, but a spiritual assembly of called out people. They are called by the sovereign grace of God unto salvation. Used about 100 times in the New Testament to refer to local churches, assemblies of believers in whom God is working. "The living God" in contrast to the dead idols in pagan temples. God is the author and source of all life. He constantly cares for and guides all in connection with His church.

The pillar of truth (v.15c) The greatest glory of Ephesus was the Temple of Diana (Acts 19:28). In it were one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, every one of them the gift of a king. The idea of the word *pillar* here is not so much support as *display*. The church's duty is to hold up the truth in such a way that all men can see it. We are to display and demonstrate the truth (Gen. 28:18-22).

The buttress of the truth (v.15d). As the foundation supports the entire super-structure, so the church supports the truth. The church holds up the truth for all to see. The church protects the truth and makes sure it does not fall (Isa. 59:14). We cannot compromise the truth, nor turn away from it (ch.4:1). The church is the custodian of spiritual truth and that truth is Christ (v.16).

The substance of Christian truth (v.16). This is the heart and core of the Epistle. The six lines and the form of the words, give the impression of the rhythm of a hymn of worship concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. By common consent there can be no difference of opinion or argument here.

His incarnation "Manifest" covers the birth and whole life of our Lord. His supernatural birth implies an unveiling of a previous existence (John 1:1,2; 14). God who is a Spirit, becomes visible in a human body (John 14:7,9).

His vindication "justified in the Spirit." He was vindicated by His Father at His baptism and at His Transformation (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). His resurrection by the Holy Spirit finally vindicated our Lord's claim to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). The Holy Trinity were involved in that tremendous event (Rom. 6:4; John 10:17; Rom. 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18).

His self-exhibition "seen of angels." He showed Himself alive to angels (Acts 1:10). As the head of all principality and power, the angelic beings and celestial hosts in heaven (Col. 2:10). He is worshipped by them in heaven (Rev. 5:11,12). Some translate "angels" as "messengers" and apply it to His post-resurrection appearances (John 20:21).

The proclamation "preached among the nations." The commissions the Lord gave to His church to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47,48; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:14,15).

Acceptation "believed on in the world." The Saviour of all nations (Acts 4:12; 32; 8:12; 10:42; 16:30,31). Here is the whole wonder of the divine expansion of the church.

His ascension—"taken up into glory." This is the glorious climax to His redemptive work on the cross (Acts 1:2,22). "In" glory, with the pomp and majesty of a victorious general, or King. What a coronation. The cloud may suggest the Shekinah glory.

Opposition to, and manifestation of the Truth (ch.4)

Paul knew that Timothy, as a young minister would experience many difficulties. He warns him of the dangers he faced (vs.1-5); encourages him to live a disciplined life (vs.6-11); disciplined in mind (v.6), and in body (v.8) and exhorts him to diligence in fulfilling his duties (vs.12-16). We need to heed these words of caution (vs.1-5); of counsel (vs.6-11); and of challenge (vs.12-16) in these days of apostasy.

(a) Facing pernicious error (vs.1-5)

Into the Church at Ephesus false teachers had come with seductions of Satan and of his demon host (v.1). The truth announced in 3:16 is now attacked by apostates (4:1-5). The truth must be apprehended and appreciated by every servant (vs.6-11), and applied daily by constant watchfulness to yourself and your teaching (vs.12-14).

1) *The prediction of apostasy* (v.1a) Timothy is informed that along with believing reception of truth, there will also come departure from the faith on the part of some. The Spirit clearly and explicitly is the author of this prediction. Our Lord warned of this, and the Spirit also spoke through apostles (Matt. 24:9-14; Acts 20:29,30). This warning applies to the times in which we live. An apostate is not a Christian, but one who forsakes the truth of the Christian faith; Peter became a backslider, Judas was an apostate.

Energized by Satan. Apostates give not only attention to, but give assent to "seducing spirits" and fall under their power. The result is "doctrines of demons," errors originated by demons, not teaching about demons. Elements in their character (v.2). These teachers, teaching in hypocrisy, are mere insincere pretenders. The hypocrite does not care about the truth of God, only about himself. He is deceived by error, and does not know the difference between truth and error (John 8:47). An apostate is not just wrong doctrinally; he is wrong morally. Their conscience is seared, or "cauterized," they are past feeling (Eph. 4:19). "Their consciences are branded as with a hot iron to show their true owner to be Satan" (Lock).

2) *Rejection of Truth* (v.3) The Apostle rebukes two mistaken lines of teaching—the forbidding of marriage, and the forbidding of meat. False asceticism refuses God's good gifts of marriage and certain kinds of food (Col. 2:8-23). They taught that an unmarried life was more spiritual than a married life (Gen. 2:18; Matt. 19:1-9). Approved by God and affirmed by the Lord, Paul refutes their teaching on both points as contrary to the creative purpose of God (v.3b).

Thanksgiving must never be absent from the believers' attitude either to material or spiritual realities.

3) *Recognition of goodness* (vs.4-5) God means us to participate, and share in these things which He has created (Gen. 1:31). What matters is that we put God's good gifts to a good use (Rom. 14:14; Titus 1:15). Verses 4 and 5 give three practical tests. The scriptures justify our use of these things by direct sanction. The tests are: (1) Does God's Word allow us to use His gifts? (2) Can we sincerely thank God for them? (3) Can we pray to God as we use them?

(b) Fresh personal exercise (vs.6-11)

God's people need to be warned about false doctrine and religious apostasy. We must teach positive doctrine so that saints will know what they

believe, and expose false doctrine so that saints will not be seduced and led astray (v.6).

We must feed daily on the Word (Matt. 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:2). Study and meditation on the Word will enable us to grow and teach the truth. The minister has a public responsibility—"put them in remembrance," and a personal responsibility, "nourished in the truth" (v.6).

1) *Spiritual exercise* (vs.7-8a) Paul gives us three qualifications as he tells us how to be a "good minister." To be fit for any job we need—food, exercise and work to do. (a) Spiritual food will keep us strong—"nourished." Keep on following God's Word, "let it nourish you daily" (v.6; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15) (b) Spiritual exercise. This is exercise in godliness. Keep your soul fit in order to become a godly person, be Christ-like. Bodily exercise is a good thing; we should want our bodies to be the best that they can be for God (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). This calls for a discipline of life (v.7b). The refusal of myths (v.7a). They are futile, senseless, only fit for senile, childish people to chatter about. (c) Spiritual Work. "Train yourself for godly living." A personal matter—"thyself." The present tense means to "keep on exercising" himself thus, as he is now doing. It is a profitable matter—"unto godliness." As the Greek athlete disciplines his body with strenuous exercise so Timothy is to discipline himself in godliness. Training in godliness and in goodness develops the whole man in body, mind and spirit and its results affect not only time, but eternity as well. Spiritual work means toil in spreading the gospel (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Thess. 1:8).

2) *Spiritual enjoyment* (v.8b) The great purpose of life is the shaping of character by truth. Our work is done with an eye on "the present life" and also the "life to come." Only the life which is in Christ Jesus is life indeed (2 Tim. 1:1).

3) *Spiritual encouragement* (vs.9,10) Spiritual exercise is not easy—"we labour." The word strive is "agonize." It is the picture of an athlete straining and giving his best to win. The encouragement is—"our hope set on the living God." Our hope as resting on God as the only true foundation of hope. The believer trusts daily in the living God who is the Saviour of all men. It is only those who believe who enjoy this salvation. We cannot witness for God without thought and care and much prayer. We are to exercise ourselves privately and corporately (vs.8,12). The exhortation (v.11). This looks back over the previous verses 6-10. Keep on commanding and teaching things to avoid (v.7); to accept (v.6); be occupied with (v.8a) and appreciate what is to come (v.8b). Timothy needed encouraging in the role of authority, his must be a positive ministry.

c) **A fine public example (vs.12-16)**

Watch your life (v.12) for you are being watched by others. Set a good example. Watch your studies (v.13); your spirit (v.14); your prayer-life

(v.15); yourself and your teaching (v.16). Guard against inconsistency. These are priorities for the servant of God. Guy H. King sums up these verses thus—"A fertility of character in verse 12. A fidelity of ministry in v.13; a felicity of gift in v.14; a fixity of purpose in v.15. A faculty of continuance in v.16."

1) **THE WAY HE LIVES** (v.12) Timothy, the young man, is to give no occasion for anyone to look down upon his youth. He is to live an exemplary life, a model to God's people. In his words and in his actions, he could be an example to all in five ways. (1) In word—by his speech, the things he says, the way he says them. On all occasions, in relation to social intercourse, we should "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Whether in public or in private discourse "always with grace" (Col. 4:6). Be like the Lord (Luke 4:22).

(a) *In manner of life.* His personal conduct. Habits, ways of dealing with people. The world watches a Christian to see how he behaves, and judges accordingly. Our lives are to be controlled by the Word of God (Phil. 1:27; 2 Pet. 3:11,14).

(b) *In love.* Whatever others might do or say he must show love, an unfailing love for the Lord Himself (John 21:17). A sincere desire for the good of others (Heb. 13:1-3). Love is the motivation of our lives (Rom. 12:10; 2 Cor. 5:14).

(c) *In faith.* The sturdiness and steadfastness of one's convictions. An inward disposition of fidelity, trustworthiness. Faith always leads to faithfulness, faith and love often go together (1 Tim. 1:14; 2:15; 6:11; 2 Tim. 1:13-2:22). "Love probably indicates the horizontal relationship; faith the vertical" Wm. Hendriksen.

(d) *In purity.* Personal sanctity and command of self. Living in complete conformity, both in thought and action, with God's moral law. This is important in this present evil world. Practical holiness is a life rooted in love and faith.

2) **THE WAY HE TEACHES** (vs.13,14) Paul wants Timothy to carry on with the work, not losing heart nor opportunity. He is the apostolic representative in Paul's absence. Paul sets out three ways:

(a) *Reading.* He is to emphasize the public reading of the scriptures. The Bible has an important place in Christian worship. Ezra exercised this privilege and read to the people, "distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand, and all were attentive unto the book" (Neh. 8:34). May we follow the Master in this (Luke 4:16). "Give attendance to" means "devote yourself to, be absorbed in." Paul often read the lessons when he visited a synagogue (Acts 13:15).

(b) *Preaching.* It is through preaching that God's Word is applied to the life. The preacher should be prayerful, thorough in his preparation, receiving from God his message, earnest and sincere in his presentation, and the Spirit will reach the hearts of his hearers. Some word of guidance, of rebuke, of challenge and comfort, should arise out of the words read.

(c) *Teaching* brings the truth of God to others so that they can increase in understanding. There is an insistent call for a teaching ministry.

3) **THE WAY HE PERSEVERES** (vs.15,16) We have gifts to use, work to do, an example to give—so “keep going on.” Timothy was to be a dedicated and a single-minded man. We also must have a single purpose. This must be a wholehearted occupation—“give thyself wholly to them.” There must be meditation upon the Word (Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:1,2). We should be absorbed and engrossed with divine things. Timothy is to throw himself completely into his ministry; all out in his activity for the Lord. There can be no standing still in Christian discipleship; we must keep going on, on to the end. Like Paul may our controlling motive be, “this one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13).

Concentration must be followed by continuance (v.16). Paul gave this warning to the Ephesian elders—“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves” (Acts 20:28). “Take heed” literally translated is “fasten thy attention on.” Keep a strict eye on himself and then on his teaching. Moral and spiritual rectitude will save ourselves and all who listen to us. We should never be so busy helping others that we neglect to feed and care for our own souls (1 Cor. 9:27). The early saints had the grace of continuance (Acts 2:42). Stickability is an essential quality not only for effective leadership but for daily Christian living. Keep pressing on (Phil. 3:14). Let us go on (Heb. 6:1a).

Timothy's work in the Assembly (ch.5:1—6:2)

Classification of duties 5:1—6:2.

Paul advises Timothy in relation to his official work with various groups in the congregations. He instructs him in the proper attitudes to be taken up towards them.

Conduct towards older Saints (vs.1,2)

The Greek for “rebuke” occurring only here in the N.T. is a strong word implying roughness and sharpness. Not to act like Paul when he rebuked Peter (Gal. 2:11). Elder in age, not an elder in the church (v.17). Timothy must show older members the same respect he would give to his own family. It is not proper for a youth to rebuke senior citizens. Entreat elders as a father. Treat younger men as brothers, the elder women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters. True fraternity with all purity (4:12c). Like Timothy be marked by care, concern, consideration and chastity (v.2).

Care of Widows (vs.3-16)

Paul endorses the practice of the early church (Acts 6:1). He lays down an important qualification. These widows were bereft of relatives; marked by loneliness. Note, “not sympathize, but honour.” Widows who are genuinely

destitute, in distress. They are entitled to respect and material help as well (Ex. 20:12; Matt. 15:4).

There are three other kinds of widows who do not fall within his definition:

(1) Widows who have close relatives were to be supported by these relatives, nephews or grandchildren, and not by the church. Supporting their parents or grandparents is practical godliness. "Charity begins at home."

(2) A genuine widow (v.5) In a permanent state of being left alone or forsaken. She has fixed her hope on God and is given to constant prayer. *By night* as well as *by day*. The abiding character of her Godward hope is evidenced as she continually makes known her needs to God (1 Thess. 3:10).

(3) A widow living in pleasure, such has no claim on the church's charity (Rev. 3:1). Can be "she liveth a prodigal's life" (Ezek. 16:49). She "plunges into dissipation," supporting themselves illicitly, attempting to support what is already dead (v.6). Today she would be called a "fast" widow.

Paul condemns the disgraceful conduct of some trying to evade the duty of supporting their own relatives (v.8). "He is worse than an infidel." This man knows what the Lord would have him do, but he is not doing it.

The deserving case, meeting the qualifications for enrolment (vs.9,10). Age and character are stressed. Those under "sixty years old" would be able to work and to support themselves. The older widow could legitimately be regarded as entitled to the support of the church. Her good record is mentioned (v.10). Note the "IFs", outlining what those good works should be. She had lived chastely, a hospitable, devout mother, who served the saints who came into her home. Her ministrations of love were beneficial, none outside the scope of her kindly help.

Rejection of young widows (vs.11b-13). They do not qualify for permanent support when they are swayed by sensual desires and wish to remarry. She may allow her natural affection to override her loyalty to Christ and marry a pagan.

Lack of maturity may lead them to indulge in gossip when they think they are engaged in visiting (v.14). Paul advises these young widows to remarry. Bringing up a family and managing the home, will give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Family responsibility should come first before church responsibilities (v.16).

Concerning elders (vs.17-22)

(1) *Recognition of Faithful Elders* (vs.17-19). Elders draw attention to the dignity of their position (3:1). They are to be appropriately honoured for their excellent work. This double honour is for elders because of their worth—excellent in administration, and their work of edification, ruling,

preaching, teaching. Material recompense is referred to here, necessary in that day. This seems to be supported in v. 18 by a very earthy quotation from (Deut. 25:4) and by an interesting reference to our Lord's own words on the theme in Luke 10:7. These words are given the same authority as O.T. Scripture. "Apt to teach" as well as able to rule well. Both functions are seen combined in elders (Acts 20:20-35; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7,17).

(2) *Rebuke of Failing Elders* (vs.19-22) A Christian leader should not be the subject of unfair criticism. On the other hand he should not be protected if he continues to sin (v.20). The possibility—"them that sin," is always present (Matt. 18:16; Eph. 4:26-31). The publicity—"rebuke before all," as a warning to other elders and believers (Gen. 39:9; Psa. 19:13). There must be no complicity with sin (v.20), and no impartiality in judgment (v.21).

(3) *Ordination of Elders* v.22 Elders are not to be identified "hastily" without due inquiry and deliberation. We need spiritual wisdom and guidance regarding elders. Only men of unquestioned integrity are to be engaged in the ministry (2 Tim. 1:6). To support a man who is not worthy is to be responsible for the harm that will follow; it means participating in the sins of another. "Keep thyself pure," be honourable and upright in your behaviour, avoid prejudice, partiality and now precipitancy (vs.19,20,22).

Consideration for health (v.23)

Paul's fatherly concern for Timothy's health because of his ceaseless work for the Lord and His saints. Individual liberty with meaningful moderation. He was to try wine medicinally for a weak digestion. It was apparently the best known remedy for Timothy's trouble.

Reflection because of confrontation with God (vs.24,25)

In his judgment upon people Timothy is advised to avoid partiality (vs.21,22) and now immaturity (vs.24,24). We need to be thorough and careful in judging ability. Conduct is always the best guide to character.

A distinction is drawn between men whose sins are clearly evident and those whose sins are not immediately apparent (v.24). Their destination indicated—"going before to judgment"; like heralds going before the sinner proclaiming his guilt. Other cases are concealed from the view of others, though they pursue them to judgment. Their sin shall find them out at last. Fitness for office is made evident by good works, their actions are not in the limelight and might easily be overlooked. The church has often suffered much because of unsuitable leadership.

Instruction to slaves (6:1-2)

Although slavery was anti-social Paul does not denounce it. He accepts the fact, but affirms the fundamental principle that in Christ all men are one, which must ultimately lead to the abolition of slavery.

In secular servitude v.1 Most Christians are the servants of men. In N.T. days they were not just servants, but slaves. They were “under the yoke” and made to work in whatever way their owners wished.

All too easily a converted slave would be tempted to show no respect to an unbelieving master (v.1). They had a definite duty “masters worthy of all honour.” A preventative purpose, “the name of God be not blasphemed.” Ungrudging service will commend the Gospel they profess, by protecting God’s name and defending God’s doctrine.

In sacred servitude v.2 Christian slaves with believing masters must not neglect their obligations. Spiritual equity does not efface civil distinctions. The Christian workman must commend his Christianity by being a better workman. The reasons for compliance, “masters are faithful and beloved.” Believing slaves were regarded by Christians from the very first as brothers in Christ (Gal. 3:28). Paul spoke of Onesimus as “a beloved brother” to his master (Philemon 16).

There is a mutual blessing when Christians serve each other in the will of God.

(ch.6:3-21)

Paul continued advising Timothy how to minister to various groups in the church and also how to live his own life for the pleasure of God. He opens this letter with warnings about false teachers (1:3) and takes up the theme again:

(1) A Description of False Teachers vs.3-5

Their marks and their motives.

Their characteristics v.3 Having refuted their dangerous teaching (1:2-4), he now identifies them (v.3). They are identified by what they do and what they refuse to do. His calculated fabrication of truth—he repudiates the sound or “healthful” words of the Gospel (Titus 1:1). The reference is not to the words spoken directly by the Lord, but to the fact that the exalted Christ is both the ultimate source of the Apostles doctrine and the glorious subject of all their preaching. Here is the substance—“wholesome words,” the source—“our Lord Jesus Christ” and the sufficiency “godliness” of apostolic preaching. The test of any preacher is in Isa. 8:20. The keynote of these Epistles is: “Holy Truth—True Holiness.”

Their vanity v.4 They are blinded by immense conceit. They have nothing to be proud of, they choose to teach, without understanding (1:7). They are marked by curiosity and verbosity.

Their conduct v.4b Morbidly absorbed with useless speculations and hair-splitting “disputes about words.” They sow the seeds of all mischief in the church and cruel social consequences flow from their diseased minds

(v.4b). They set little value on moral character. Envious of the success of their rivals; disturbers of the peace, slanderers of other teachers, suspicious of all who differ from them. They are all subtlety and no solidity.

Their condemnation v.5 They are depraved in mind and deprived of truth. Once acquainted with the truth, they were never possessed by it. Deceived—not a grain of the truth of God in them. They have disinherited themselves. They think a show of godliness as a profitable commercial investment. Their motives and religious profession is a means to make money. They look on their teaching and preaching, not as a vocation, but as a career (Titus 1:11). Their influence in society is thoroughly bad, they are contagious.

(2) **A Discussion of Godliness and Wealth (vs.6-10)**

Godliness is a great gain even in this life.

(a) *The Excellence of Contentment* (vs.6-8). “But” introduces a contrast between the erroneous view of the false teachers and the Christian view. Verse 6 is a description of Paul’s own disciplined life (Phil. 4:11-13). Verse 7 is a factor for contentment. Our barren entrance “we brought nothing in;” our denuded exit—all left behind. All we shall take with us are spiritual things—our memories (Luke 16:25); our characters (Rev. 22:11). We should be prepared to be satisfied with the supply of our personal needs, “food and shelter” and be content with these necessities, not hankering after luxuries. Be marked by adequacy and dependency.

(b) *The Evil of Covetousness* (vs.9,10). The ensnaring power of riches, a desire and determination to get money. They are resolved, right or wrong, they will have wealth. The desire for wealth leads to sin. They are caught like an animal in a trap; this leads to bondage not freedom. The temptation is there and many succumb to it. The disabling passion—“foolish and hurtful lusts.” These lusts overwhelm a man, like the waves covering a sinking ship, all ends in perdition.

The explanation (v.10a) The “love of money” is a dangerous disposition. Instead of providing help and health, an excess of material things hurts and wounds. The verification (v.10b) they wander away from the straight path of “the faith.” A departure from the faith is inevitable when gold displaces God in man’s affections. The sad perdition is self-inflicted “sorrows.”

(3) **Directions for Godly Living (vs.11-16)**

a) *A call to consecration* (v.11). This is the antidote to the perils just pictured. Timothy is challenged by the honour which is his, the honour of being God’s man. It makes him, like the O.T. prophets, as a man belonging to God (Deut. 33:1; 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kings 17:18; Neh. 12:24). It denotes holiness of character and godliness of behaviour.

God-given principles for living (v.11b). These if obeyed, would assure

him and us of success in the ministry. These duties are both negative and positive. "Flee" covetousness and its results as in verses 9,10.

There must be the pursuit of positive virtues: "Righteousness"—our relation to our fellows. Personal integrity must be manifest in the home, to our neighbours and in business. We must live up to our religious profession. "Godliness"—our relation to God. This is practical piety, reverent devotion to God. There should be a growing likeness to Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). "Faith"—our relation to duty. This is fidelity, faithfulness to God: the virtue of the man who, through all the changes of life, is loyal to God. "Love"—our relation to all. A love that cannot forget what God had done for him. It sacrifices all for others (Luke 10:33-36). A contrast to the evils of verse 10. "Patience"—our relation to circumstances. Victorious endurance, constancy under trial. Holding on in spite of adversity and suffering. "Meekness"—in relation to self. A gentleness of spirit which never blazes into anger, which knows how to forgive. Well-described as "power under control;" never insists upon its own rights.

(b) *A call to conflict* (v.12). A real conflict with the forces of the Evil one (Eph. 6:12,13). The Christian life is active, it demands strenuous effort. It is war for the advancement of "The Faith." This is a continuous struggle with the enemies of Truth. It is a good fight, it is a good cause and it will have a good issue.

We are encouraged—we "have eternal life" and it should work in our experience. Vigorously lay hold of it, this is our calling at conversion.

(c) *The incentive to Christian living* (v.13). Encouraged by the good confession of the Lord (John 18:37,39). He is "the faithful Witness" (Rev. 1:5). The great commandment (vs.14-16). The charge laid on him in his baptism, the once-for-all confession of obedience to his Lord. This is his inspiration. It must be kept untainted, "without spot" and unstainable "unrebukable." Timothy had confessed his allegiance to the Lord. The duty extends throughout the course of this life and terminates with the return of the Lord. His Second Advent in Glory. The Father shall display to the wondering eyes of men the glorious appearing of His Son.

(d) *A doxology of praise* (vs.15,16). "God is supreme in distinction, Sovereign in authority, and Superb in glory. He is the Invincible One—'the only Potentate'; the Imperial One—'King of Kings'; the Indescribable One—'Lord of Lords'; the Incorruptible One—'immortality'; the Ineffable One—'dwelling in light'; the Invisible One—'no man hath seen'; the Incomprehensible One—'nor can see'; the Worthy One—all honour and glory" (C.J. Rolls).

(4) **The Duty of the Rich (vs.17,18)**

Paul adds a word of practical guidance here after the grand climax of lofty praise. The early church had its wealthy members. They are told what not to

do, and what to do with their riches. (a) Be humble (v.17b). The provision of material wealth ought to humble a person and cause him to glorify God, not himself. We are not owners; we are stewards (Deut. 8:18). (b) Be trustful (v.17c). Do not rely on your money to secure position and comfort in this life. Rather let our trust be in the living God—the great Giver, because He is the great Lover (John 3:16). Riches are uncertain, not only in their value, but also in their durability. They are undependable, here today, and by some misfortune gone tomorrow. God intends that His gifts be used and enjoyed with all gratitude (v.17c). (c) Be helpful (v.18). We pass from dangers (v.17) to duties (v.18). Use your wealth to do good. Being “rich in good works” doing good continually, that so your munificence becomes beneficence (Titus 3:8). They must be ready to share their wealth and recognize the claims of Christian fellowship. The wise use of wealth will build up for them a good foundation in the world to come (Matt. 6:19,20). As someone put it, “What I kept I lost; what I gave, I have” (Luke 16:1-13).

(5) The deposit is to be guarded (vs.20,21)

This affectionate appeal to Timothy is a summary of its entire contents (1:3-7). “Guard the deposit.” Similar to “Guard yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21). The name Timothy means “he who honours God.” Is Paul urging him to be true to his name? Do the best, be the best for GOD. The “deposit” is the sound doctrine of the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:4). This has been entrusted to his safe-keeping. The word “guard” is the picture of a soldier standing guard over a treasure which has been committed to him for safe-keeping. We are put in trust with the Gospel, and are held responsible for passing it on to others (2 Tim. 2:2). We are not only possessors, we are also trustees of the faith. We must hand it on to others. Reject all spurious teaching (vs.20b,21). Do not dilute, alter or modify the Gospel of Christ. Refuse both the matter and methods of false teachers. The facts of Christianity are matters of revelation, not of reason (1:4-7). Argument about scriptural and spiritual things never got anyone anywhere. Paul is condemning a false intellectualism, and a false stressing of human knowledge. It was in reality the enemy of the faith (1 Cor. 2:14). Does Paul mean, don’t waste your time seeking out contradictions in Scripture, use the Scriptures to live by and not to argue about? (1 Tim. 3:16a; 2 Tim. 3:16,17). Clever argument can never be made a substitute for Christian action. The benediction is refreshing (v.21b). Paul’s final sentence includes all. The pronoun is plural—“with you,” as in 2 Tim. 4:22; Titus 3:15. The letter ends with the beauty of the grace of God. Here is Grace to: G—Garrison our hearts, R—refresh our souls, A—assist in our living, C—coming from heaven, E—for every saint, everywhere, every day until we see His face. Amen.

Truth for Youth in 2nd Timothy

Listen to His Word

- In Chapter 1 He **STIMULATES** our faith
In Chapter 2 He **STRENGTHENS** our confidence
In Chapter 3 He **STEADIES** our conduct
In Chapter 4 Be **STRONG** in the Lord

CHAPTER ONE LOYALTY IN SUFFERING

1. *Communion with God* vs.1-2 Paul a Surrendered Man
Chosen by the Lord (v.1a) Controlled by His Will (v.1b)
Cheered by Promise (v.1c) Conscious of Resources (v.2)
2. *Concern for His Son* vs.3-4 A Sympathetic Man
Thankful Prayer (v.3a) Faithful Prayer (v.3b)
Mindful Prayer (v.4a) Joyful Prayer (v.4b)
3. *Courage in Service* vs.5-7 A Spiritual Man
Remember your mother's example (v.5)
Remember your master's endorsement (v.6)
Remember your Maker's endowment (v.8)
4. *Confidence in the Gospel* vs.8-12 A Satisfied Man
The Testimony of the Gospel (v.8) Truths of the Gospel (v.9)
The Triumph of the Gospel (v.10) Transmission (v.11)
The Trust and Thrill of the Gospel (v.12)
5. *Continuance in Truth* vs.13-14 Paul a Sure Man
Hold to the pattern of health giving words (v.13)
Hold the precious deposit (v.14)
6. *Constancy to Duty* vs.15-18 A Slighted but a Sustained Man
Unreliable Friends (v.15)
Unbroken Fellowship (v.16)
Unforgettable Ministry (v.17)

"BE A SUFFERER FOR THE GOSPEL"

CHAPTER TWO LOYALTY IN SERVICE

- His duty to Himself vs.1-7 Faithfulness to the Lord
His duty to the Truth vs.8-14 Faithfulness to His Word
His duty to the Church vs.15-26 Faithfulness to His Name
1. *A call to courage* vs.1-6 Exhortation
A Son and a Steward (vs.1-2) Loving Obedience

- A Soldier (vs.3-4) Fearless Endurance
 - An Athlete (v.5) Faithful Perseverance
 - A Husbandman (v.6) Fruitful Patience
 - 2. *A call to Consideration* vs.7-15 Encouragement
 - Understanding His Mind (v.7)
 - Remembering His Lord (v.8)
 - Charging all Saints (v.14)
 - Suffering for Christ (vs.9-10)
 - Rejoicing in Truth (vs.11-13)
 - Resting on His Character (v.13)
 - 3. *A call to Consecration* vs.15-18 Examples
 - Our Duty as a Workman (v.15)
 - The Danger of words (v.16)
 - The Denial of Truth (v.18)
 - The Dependable Foundation (v.19)
 - 4. *A call to Cleansing* vs.19-23 Examination
 - The Stability of Christian Truth (v.19)
 - The Purity of Christian Living (vs.20-21)
 - The Responsibility of Christian Men (vs.22-23)
 - 5. *A call to Christ Likeness* vs.24-26 Expression
 - The Bondservant (v.24) His Behaviour
 - His Manner (v.24) His Method (v.25)
 - His Motive in Ministry (v.25)
- “BE A STEWARD OF THE GOSPEL”

CHAPTER THREE LOYALTY AMID SIN AND SHAME

- The last days of Terror (vs.1-2) of Trouble (vs.3-4)
- The last days of Temptation (vs.5-8) of Trickery (v.13)
- The last days of Training (vs.16-17)
- 1. *The Approaching Peril of the Man of God* vs.1-9
 - A Call to Vigilance*
 - The marks of the last days (vs.1-2) Their manners (v.3)
 - The Morals (vs.3,6,13) Their materialism (v.4b)
 - Their Motives (v.4) Their Movements (vs.7-8)
 - Apostasy in Personal life (v.2a); Home life (v.2c); Social life (v.3)
 - Apostasy in Political life (v.4); In Religious life (v.5)
- 2. *The Appointed Path of the Man of God* vs.10-12
 - A Call to Patience*
 - Paul the Leader—Guiding, Instructing, Directing
 - Timothy the Learner—Loving, Trusting, Following
 - His Doctrine was sound; His Deportment saintly (v.10)
 - Devotion was strong; His Delightful character

- Distressing circumstances (v.11a)
- His Divine deliverance (v.11b) His Deceitful Enemies
- 3. *The Approved Plan of the Man of God* vs.14-15
 - A Call to Continuance*
 - Ignorance of the Word of God (v.13) Morally, Spiritually
 - Importance of the Word of God (v.14) Rich, Reliable
 - Influence of the Word of God (v.15) In Experience
 - Inspiration of the Word of God (v.16) Affirmed
- 4. *The Abundant Provision of the Word of God* vs.16-17
 - A Call for Diligence*
 - Their Authority “of God”; Their Purity “Holy”
 - Their Ability “Make Wise”; Their Beauty—Salvation in Christ
 - Their Versatility constructive, preventative, restorative and educative (v.16)
 - Their Sufficiency (v.17) Fit us for life and service.

CHAPTER FOUR LOYALTY AS A STEWARD OF GOD

1. *The Solemn Charge* vs.1-2 **“Listen to Truth”**
 - The Solemnity of it* (v.1) In the Presence of God under the Lordship of Christ.
 - God as Judge; Christ as Conqueror and King.
 - The Responsibility of it* (v.2) The Challenge to us
 - Be Urgent—Speak as a Herald
 - Be Persistent—Always in Season
 - Be Relevant—Convince, Rebuke, Exhalt
 - Be Patient—Long Suffering
2. *The Serious Conditions* vs.3-4 **Look at your surroundings**
 - Heresy Abounds (v.3) Apostasy all around (v.4).
3. *The Servants Commitments* v.5 **Learn to Obey**
 - Be calm—“Sobriety” Be courageous—“Endure”
 - Be committed “Do the Work” Be consecrated “Make Full Proof”
4. *Paul’s Sterling Character* vs.6-8 **Live Like Me**
 - (v.6) The Present—His spiritual vigour—Being offered
 - (v.7) The Past—His Striking Verdict on Three Things
 - (v.8) Future—His Sublime Vision on the Prize
5. *His Staunch Companions* vs.9-15 **Loyalty**
 - Demas—The Allured Brother; Titus—An Assuring Brother
 - Luke—The Abiding Brother; Mark—The Appreciated Brother
 - Tychicus—The Able Minister; Carpus—Assisted Paul
 - Alexander—The Adversary; An Attacking Brother
6. *His Strong Confidence* vs.16-18 **Learn to Trust the Lord**
 - He was abandoned (v.16) He was assisted (v.17)
 - He was assured (v.18) He adored His Lord (v.18c)

7. His Salutations in Christ vs.19-22 **Do not Linger, Come Soon**
(v.19) Loving Friends (v.21) Longing for Friends
(v.22a) An Ever Living Friend (v.22b) A Lasting Friend—Grace
“DO SPREAD THE GOSPEL”

Cameos of Paul in 2nd Timothy

CHAPTER 1 “As a Faithful Pastor” His character and conduct
Encouraging a young man and his mission v.1.

1. *Faithful in his affection* vs.1-4. Paternal, prayerful, mindful
2. *Faithful allegiance* vs.5,6,8. Divine preparation v. 5. Divine provision v.6. Divine power v.8
3. *Faithful in his appointment* vs.9-11 realised the truths of the gospel v.9. He rejoiced in the triumph of the gospel v.10, recognised task of the gospel v.11
4. *Faithful in his acceptance* vs.12-14; suffer bravely v.12; guard faithfully vs.13,14; Spread it actively v.14
5. *Faithful in his appreciation* vs.16-18. A loving brother v.16, a loyal brother v.17, a labouring brother v.18

Timothy encouraged by:

1. *Unlimited resources* vs.1,2; unceasing remembrance in prayer v.3
2. *Unfeigned faith* vs.5-8. The genuineness of it; the gift of it v.6; the grandeur of it v.7. Power, love, discipline. The glory of it. Power of God v.8
3. *By an unchanging gospel* vs.9-11
 - (i) Its content v.9
 - (ii) Its conquest v.10
 - (iii) Its claims v.11
4. *By an unequalled treasure* vs.12-14
 - (i) A glorious thing v.12
 - (ii) A gift in Christ v.13
 - (iii) A good thing v.14; keep it
5. *By unswerving loyalty* vs.16-18
 - (i) His ministry appreciated v.16
 - (ii) His mission accomplished v.17
 - (iii) His mercy assured v.18

“BE COMMITTED” Read Chapter 1 vs.12-13

CHAPTER 2 “As a Fatherly Teacher” “Expounding and exhorting”

1. *Rise to your responsibilities* vs.1-6 Christian service
 - (a) A stern life vs.1-2 Be strong and sure
 - (b) A strenuous life vs.3-4 Be a soldier and stand

- (c) A sacrificial life vs.5-6 Strive lawfully v.5 and serve laboriously v.6
- 2. *Rejoice in your resources* vs.7-13 Christian suffering
 - (a) The victory of Christ v.8
 - (b) The liberty of the Word v.9
 - (c) The glory of the Kingdom vs.10-13
- 3. *Recognised divine revelation* vs.14-19 Christian's safeguard
 - (a) Remember the perilous Word v.14 Subverting
 - (b) Respond to the precious Word v.15 Dividing
 - (c) Reject the pernicious Word vs.16,17 Ensuing and Erring
 - (d) Rest on the perfect Word v.19 Knowing
- 4. *Reject the rebellious and the ruinous* vs.21-26 The Christian's separation
 - (a) Decline their disputes vs.16,23
 - (b) Be dedicated to His services vs.20-22
 - (c) Deal with their difficulties vs.24,25
 - (d) Desire their recovery v.26

“BE COURAGEOUS” Read Chapter 2 vs.3,8 and 22

CHAPTER 3 “As the Fearless Prophet” “Exposing evil and error”

- 1. *Departure from the truth* vs.1-7 Apostasy
 - Days of declension vs.1-2
 - Days of defiance vs.3-4
 - Days of depravity vs.6-7
- 2. *Denial of the truth* vs.8,9 Heresy
 - By deception v.6
 - Imitation v.8
 - With limitation v.9
- 3. *The display of the truth* vs.10-12 Purity
 - What Paul believed, his clear convictions v.10a
 - How Paul behaved, his Christlike character v.10b
 - What he experienced, cruel persecutions v.11
- 4. *Development through the truth* vs.14-17 Ability
 - The salvation it brings v.15 In Christ
 - The education it imparts v.14 Read Chapter 3 vs.10-11
 - The instruction it gives v.16 Fourfold
 - The reproduction it produces v.17 Good marks

“BE CAREFUL AND CLEAN”

CHAPTER 4 “The Friendly Partner” “Establishing and enabling”

- 1. *His faithful charge* vs.1-5
 - Solemn, v.1; Sincere, vs.2-3; Searching, v.5.
- 2. *His full consecration* vs.6-8 Read Chapter 4 vs.5-8,17 and 18
 - His priestly act v.6
 - His practical aspect v.7
 - Pleasing prospect v.8

3. *Some fine, some fickle companions* vs.9-15
 Some deserted him v.10
 Some diligent for him v.12
 Some devoted to him vs.11,13
 Some defied him v.14
 4. *His fearless commitment* vs.16-18
 The Lord is available v.17
 Helpful v.17
 Royal v.15
 Shall reign v.18
 5. *His final greetings* vs.19-22
 Appreciating vs.19,20
 Appealing v.21
 Assuring v.22
- “BE CONSISTENT AND CHEERFUL”**

Timothy

1. His circumstances
2. childhood
3. conversion
4. confession
5. collective work
6. condition naturally
7. commendation
8. circumcision
9. companionship
10. character
11. capabilities
12. challenge

1. His circumstances, Acts 16:1-3

The parents; the cultures—two way tug; hometown—Lystra.

2. His childhood—two influences

i. *Faith* 2 Tim. 1:5. 2:1 unfeigned faith; contagious faith (grandmother, mother and Timothy); indwelling faith.

ii. *Scriptures* 2 Tim. 3:14-17.

(a) 2:2 personal ministry v.14; continuance—thou; learning with conviction—thou; learning by example—‘of whom thou hast learnt’.

(b) primary ministry—babe (RV) v.15. reveals man’s need—salvation; the means—‘in Christ’; the method—faith.

(c) profitable ministry v.16; (i) inspiration of Scripture; all scripture; inspiration—God breathed out scripture; (ii) purpose of Scripture; forward steps—doctrine; false steps—reproof—conviction; faltering steps—correction; first steps—instruction in righteousness and produces righteousness.

(d) perfecting ministry v.17; godliness—man of God; perfect—adjustable—knucklejoint; furnished—filled out—sailingship. No good work we cannot do. See Ephesians 2:10.

3. **His conversion**, Acts 14:6-20

The conversion itself Acts 14:6-20. Power of the servant of God vs.8-10; preaching of the servant of God vs.15-18; suffering of the servant of God vs.19-20.

Results of conversion spiritual relationships—beloved son—spiritual father 1 Cor. 4:17; loveable—beloved 1 Cor. 4:17; trustworthy—faithful 1 Cor. 4:17; genuine true child in faith 1 Tim. 1:2.

4. **His confession**—baptism 1 Tim. 6:12

Conversion—became a soldier—called in salvation 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

Confession—baptism—donning the uniform. (a) good confession—good and noble; (b) many witnesses—many there.

5. **Collective life—Assembly life** 2 Tim. 2:2

Fellowship—among many witnesses 2 Tim. 2:1

Instruction—heard 2 Tim. 2:1. (1) the teaching 2 Tim. 2:1. (a) pattern—model v.13; (b) healthy v.13—sound; (c) good—precious thing v.14.

Responsibility—2 Tim. 2:2. (1) teach others v.1—deposit the truth in a safe place; (a) faithfulness v.2; (b) ability v.2.

6. **His condition naturally**

Young in years 1 Tim. 4:12-13. Negative v.12—‘no man despise’; positive—‘be an example’ (model)—2 Tim. 1:13; (i) in word—speech v.12; (ii) in walk; (a) love—agape—manward; (b) faith—Godward; (c) purity; (iii) in work; (a) the reading—basis; (b) the exhortation—to the heart; (c) doctrine—to instruct (v.13).

Frail in health 1 Tim. 5:23.

(a) problem; (i) weak stomach; (ii) oft infirmities as a result.

(b) prescription—*use a little wine NOT* begin to drink with wine Eph. 5:18.

Retiring disposition—Spirit of fear 2 Tim. 1:7 and 1 Cor. 16:10.

(a) God helping him 2 Tim. 1:7; (i) power—dynamite; (ii) love; (iii) sound mind—disciplined mind—different word.

(b) Helping himself 2 Tim. 1:18; (i) negative—not ashamed; (ii) positive—suffering hardships.

(c) Believers helping 1 Cor. 16:10. For the sake of the work (work glorifies the men).

7. His commendation, Acts 16:2 and 1 Tim. 1:18

- (a) Evidence of ability 1 Tim. 1:18.
- (b) Use of its ability Acts 16:2. Worked in Iconium and Lystra.
- (c) Good report from more than one assembly Acts 16:2 —witnesses.
- (d) Opportunity for expansion in service Acts 16:2.

8. His circumcision

- (a) *For the sake of unbelieving Jews* Acts 16:3.
- (b) *Make Timothy's service more acceptable* 1 Cor. 9:20.

9. His companionship with Paul Acts 20:4

- (a) *He was a messenger* Acts 19:22 and 1 Cor. 4:17. Postage stamp—sticks to its job and goes where its sent.
- (b) *He was a worker* 1 Cor. 16:10. (i) active in the Lord's work 1 Cor. 16:10; (ii) laboured 1 Thess. 3:2; (iii) fellowship—fellow-worker Rom. 16:21.
- (c) *He was a prisoner like Paul* Heb. 13:23.

10. His character

Godly 1 Tim. 6:11-12.

- (a) Awareness—flee these things—love of money and youthful lusts 2 Tim. 2.
- (b) Eagerness—follow, pursue v. 12. (i) Righteousness and conformity to God; (ii) Godliness—devotion to God.

Inward: Faith—lays hold of God's mercy; Love—love of God in heart Rom. 5:5

Outward: Patience towards circumstances.

Fight the good fight whilst in enjoyment of eternal life.

Devoted to Christ Phil. 2:19-23

- (a) Caring v.20.
 - (b) Humble—as Son with Father v.22.
 - (c) Slave for the gospel (v.22) bondservant.
- Affectionate* 2 Tim. 1:4. Timothy's tears.

11. His capabilities

Predicted gift 1 Tim. 1:18 (principle—proof of ability before task given)

Practised gift

- (a) The gift—teaching 2 Tim. 1:24, apt to teach.
- (b) Bestowal of the gift. (i) endowment—the Holy Spirit 1 Cor. 12:8; (ii) evidence—prophecies 1 Tim. 4:14; presbytery 1 Tim. 4:14; Paul 2 Tim. 1:6;

(iii) use of the gift; negative—neglect, made light of Matt. 22:5; positive 1 Tim. 4:15-16.

Private

First pair: (i) meditate—careful thought in practice; (ii) give thyself to them—wrapped up in them.

Result—progress manifest to all—word for pioneer.

Second pair: (i) take heed to thyself (attention) and doctrine; (ii) continue in them—stick to their side.

Result—save thyself and them that hear.

Public

(i) apt to teach 2 Tim. 2:24; (ii) work of evangelist 2 Tim. 4:5.

Protected gift 2 Tim. 1:6. Continue the stirring up. Preventive and not corrective.

12. His challenge

Three Greek words used 30 times. Challenged all aspects of the Christian life.

Challenged as to his relationships with people 1 Tim. 5:1-2

(a) Old men as a father. (i) rebuke not—pound with words (negative); (ii) intreat, beg, beseech (positive) I beg of you—please.

(b) Young men as brethren. Intreat as brethren equally.

(c) Young women as sisters. With purity of thought and deed.

(d) Old women as a mother. Intreat them with respect. N.B. Paul speaks about the assembly being as a family.

Final challenge 2 Tim. 4:1-5

(a) Solemnity of the charge. Threefold witness (i) God; (ii) Christ as Judge; (iii) Appearing and the kingdom.

(b) Preaching. (i) preach the word; (ii) be urgent—instant, in season; (iii) reprove—convict; (iv) rebuke—to censure or blame; (v) to exhort (done in longsuffering and doctrine).

(c) Personal. (i) be watchful; (ii) suffer hardships; (iii) evangelise; (iv) complete the service.

The Authority of Scripture in this Modern Age As viewed in 2 Timothy 3

“But understand this, that in the last days there will set in perilous times of great stress and trouble, hard to deal with, and hard to bear”, 2 Tim. 3:1, Amplified N.T.

The Apostasy: its Peril, v.1; its Pattern, vs.2-5; its Product, vs.6-7; its Persecution, vs.8-13; the divine Provision for its Prevention, v.14.

1. **An Age of Corruption**, vs.1-7; TURN AWAY FROM IT. This is seen in *personal life*, v.2, as “lovers of their own selves”; in *home life* as “disobedient to parents”, v.2; in *business life* as “boasters . . . highminded”, vs.2,4; in *social life* as “truce-breakers . . . lovers of pleasures”, vs.3,4; in *personal life* as “incontinent, fierce”, v.3; in *religious life* as “having a form of godliness, but denying the power”, v.5.

The Marks of the Last Days, vs.1-2. The first two marks in the list, lovers of self and money, supply the key to the rest of the list, eighteen vices in all.

The Manners of the Last Days, vs.2-3, sins against truth, “boasters”; sins against love, “proud”; sins against good, “blasphemers”.

The Morals of the Last Days, vs.2,3,6,13, “disobedient to parents, unthankful”, “despisers of those that are good”, with evil men waxing “worse and worse”.

Materialism in the Last Days, v.4, shown by those who are lovers of money and pleasure more than lovers of God.

Motives in the Last Days, v.4, manifested by the words “more than”.

The Movements and Minds of such Men, vs.6,8, as with “corrupt minds,” they “creep” like serpents.

2. **An Age of Imitation**, v.8; REFUSE IT. The character of these apostates is compared to the Egyptian court magicians in their opposition to the truth by counterfeit miracles.

3. **An Age of Opposition**, v.8; WITHSTAND IT. These men of moral depravity may have availed themselves of occult powers and practices, in rivalry to the gifts of the Spirit.

4. **An Age of Deception**, vs.6,13; CONDEMN IT. Here in verse 6 we have a description of their work, accomplished with winsome manners and plausible propaganda. The “evil men” are depicted in verses 2-5, and the imposters in verses 6-9.

5. **An Age of Limitations**, vs.11,12; REJOICE AND THANK GOD FOR IT. Apparent success is severely limited; the imposter is eventually exposed.

6. **An Age of Persecution**, vs.11,12; SHARE IN IT. From worthless men, vs.1-9, we turn and follow a worthy man, vs.11-12. He was imprisoned, 1:8; afflicted, 3:12; deserted, 1:15; chained, 1:16; maligned, 2:9; forsaken and wronged, 4:14-16. May we share such reproach, Heb. 13:13.

This Modern Age—a Further Description:

Manners and morals, vs.2,3;

Opposition to truth, v.8;

Affection for self, vs.2,4;

Deceiving and deceived, v.13;

Greed and guilt, vs.6,7;

Evil men and manners, vs.3,13;

End fully revealed, v.9.

Reprobate concerning truth, v.8;

Never acknowledge truth, v.7;

From what is sordid and sensual, we now turn to the sacred

Authority of Scripture, vs.14-17. Divine resources available to us are (i) apostolic teaching and example, vs.10-13; (ii) parental instruction and help, vs.14-15; (iii) the Scriptures, vs.16-17.

1. *Authority Declared*, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (God-breathed), v.16. The word "inspiration" is not applied to the vessel, but to the verities. The Spirit of God both gave and guarded the Word of God, Matt. 22:43-45; Psa. 119:160.

2. *Authority is Delineated*, v.16. Here we have what is profitable, constructive doctrine, preventative reproof, restorative correction, and educative training for living.

3. *Authority is Divine and Dynamic*, v.15. Here we have the Word in its purity, "holy"; in its ability, "able to make thee wise".

4. *Authority is Dependable*, v.14. We must "continue" or abide and remain in these things, not advancing away from them like false teachers. All true progress must be within, not away from the divine fundamentals of the Christian revelation.

5. *Authority is Directive*, v.15. "Thou hast known" shows that there had been a continuous knowledge always "from a child". The aim is not knowledge as such, but wisdom "unto salvation". The end result is "to be permanently equipped", "complete in all parts and proportions".

6. *Authority Demonstrated*, vs.10-14; 1:5. Timothy had a mother and a grandmother both marked by "unhypocritical faith". From them, Timothy had inherited the knowledge of the true God, having received instruction in the Scriptures from childhood, vs.14-15. He diligently traced the life of Paul step by step; the Scriptures are a storehouse of wisdom, a reservoir of fullness, a fountain of delights, and a river of refreshment.

The "last days" are marked by terror, vs.1,2; trouble, vs.3,4; temptations, vs.5-8; trickery, v.13. On the other hand they are marked by testimony, vs.10-17; teaching, vs.14,15; training, vs.16,17. Hence we must read, rely upon, and respond to the authority of the Word.

Truth from Titus

ch.1 CHURCH LIFE

Attend to discipline

The elects's foundation:

Divine and dependable

The elder's fitness:

personal, civil, social, doctrinal

The elder's function:

convince, control, correct, condemn.

ch.2 HOME LIFE

Adorn the doctrine

Christian deportment:

sobriety, sanctity, chastity

Courteous demeanour:

sanctified conduct, sound speech

Conscientious in duty

Coming display:

grace disciplines, glory displayed, grace delivers.

ch.3 PUBLIC LIFE

Active on duty

Guidance given

Guilt recalled

Generosity experienced

Good works maintained

Cranks avoided

Consideration appreciated.

“Suggested Analysis of the Epistle”

INTRODUCTION 1:1-4 Salutation of Paul

Paul's humility and authority—servant, apostle

Foundation of Truth, According to truth v. 1

Manifestation of God, His Word in the gospel v. 2-3

Explanation of Assignment, Titus in Crete v. 5

(1) **RULE IN THE CHURCH** 1:6-16 Divine order

The character of its elders vs.6-8

The credentials of its elders vs.1,9
 The challenge to its elders vs.10-15
 The unruly, their method v.10, their motives v.11
 The unruly must be suppressed vs.11-15

(2) **REGULATIONS FOR THE CHURCH** 2:1-15 Daily obedience

(a) *Guiding principles* 2:2-10 All classes
 Aged men, aged women, young women, young men.
 All servants.

(b) *God given power* 2:11-15 All sufficient.
 The adorning of the Doctrine. The appearing of Grace.
 The acceptance of the Truth. The appearing of Glory.

(3) **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH** 3:1-11 Definite obligations

(a) *Our duty to the state* vs.1-7
 Submission v.1, Showing meekness v.2, Shameful past, v.3
 The motive. The Salvation of God vs.4-7.

(b) *Our discipline in the church* vs.8-11
 Treatment of foolish questions v.8
 Treatment of factitious men vs.9-11

CONCLUSION vs.12-15

Guidance v.12, Goodness v.13, Good works v.14
 Grace be with you all v.15.

“FACTS REGARDING TITUS”

The writer:

Chapter 1:1 Paul the Apostle—A personal letter to Titus

Date of writing:

Probably A.D. 66 or 67

Where Written:

Place uncertain. Probably Miletus or Macedonia

Its Importance:

“It is a priceless and unrivalled manual of pastoral advice”. This short epistle gives a summary of Christian Doctrine and contains all that is needed for Christian knowledge and life.

Keyword: “Good works”. Our responsibility in the world.

Studies: Collect and ponder over references to the Old Testament in the Epistle. The words Saviour, Salvation, Sound, God our Saviour. Meditate often on ch.2:11-14; 3:4-7.

Theme:

Christianity in the Church ch.1; in the home ch.2; in the state ch.3.

Analysis:

Introduction 1:1-4; Official Responsibility 1:5-16; Personal Responsibility 2:1-15; Social Responsibility 3:1-8; Doctrinal Responsibility 3:9-11; Conclusion 3:12-15.

“TITUS THE LORD’S SERVANT” It is a remarkable fact that Titus is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. All we know of him we gather from the writings of Paul. He was a Gentile Gal. 2:1-3; a friend and helper of Paul 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6,13; 8:23; a messenger of the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. 8:16-18; reliable and unselfish 2 Cor. 12-18; he was left in Crete by Paul to care for the church Titus 1:5. One of those mentioned by Paul in his last letter 2 Tim. 4:10.

Profit from Philemon

This is a purely private letter from Paul to his friend Philemon about a runaway slave Onesimus. It expounds no doctrine, exposes no error, but it exalts the Lord and encourages Christian courtesy in all circles of society. The shortest and one of the sweetest of Paul's letters.

Study this letter for its presentation of Christ, eleven references; its portrait of Paul, eight pictures; the conversion and four aspects of Philemon's life.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie suggests it has a sevenfold value:

“1. ITS PERSONAL VALUE. The light it throws upon the character of Paul, a gentleman.

2. ITS ETHICAL VALUE. Its balanced sensitiveness to what is right, 13,14,18,19.

3. ITS PROVIDENTIAL VALUE. God is aback of all events. What God does not appoint, He may employ v.15.

4. ITS CHRISTIAN VALUE. The application of the highest principles to the commonest affairs. Every man is precious to God, and for everyone Christ died.

5. ITS PRACTICAL VALUE. The encouragement it supplies to seek and redeem the lowest, Luke 19:10.

6. ITS SOCIAL VALUE. Its presentation of the relation of Christianity to social evils—slavery, polygamy, intemperance, and all the ugly brood.

7. ITS SPIRITUAL TRUTH, which consists in the analogy it contains, and illustrates in a parabolic way *some of the essential* aspects of the Gospel story.”

As you read this book keep in mind the teaching of 1 Cor. 13. This book illustrates many features of Christian love.

Four words analyse the letter:—Salutation 1-3; Commendation 4-7; Supplication 8-21; and Expectation 22-25.

1. **A Letter of Appreciation.** “*Love rejoiceth in the truth.*” Appreciation of fellowship vs.2,6,14,23,24; of faith and love vs.5,6; of fidelity vs.1,2 labourer, soldier; Of friendship vs.16-19.

2. **A Letter of Appeal** for “*Love is kind.*” There are more than fourteen appeals here. An appeal for consideration vs.8,9; for recognition v.10; for reception v.12 and accommodation v.22.

3. **A Letter of Assurance** “*Love never faileth.*” Assurance of provision

v.3; of prayer vs.4,22; of practice and profit v.5; of payment v.19, and peace v.25.

There are four pictures of social relationship; love, wooing, working, winning.

1. **Paul and Philemon** 14-15. *Paul*—"love seeketh not its own." *Philemon*—"Love doth not behave itself unseemly." In both, the development of Christian character.

We cannot doubt God's sovereign overruling in this gracious suggestion "not of necessity" v.14. Philemon would possess Onesimus in a new way v.15.

2. **Paul and Onesimus** 17-19. "Love beareth all things." Love protects v.9 "I beseech." It pleads v.10 "for my son." Love pays v.18 "on mine account." Love ponders v.19 "albeit." Love's purpose vs.14,15 "depart for a season." Love's partners vs.23,24. Love's provision v.25.

In Paul the dignity of Christian deportment.

3. **Philemon and Onesimus** "Love suffereth long and is kind." Philemon suffering wrongfully v.15,18; 1 Peter 2:19; "this is thankworthy." Suffering patiently v.11; 1 Peter 2:20, this is acceptable with God. He acted graciously v.16 received as a brother beloved. He gives generously. Onesimus had a new link v.10 "my son"; a new life "a brother" v.10,16; new loyalty "profitably" v.11. His new look, now beloved v.16. Seen in a new light, as myself v.17, Eph. 1:7.

In Philemon the display of Christian graces, Gal. 5:22.

4. **A Picture of the Whole Church** 1-3, 23-24 "Love never faileth." The Church is interested in its fellow members 1-2. "If any suffer or rejoice" Romans 12:10,15. The Church is identified with its Head 12. Paul had Christlike compassion. It is inspired and instructed by good ministry 7, "refreshed". It is influenced by Divine truths, the teaching of Colossians especially, also Ephesians and Philippians.

In Ephesians—a new relationship in Christ, maintained by the Spirit's fulness 5:18. In Philippians—a new fellowship with Christ, maintained by humility of mind 2:1-11. In Colossians—a new discipleship in Christ, so let the word dwell in you richly 3:16. In Philemon—a new friendship in Christ, loving care, thought, help and prayer 4:6,22,25.

From these pictures there are four lessons for today:

1. The fellowship which Christ controls; we should listen, learn and love Phil. 2:1-4.
2. The relationship which Christ creates; "one new man" Ephesians 2:15.
3. The friendship which Christ commends; Philemon 5-7.
4. The stewardship which Christ commissions; preach, reach, teach, baptise, Matt. 28:19,20.

Suggested Analysis of Philemon

1. **Introduction** 1-3. The writer's designation, association and appreciation v.1. The readers, the friendship, a brother beloved. The family, saintly, spiritual and sympathetic v.1,2a. The fellowship, the Church its enjoyment, expression and experience v.2.

The favour, is divine, delightful and dependable v.3.

2. **The Method of Approach** 4-7. It is tactful v.4, his appreciation of character. Helpful v.5, the exhibition of Christ in the life. Prayerful v.6; he pleads for the continual communication of love to all. Joyful v.7, because of the ministry and hospitality.

3. **The Masterly Argument** 8-16. Paul waves all his rights and argues: *Carefully* v.8 did not use his authority nor take any liberty. *Tenderly* v.9 he prefers to plead, his deliberate choice. *Lovingly* v.10 "my child," his travail, Onesimus truly born again. *Skilfully* 11-12 Once he was disappointing, now different v.11. Delegated and appreciated by Paul v.12. *Humbly* 13-14 A good servant and substitute v.13. Paul always considerate so Philemon is constrained v.14. *Providentially* 15-16 the providence of God v.15, the grace of God v.16a, the love of God v.16b.

4. **The Moving Appeal** 17-21 Based on partnership v.17; backed by payment v.18, so, my brother be profitable v.20, for I build my confidence on your practice 21.

5. **The Conclusion** 22-25 His personal request v.22; his partners recognised vs.23,24. His and our precious resource v.25.

"LOVE ALWAYS WINS" 1 Cor. 13,13.

W.J. Erdman sums up the Epistle thus:—"a model of Christian courtesy, a manifestation of Christian love and a monument of Christian conversion."

Christ in The Hebrew Epistle

This epistle teaches the finality of the Gospel. Its great theme is that Jesus Christ is God's last word to the world. In Him God has spoken fully, perfectly and finally. Hebrews moves from the rich symbolism of worship in old Israel to its fulfilment by the person of Jesus Christ.

It deals with the tremendous struggle involved in leaving Judaism for Christ, leaving shadows for the substance, ritual for reality, the temporary for the permanent, yea the good for the best. The Lord Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament foreshadowings, and there is nothing more to follow. Christianity is the perfect religion; it can never be superseded.

It is a book of contrasts rather than comparisons. The writer takes the best of the Old Economy and Covenant and proves Jesus is better than the best, greater than the greatest and higher than the highest.

Commitment to total immersion in Hebrews will revolutionize your life, fill your soul with wonder and worship, inspire your service and inform your mind with the glories of Christ in His Sonship, Creatorship, Kingship, Mediatorship, Testatorship and Priesthood. He is the Heir of all things, He fills every office, meets every need, holds every right, subdues every foe and stands unique in His Superiority, Sovereignty and Sufficiency.

Writer The identity of the writer remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the N.T. introduction. No one knows. Indeed, the letter or treatise is really anonymous. It is best to leave the matter in doubt, and gladly acknowledge the divine authority of the epistle.

Destination It is clearly addressed to Hebrew Christians who were members of some definite community (13:7,17-19,22-24). Both writer and readers were known to each other. Timothy seems to have been known to both readers and writer (13:27). The precise locality is quite unknown, some thinking it was in Jerusalem, others favouring Rome (13,23,24), or Antioch.

Date This cannot be fixed with precision. It is generally thought to have been written before the fall of Jerusalem, AD 70. It was written when the Temple was still standing (8:4; 9:6; 12:27; 13:10). The allusion to "the day approaching" (10:25), may indicate the catastrophe in AD 70, in the destruction of Jerusalem. The date is somewhere about AD 68, soon after the martyrdom of Paul.

Purpose These Jewish Christians were in grave danger of apostatizing, or “drifting” away from Christ (2:1). The readers were toying with the idea of withdrawing from Christ, probably because of growing hostility from outside. They were intellectually at sea. They could not understand how venerable Mosaic institutions, ordained by God, could be swept away.

In order to preserve them from apostasy the writer gives an exposition of the final supremacy of the priesthood, sacrifice and covenant of Jesus Christ. The Epistle was written to lead from immaturity to maturity (6:1). “Let us be carried along.”

Plan This is the only place in the N.T. where Christ is set forth as Priest. Two texts seem to sum up the Epistle. “Thou art my Son; Thou art a Priest” (W.H. Griffith Thomas).

Trace the many keywords found in the Epistle: “perfection”; “eternal”, companion word “forever”; “heaven, heavens, heavenly”; “better”; “lest” and “let us”, which help to a full appreciation of its purpose and plan. Listen to the five appeals or warnings (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:20; 10:26-39; 12:15-29).

“The Changeless Christ” (1:12; 13:8)

This epistle, without introduction or superscription, brings us into the presence of God that we may hear the voice of “His Son.” It presents contrasts rather than comparisons; its theme being that the Son of God, Founder of Christianity, precedes, exceeds and supersedes all. The key to the epistle may be found in the words of chapter 10:9 “He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.”

We are made intelligent as to His glories as the Son of God; ch.1. He is associated with the throne of God, and everything He touches takes character from Him, the unchanging Christ. He is the Son of Man, ch.2; Apostle and Leader, ch.3:4; He is the Rest Giver, ch.4; Great High Priest, chs.5-7; Minister in the Sanctuary, chs.8,9; The glory of His atoning work, ch.10; Author and Finisher of faith, chs.11,12, and the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, ch.13.

The thought of the Lord’s stability stands majestic above the best of the Old Covenant. Created works, whether in heaven, or on earth, will perish ch. 1:10; but He remains unchanged and unchanging, “The Same” 1:12.

• His Undiminished Power (1:10)

He is creation’s unchanging God and universal sovereign Lord, v.10; Psalm 102:22-27. The self-existing “I am” of almighty Lordship became the “I am” of abject loneliness, Ps. 102:6. Note the five “I am’s” in this psalm.

He is the everlasting Being who brought everything that is visible into existence. He is the One who is creator and upholder of all things by the

Word of His power, 1:3. The “worlds”, is “ages,” referring to the plan and arrangement of the various dispensations through which the created world has passed, is passing and will pass.

In chapter 1 verses 11 and 12, the creation’s transience is contrasted with the Creator’s perpetuity. Creation will change, He cannot change; He never fails, for the peerless Lord Jesus is changeless and endless. In His incomparable glory He is much “better” than the angels. In His Divine nature, they worship Him, vs.5,6. In His Kingly nature, they obey Him, vs.7,9. In His creative nature, they respond to Him, vs.10-12. In His exalted nature, they serve Him, vs.13,14. The immutability of His Person gives character to all He does as the Omnipotent sustainer of all things.

His Unsullied Purity (7:27)

His personal characteristics never change since He ever lives. There was absolute harmony existing between His unblemished character and unblamable conduct. His raiment remains undefiled, and His reputation undamaged. He is “holy” toward God in the sense of reverence. It is a moral feature, holiness of character, with qualities such as godly fear 5:5.

“Harmless” in His disposition towards men. He was “guileless”, entirely free from all malice. This speaks of His spotless character. “Undefiled”—in Himself. Unstained, unsullied in His personal character. No moral impurity of defilement ever marked this lovely Man, thus fitting Him for a heavenly priesthood. “Separated from sinners” permanently in His life and ministry at God’s right hand. Lifted out from among men and withdrawn from them. This was a historical occurrence which introduced an abiding state. It is God’s vindication of His sinlessness. “Higher than the heavens”, “removed out of the earthly sphere and elevated into communion with God where nothing intervenes between the face of God and Him” 4:10; 9:24 A.B. Davidson.

His Untransferable Priesthood (5:5,6; 7:25-28)

His priesthood has a value beyond all price, and a virtue above all that is precious, for He continues in the power of an endless life.

He is before nature, beyond time, and above space, superior in sovereignty, and sufficient in sympathy. “Time will fail me,” 11:32, to speak of His Immutability, who is glorious in majesty at the right hand of power, 8:1. This High Priest is tender, was tempted and is sinless, 4:15; a helpful priest, 4:16. An appointed and compassionate priest, 5:1-2; a royal priest, 5,6. He has entered within the veil, 6:19,20. He is able, saving, interceding, holy, undefiled and an exalted priest, 7:25,26. He is an enthroned high priest, 8:1, and a minister of the sanctuary, 8:2. He made propitiation for sins, 2:17; 7:27. He offered one atoning sacrifice, 10:12, and perfected the sanctified. He is the Mediator of the new covenant, 7:22. He has made

available to us eternal salvation, eternal redemption and eternal inheritance, 5:9; 9:12,15.

We can trust His unwearied watchfulness, His untiring faithfulness and His unceasing helpfulness in every time of need. This Priest could not have had a predecessor and most certainly can never have a successor. "A priest forever". His life is endless, His Priesthood is changeless and His intercession is ceaseless.

His Unlimited Provision (4:14; 13:20)

We are assured of daily help because of His personal excellence 4:14; and His personal experience v.15. Priesthood has reference to believers and has in view our temptations. As Priest He sustains and His ministry is preventative in character, against us committing sin.

As "Son of God" He has all the resources of Deity, power and provision. The name "Jesus" tells us of His humanity, nearness, oneness and sympathy. His greatness is inferred in His passing through the heavens. He is exalted and victorious having ascended to the right hand of God. He was thoroughly tested by temptation, remained sinlessly perfect, and is sympathetically understanding in His help. This help is available as we "keep on drawing near", for we have spiritual freedom to approach God. Mercy is the quality of the High Priest, 2:17; and grace, as that of God. We need mercy because of our sins, and grace because of our weakness. The guarantee that all our need will be supplied, is His resurrection and Shepherd character 13:20. This choice expression "that great Shepherd" assures us of care and comfort. As the good Shepherd, we see His sympathy as a substitute, Jn. 10:11. As the great Shepherd, His sufficiency as a sustainer, Heb. 13:20. As chief Shepherd, it is His supremacy as a sovereign, 1 Pet. 5:4. He has triumphed over death, and the Devil, 2:14. Now He sways the sceptre of sovereign supremacy in God's presence, 1:8,14. His care in the provision made for Israel on their journeys, would remind us of abundant provision for us, Psalms 78:52,53; Psalm 79:13; Psalm 80:1.

His Unfailing Presence (13:5,6)

The sin of our day is "covetousness"; the need of the hour is contentment. "The best tent in which to dwell is content". This is a virtue we need to cultivate in this age of materialism. This is based upon the covenant relationship between God and His people, and His faithfulness and goodness.

His verse of assurance "I will never leave thee" brings us into a right relation to earthly things. He never withdraws the sustaining hand of help. This promise is an adaptation of several passages Gen. 28:15; Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; Isa. 41:17; and verse 6 is taken from Psalm 118:6.

Here is the promise of His personal and perpetual presence. "I will not at

any time, for any cause, leave thee or forsake thee. My aid and my help shall be continuous.” The presence of the constant Christ means stability, for He is eternally fresh and fragrantly faithful.

“The Lord is my helper” brings consolation; “I will not fear” is holy boldness and confidence in God. May the doxology of vs.20,21 be our response in adoration and worship.

A suggested analysis:

“CHRIST THE MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY” 8:2

(A) **THE EXCELLENCY OF HIS PERSON** chs.1-4

The Lord Jesus is the Expressive Son 1:1-3; the Established Sovereign 4:14; the Exalted Saviour 2:1-9; the Experienced Captain 2:10-13; the Emancipating Kinsman 2:14-15; the Enabling Priest 2:16-18; the Exemplary Son 3:1-6; the Enjoyed Sabbath 4:1-10; Help from the Exposing Word 4:12,13; and the Encouraging Throne 4:14-16. May we adore Him.

(B) **THE EFFICIENCY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD** chs.5-8

1. *His sufficiency* 2:16-18. He undertakes for us. He is merciful, faithful and helpful.
2. *His sympathy* 4:14-16. He feels for us. His exaltation leads us to confession, v.14; His experience gives us confidence, vs.15,16.
3. *His suitability* 5:1-10: He understands us. His divine Appointment 1-4; Approval 5-9; Anointing v.10.
4. *His strength* 6:19-20: He enables us. The exalted Lord is our Forerunner and File-Leader.
5. *His superiority* 7:1-28: He inspires us. His Superiority Illustrated 1-4; Intimated 5-10; Indicated 11-18; Established 19-22; Vindicated 23-25.
6. *His sphere defined* 8:1-6: To assure us. He is in heaven 1,2; His helpful ministry 4-6.
7. *His covenant better* 8:7-13. Its superiority; spirituality 10; and efficacy 11; and approachability.

(C) **THE EFFICACY OF HIS PROPITIATION** chs.9-10:18

1. *Failure of the Old System.* It was Typical 9:1-5; Temporal 9:8, Material 9:1,8; Ceremonial 13,14; Non-Moral 13-19; Non-Effectual 10:1-4.
2. *Fullness of the New Covenant.* A Better Priest 9:11; Sacrifice 9:26; Sanctuary 9:24; Ministry 9:15; Blessing 10:10; Privileges 10:18.

(D) **THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF HIS PATHWAY** chs.10:19—13:25

1. *Encouragement of faith* 10:19-37. Freedom of access 19,20; Fitness for worship 21-23; Fellowship of saints 24,25.

2. *Examples of faith* 11:1—12:2. Primeval period 11:4-7; Patriarchal period 8-22; Mosaic 23-29; Prophetic 30-33; Monarchical 34—12:2.
3. *Education in faith* 12:3-17. Discipline of Adversity 3-5; Desire of the Father 6-17.
4. *Experience by Faith* 12:18-29. The Better Mount Zion. The Better Hope—Christ.
5. *Expression of love* 13:1-25. For Christians 1-7; For Christ 8-21; Salutation and benediction 23-25.
We must emulate Him.

The Incomparable Son (ch.1)

He is the Revealer of God v.3a, the ruler of creation v.3b, the Redeemer of men v.3c, the Recognized Heir v.2. His relationship is acknowledged vs.5-6, the righteous king with rightful prerogatives vs.8-9; His reliable work as Creator v.10. He remains because of perpetuity v.12, and will receive universal dominion v.13.

His expressive sonship v.3a

He exactly represents the Father. God is seen, or is made visible, in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect impress of the nature, character and power of God. He is a distinct Person from the Father and yet one with Him in the Godhead (John 1:1-2; John 1:18; Col. 1:15).

The divine glory which once rested upon “the tent of meeting” has been fully manifested in the Incarnate Word (John 1:14 RV, 14:9). Just as a coin bears the image of the die-stamp from which it is struck, so the Son expresses the Father.

His expounding sonship vs.1-2

This prophet not only speaks FOR God but AS God. The former ministry was partial and fragmentary; differential—“various ways,” patriarchal—“to the fathers,” preliminary, progressive and diverse in the manner of presentation. The OT prophets have been overshadowed by the coming of Christ into the world both as the Son of God and the Word of God. The Son is God’s full and final revelation of Himself to man, not through mere man but through Himself becoming man 1 Tim. 3:16.

His eternal heirship v.2b

This means that the universe belongs to Him by divine appointment and He will soon reign over it, Rom. 8:17; Psalm 24. His inheritance is over all things and is eternal as well as universal. He is the mediatorial heir of the

universe. The future universal recognition of Christ's sovereignty over the whole of the created order cannot fail to be realized because it is the subject of the divine decree *Psa. 2:8; Phil. 2:9-11*.

His expiating sonship v.3b

The Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the ages became the sin-bearer. The sovereign Lord stooped to become the sacrificial Lamb. This is sacrificial language, it points out the objective effect of Christ's atonement, *Exod. 30:10; 29:36*. He effected it, by His sole activity, all by Himself. He was at once priest and victim, so defilement is purged away. His was a finished redemption, for "He sat down," becoming in His present session an interceding priest on the basis of an accomplished redemption, *8:1-2; 10:12*.

His eminent sonship vs.4-5

He has an acquired superiority resulting from His resurrection, ascension and exaltation as Lord and Christ, *Acts 2*. He has a higher position or rank. His name as Son being more distinguished, more eminent. The superiority of the new covenant resides in the excellence of the Mediator through whom it is inaugurated. His fitness to fulfil this function rests upon His Sonship as the Messiah. He has also inherent superiority for His is uncreated Deity and angels are mere creatures *v.7*. Christ's absolute supremacy over angels was openly demonstrated when He entered into the Messianic inheritance as the triumphant Son of Man *2:7,9*.

He is addressed by God as Son, *v.5a*, and acknowledged by God as Son, *v.5b*. His first advent by birth is in view here. Angels are collectively referred to as the "sons of God," but SON is singular to Christ, and incommunicable to any other.

His exhibited sonship vs.6-7

The word "again" is yet future. His second advent, the subjection of the inhabited earth to the sovereignty of the exalted Mediator. Being heir He shall be brought again into the habitable world and installed into His inheritance and all angels shall worship Him. "First-born" is a recognized name of the Messiah the honoured heir of the universe *Psa. 89:27*. In *Col. 1:15*, "First-born" is a title of uncreated Deity. He is the Creator of all things. Angels are commanded as creatures "to worship Him," their Creator, they are His messengers and servants, *v.7*.

His established sonship vs.8-9

The Son is addressed as God, attributes of Deity are ascribed to Him and He is seen to be incomparable. As the king is divine, His kingdom must endure forever, for He is the Eternal Sovereign. *Psalm 45* describes the

theocratic kingdom, it is viewed ideally. His dominion over all things remains for ever and His righteous kingdom rule is intimated. Established by God His throne is permanent in character. His sceptre is reliant for rectitude and his rule is beneficent in effect. During the period of His humiliation Christ proved His undeviating attachment to righteousness and His inflexible hatred of iniquity.

His immeasurable anointing may refer to the heavenly coronation which followed the victorious completion of his earthly ministry.

His enabling sonship vs.10-12

Superior to angels in His work as Creator. God addresses His Son as Lord, that is Jehovah. The Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old. Christ as Son carried out the original act of creation, bringing it into being. "As Jehovah He stands apart from the world and above it—being before it, for He laid the foundations; and after it, for He shall fold it up as a garment, and while it waxes old He stands over against it, unchanging" (A.B. Davidson).

The creation's transience is contrasted with the Creator's perpetuity. His works will perish but He Himself remains, changeless and endless 13:8.

His exalted sonship vs.13-14

The Son in exaltation is the end and aim of history, 2:19; 10:13; Eph. 1:10. Angels are only servants helping forward by their service, to the heirs of salvation, the purpose of God in the earth.

The Psalm quoted presents Christ as Potentate and Priest and all things will be put in subjection under His feet. No angel is ever addressed in this fashion. As Prophet listen to Him, as Heir we will share with Him, as Priest may we thank Him, as Son and Jehovah worship Him, as King submit to Him, as Creator be moulded by Him, and as Lord surrender to Him.

The Interested Kinsman-Redeemer (ch.2)

Here we see the glories of the Son of Man consequent upon His humiliation on the Cross v.9. He is the Revealing Prophet 1-3, the Representative Man 5-10, His Relation to the saints 11-13, His Redeeming work 14-16, and the Reliable Priest 17-18.

In chapter 1 we see the hallmarks of His deity, now we consider some features of His humanity. We trace His moral history as the Redeemer and the Representative Man.

The Communicating Prophet vs.1-3

Bringing to us "so great salvation." God began it in the sending of Christ,

it was declared to us by the Lord, the Spirit bestowed it in manifold gifts, and men beheld it, and bore witness to it. How great? Great originally in the heart of God, great historically in the mission of Christ, and great experientially in our lives.

Therefore give "closer attention." We have an obligation to obedience. There is a message to hear and a peril to fear.

The Competent Ruler vs.5-9

In the coming "kingdom age" angels will not rule. Authority will be invested in the Son of Man, who will be "King of Kings" Rev. 19:16. God made man to be the crown of creation and to tenant the earth as beneficent owner, having dominion over the works of God's hands. Psalm 8 describes the high destiny for which man was created. Man is insignificant, and yet God is mindful of him, he is unimportant, yet God cares for him. Man is destined to be crowned with glory and honour v.8. The period of subjection to the angels is to be superseded by man's final exaltation over them. The terms of this prediction are such that it could find fulfilment only in "the man Christ Jesus" to whom it is applied v.9. The certainty of its realization is guaranteed by the present exaltation of our risen Head.

In becoming man Christ took upon Him a nature that was capable of dying. By His vicarious death He has regained man's lost dominion and one day all things will be subdued unto Him 1:13. He is the key to man's eventual rule over the earth. The reason for His death is given in v.10.

The Committed Leader vs.10-13

The work of Christ on the cross was in harmony with God's eternal nature as moral Governor of the world. It was in accordance with the perfections of the character of God to bring "sons to glory" v.10. These "sons" needed a pathfinder, a pioneer, a file leader and Jesus became this pathfinder through the sufferings of the cross. He has the Imperial rank, for He is Chief in leadership and the Champion of our cause. He is also the author of our sanctification. Our blessed Lord is both the Leader and the Road, John 14:6.

"Sanctification" in Hebrews is always associated with Christ, never with the Spirit, it refers to position rather than condition. What Christ has done for us, rather than the work of the Spirit in us, see 9:12-14; 10:9; 14:29; 13:12. The dual thought of oneness and sanctification is seen in John 17; 20:17. We are consecrated to Christ and to the family. We are made brothers in Him, and He brings us home to glory.

We share a common humanity, "all of one," for Christ came down to our level, the passage brings out the oneness of Christ with His people in their humiliation. A threefold proof of this association is seen in the quotations which follow in vs.12,13.

Christ is the Head of a new order of humanity 12-13, He is the Risen Priest

who sings in triumph after suffering Psalm 22:22. Isaiah's own experience as the rejected prophet is applied to Christ Isa. 8:17,18. Isaiah's ministry resulted in the emergence of an elect remnant Isa. 6:13 "the children which God hath given me." Thus there is a close identification between Christ and all believers.

The Conquering Redeemer vs.14-15

The threefold purpose of the Incarnation is seen here. There are two elements in our Lord's manhood—the Reality of it—"He partook of the same." The miracle of it—"He took part of the same."

His sharing in "flesh and blood" was deliberate, and voluntary. Incarnation was with a view to shedding His blood. He took part of the same, that is Bethlehem. "That He might disannul," that is Calvary. In assuming manhood He did not come to reign in it, but to suffer and die in it v.14. Note His Condescension, "He partook." His Cross, "Through death." His Conquest, to "render powerless the Devil."

The divine side of His work is seen in vs.10-13, the human side in vs.14-15. Christ must become our Kinsman-Redeemer in order to crush the Serpent. The Seed of the Woman has bruised Satan's head, setting us free from his tyranny. The power of the devil has been effectively broken by our Saviour's death on Calvary.

The Compassionate High Priest vs.16-18

The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus made possible His becoming a High Priest. In becoming man, Christ did not espouse the cause of angels, but the descendants of Abraham or "a seed of Abraham." He puts His divine saving hand upon men and women in whose hearts has been evoked a living faith towards Himself. He will bring them to glory and present them before the Father's face. Thus will be realized God's prime purpose for man of Lordship and headship.

The present tense is used here, "He taketh hold" suggesting that the divine hand is still effectively placed upon everyone who is being brought to glory. As He took the hand of Peter in answer to his cry, "Lord save me," so despite all that is in me of weakness and sinfulness, the strong hand of the Son of God has been placed upon me.

The Aaronic priesthood was lacking in sympathy to men, and faithfulness to God Hosea 4:4-9.

Propitiation is by blood, and as Priest at Calvary He offered up Himself and shed His blood on earth.

In life He was a teaching Priest; in death a sacrificing Priest; and now in heaven an interceding Priest. He is the propitiation (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

The day of atonement is the type (Lev. 16) and Christ the perfect fulfilment of the same. Verse 17 gives us the collective aspect, v.18 the

individual application, the blessings that accrue to us. His deity secures to us His unfailing presence and His unlimited power. His perfect humanity assures us of His sympathy and compassion. He can keep us in temptations for He is acquainted with suffering and is able to succour us. These verses emphasize His suitability, sympathy and support. He has the ability and readiness of mind to help us under every trial and bring us through to His praise and glory.

The Lord Jesus was tempted from without, but never from within. He could never be tempted to sin by lusts or passions within Himself, for there was no sin in Him and nothing to respond to sin.

Let us come boldly to the throne of grace for therein lies our strength for each day ch.4:16. May we avail ourselves of His prevailing ministry 1:25 "before the face of God."

The Infallible Christ (3:1-6)

The writer has already demonstrated the supreme glory of Christ over prophets and angels. Now he proceeds by a series of comparisons and sharp contrasts to show our Lord's superiority to Moses.

The consideration of Jesus v.1

How inexhaustible is this consideration, and how truly inspiring as we "contemplate attentively" the faithfulness of Jesus as APOSTLE, representing God among men, and as HIGH PRIEST, representing men before God. The outstanding OT personality combining these two offices was Moses. Saints are qualified to contemplate Jesus for we are "holy" as to our position and character, "sanctified in Christ Jesus." We are "brethren," as to our communion and association. Not by race, but by believing on Christ. We are "partakers" as to our calling, a present heavenly state. We have been made meet to be partakers (Col. 1:12). Our calling is heavenly, distinct from the nation of Israel, (Eph. 1:3; 2:5,6; 4:1; 5:30-32).

The contemplation of Jesus vs.1-6

We ought to thoroughly think of His dignity, His excellency, and His authority. Think of His Name—personal—"Jesus"; His offices—prophetical—"Apostle"; priestly—"High Priest." Think of His character—"faithful" RV. Think of His work, His dignity as "Son over the house" and of His superiority—"worthy of more glory."

Three of the greatest blessings and privileges vouchsafed to the Jewish nation were: The Law of God (Rom. 3:1-2); The Levitical Priesthood (Exod. 29:1) and The Land of Rest, Canaan (Josh. 1:2). The Law was given by Moses, the priesthood was invested in Aaron, and Canaan was conquered by

Joshua. The writer proves Jesus to be greater than Moses as Apostle (ch.3), greater than Aaron as Priest (chs.5-8) and greater than Joshua as Leader and Giver of Rest (ch.4).

The consideration is not said to be between Moses and Christ but between Moses and "this man" (v.3) that is Jesus, and His Humanity as Son of Man (ch.2). We must consider Him, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to become like Him down here. This is the God-given way for deepening our appreciation, increasing our acquaintance with Him and enlarging our affection for Him. We are losing the holy art of habitually considering Him and it is seen in the poverty of our worship and lack of maturity in Christian living. The name "Jesus" (Matt. 1:21) combines the title of Jehovah with the work of salvation which He accomplished.

Our confession

"Even Jesus" (RV). In our confession, He holds the place of Apostle and High Priest, in contrast to the confession of Moses by Israel. In whatever ways Jesus may be esteemed by others, the believer has the inestimable privilege and honour to confess that He does not come behind Moses in faithfulness.

The comparison, His similarity to Moses

Moses was the object of the deepest veneration among the Jews, so there is Divine wisdom in speaking of Him to these Hebrew Christians. He was a type of Christ, both in character and career. Moses was their deliverer, leader, administrator, prophet and mediator with God. The comparison instituted between Jesus and Moses reminds us of Moses' greatness. Christ like Moses was a Prophet (Deut. 18:15) and each introduced a new dispensation (John 1:17). Each were divinely commissioned and supported in the work for God. They were Apostles of God and had a message for their day, both were marked by devotion to God and to duty, sincerity of purpose, patient forbearance, complete unselfishness and absolute surrender to God. The point of similarity here is their faithfulness (Num. 12:7; Matt. 17:5; Rev. 1:5). The words, "Who is faithful," is the general designation of His inherent character. He is today what He ever was, utterly faithful, so we in turn should have this feature in our character and confession.

The contrast, His superiority to Moses

We see His superior glory as the Builder of the house (v.3). Moses only introduced the Hebrew economy, God was the Founder and Moses was part of it. Christ was the Author of that which He instituted. The glory of Moses faded, but the Lord's glory is abiding. The degree of His superiority is clearly acknowledged in the fact stated that the builder of a house has more honour than the house.

Jesus is superior in rank and position, for Moses was part of the system entrusted to him. He did not originate it. Christ as Son, is the Founder of the ages (1:2). He is the Architect and Builder of the Church and is thus greater than the house He established. Moses is viewed as part of the building and Christ as the Builder (vs.3,4). Then Moses is viewed as servant but Christ as Son (vs.5,6). "The servant abideth not, but the Son abideth ever" (John 8:35). The Mosaic order pointed forward to the better thing which should come. Christ was the subject of such testimony.

Two houses are here in view, the house of Israel in which Moses was a servant; and the Christian Church over which Christ is as Son. The latter is composed of the saints of this dispensation (Eph. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:15).

Verse 6 explains what is meant by God's house today. We prove we are God's if we hold fast. Our salvation is not dependent on our holding fast. Endurance is the proof of our reality. Here our privilege and responsibility are emphasized. The proof of our being in the house is seen in corresponding conduct; holding fast our boldness and glorying of the hope unto the end. The faithfulness of Moses and ourselves is finite and temporal, but that of Christ is infinite and eternal.

Think of His greater glory, His office, work, appointment, faithfulness, honour, rank and superiority, and may we prove our relationship to Him by saintly conduct, clear and courageous confession and exultant hope.

The Introducing Christ (4:1-13)

The Lord Jesus is greater than Isaac in heirship, 1:2; than angels in Sonship and relationship, 1:4; than Adam in rulership, 2:5-9; than Moses in apostleship and stewardship, ch.3, and now we see Him greater than Joshua in Leadership ch.4. Christ is the Sanctuary rest, the true Rest-Giver, Matt. 11:28-30. He is greater than Joshua in His victory v.8; Josh. 23:1, the Victorious One. Greater than David in the Sanctuary v.7; Psa. 95:6-11; Psa. 132; the Gracious One. Greater than Caleb in His consistency 3:16b, the Faithful One; and greater than Solomon in His clemency, 4:16, the Merciful One.

The rest of God vs.1-11 To save us from wandering

The call to rest vs.1,2. Exhortation to godly fear. The promise of entering the "Rest" of God remains open and this calls for faith. No earthly Canaan could exhaust the meaning of that rest. Israelites missed Canaan because they did not add faith to the promises of God v.2. The application is made to us in v.2. God always works on the principle of faith. It is exemplified in the offering of Abel, the obedience of Abraham and the choice of Moses, and in each case faith was rewarded by the blessing of God.

These "Hebrews" are exhorted not to come short of it as Israel did in their day vs.1,11. Some of the promises are given in Exodus 23:20-33, and they needed to be received by an obedient faith. Genuine faith is always obedient and persistent. The Rest God provided was preached unto them and unto us, v.2.

The character of rest vs.3-10. In verse 4 we have Creation rest. God rested after the work of creation was completed, this is rest typified because of a work done. In verse 3 it is Christian rest, rest realized because of faith exercised; faith is the key that opens the door. In verse 8 it is Canaan rest, rest prophesied, because of victory won. Some Israelites did enter Canaan with Joshua, but even these did not enjoy the final rest which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Verse 9 is Celestial Rest, this is anticipated because of the work of redemption; God rested after His work of creation v.4; Christ rested after His work of redemption 1:3; Rest is not cessation from work, nor inaction, but the perfecting of activity.

Exod. 31:17 reminds us that the Sabbath is a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever. He called Israel to share His rest in creation, by appointing the seventh day as a sign between Himself and them. Creation did not exhaust God's rest, because He spake by Moses to Israel of a rest long after creation was finished. This description of His rest is connected with Canaan for this was His purpose for them. They failed to enter, v.5, so God spake of another day of rest, which is deeper and more spiritual—a Sabbath rest, ceasing from one's own works. This promise was made five hundred years after Joshua had given some rest, v.8.

We enjoy today the Rest of Salvation, of the forgiven sinner—entered in the past Matt. 1:28. The Rest of Service of the willing servant—enjoyed in the present, and the Rest of Satisfaction, as glorified saints—experienced in the future Heb. 4:9, all through the gateway of faith in God.

Compare this chapter with the teaching of Leviticus 23 and 25. The Sabbath DAY—rest from physical toil, Lev. 23:1-3; the Sabbatic WEEK—rest in spiritual life and labour, 23:10-22; the Sabbatic MONTH—rest in spiritual worship 23:24-33; the Sabbatic SEVENTH MONTH—rest in a spiritual frame of mind vs.34-44; the Sabbatic SEVENTH YEAR—rest in spiritual hope 25:8-55.

Rest in Christ vs.9,10. Moses led Israel to the border of the land of promise; but Joshua introduced them to the rest of Canaan. So the law led only up to Christ, it is Christ alone who leads us into the heavenly rest.

There is rest from weariness, sorrow and sin v.8; and rest in the completion of God's new creation v.9; this rest will never end.

In that eternal rest we will worship and serve our God, but without fatigue, distress, affliction or persecution. In that day we will gladly acknowledge that our entrance into that rest depends entirely upon the

redemptive achievement of Christ. Jesus is better than Joshua since He provides a better rest than Joshua did. Joshua in his life and work is a good illustration if not a type of Christ. There are many similarities, but Christ is greater in many ways. Better because of His distinct Sonship, diligence in service, dependence upon God, devotion to duty and displacement of all other servants. Unlike Joshua He never depended upon flesh and blood Num. 13; was never directed by human wisdom Josh. 3:3,4; never dismayed by superior forces Josh. 8:1; 7:6; 10:2; never deceived by any enemies Josh. 9:4 nor ever defeated in any conflict.

Thus our Lord is the Introducing Christ, leading us to rest and victory. God desires from us now, for present enjoyment, an attitude of soul which will give us glorious rest of heart and produce in us loyalty of conduct and character.

Our response to His rest v.11 (RV). Here is the application of the argument of the previous verses, "Let us give diligence" and "today". For us God's "today" has arrived. The works of Judaism avail nothing, so we should be diligent to enjoy God's rest provided in Christ. The spirit of disobedience that marked the Israelites in refusing to enter the land of Canaan is a warning to us today. Unbelief leads to disaster and Israel's attitude betrayed an indescribable hardness of heart, a wilful rebellion of spirit, and a strange narrowness of mind. The warning closes with a twofold reminder, first about the Word of God v.12, and then about God Himself v.13. The judicial power of the Word of God is seen here. It doomed the disobedient Israelites to exclusion from Canaan and shall exclude the unbelieving from Heaven. Their disobedience was direct opposition to the Will of God.

The Word of God vs.12-13 To Save us from Wilfulness

The "Word" of God is personified here, and endowed with all the attributes of God Himself, with whom it is identified, v.13. The identification, however, is with God, not with the Son, for there is no trace of the Personal Word or Logos here. The Word of God is a minister of death to those who reject it and of life to those who receive it (2 Cor. 2:15,16). The word is living, it possesses life, power, and efficiency, and is constantly active.

It is active—it possesses energy, energetically efficacious; as such it is meaningful to us, applicable to our lives. It is "sharper", it has power, it has an incisive and penetrating quality. It lays bare self-delusions, judges the unseen motives of the heart. "Piercing" means to "go through", signifying that the Word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being. "Dividing" piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow. The reference may be to the knife of the priest as he tested the lamb for sacrifice. "Discerner" or "critical of", gives the idea of discrimination and judgment blended together. It takes cognizance of the emotions and

purposes, as well as the actions which they produce. This word sits in judgment, upon us and upon unbelief which leads to departure from God.

In view of its power, it is perilous to trifle with it. The Word of God convicts, Heb. 4:12; it converts Psalms 19:7; it cleanses John 15:2; it corrects 2 Tim. 3:16; it confirms John 8:31; it consecrates John 17:17 and it comforts Psalms 119:30,54. The Word that searches, expresses and represents God Who is Omniscient and is our Judge. From Him there is nothing concealed—all things are naked in His sight. There is no covering possible, either natural or artificial, that can hide us from the eyes of God (Gen. 3:8).

Everything is revealed. The word “laid open” means “having the throat exposed” with the head bent back. This may be a reference to the sacrificial victim slain for the altar. Nothing escapes the notice of God, He is Omniscient. There is a day of reckoning coming, and we will have to give account of our lives to God.

May we live each day in the light of “that day” and test our living by allowing the Word of God to criticize us, may we tremble at His Word. It will keep our thoughts and affections subjected to the will of God and it will help us to appreciate the Lord Jesus, who represents us before the Throne of God. We have a Priest there to save us from weakness.

The Inaugurating Christ (4:14-5:10)

This portion introduces us to the main part of the great theme of the book. The word “High Priest” does not occur in any other Epistle. “High Priest” and “Great High Priest” are referred to seventeen times in Hebrews. “Priest” and “priests” ten times; “Priesthood”, five times. The subject of Priesthood introduced in 2:17,18 is developed in 4:14-5:10. Here it is compared with Aaron’s; in chapter 7 it is contrasted to Aaron’s by being likened to Melchisedek’s. Jesus is presented as being a merciful and faithful “High Priest” 2:17. His faithfulness is discussed in 3:1-6. Here the writer deals with His gracious and sympathetic nature 4:14-16. In 5:1-4 we see the general qualifications of the priesthood and how Christ excellently satisfies these qualifications 5:5-10.

The encouragement of His priesthood 4:14-16 Its comfort

The subjects, “Jesus” and “Son of God” are now combined in this section. Our Lord is called “great”. This speaks of His dignity. He is great personally and officially. He is great because of His divine nature 1:1-2; 3:6. He is the great resource of His needy people in the wilderness. He is able to keep them from falling. Being a person of high distinction and power, He eclipses Aaron and that order of priesthood. Being “High”, He has preeminent authority in His office. He is not a subordinate. Israel had many high priests, but none was ever called “Great”.

"Priest" implies a ministry of the sympathy of the One who cares, comforts and welcomes all who approach Him. He is perfectly able and perfectly willing to intercede for us. The words, "Passed through the heavens", tell of victory, and refer to His exaltation 1:3; 2:9.

Thus His ministry excels the Aaronic for it takes place not in an earthly tabernacle but in the very Presence of God. It infers that all man-ordained priesthoods and ceremonies are abandoned by God, set aside for ever. These heavens were the veil which our high Priest "passed through" into the heaven of heavens, the immediate Presence of God.

"Jesus", this name bespeaks His nearness, oneness, and sympathy with us because of His humanity and His earthly history (2:9). Jesus did not come out of the race of man, He came into it. God prepared for Him a body (2:16; 10:7).

"Son of God", This ascription declares His Deity and sufficiency. He has absolute power and overthrew Satan and the demons who attempted to impede His progress to the Throne of God (ch. 2:14; Col. 2:15).

The bringing together of these references to the human and divine natures was to encourage the readers to "hold fast" their confession.

He has ability: "Touched" because He suffered like us. He also suffers when we suffer. Had he never become incarnate, He might have pitied us, but He could not have sympathized with His people. The double negative is equal to a strong affirmation, it is impossible for Him not to sympathize; not only feeling FOR US, but feeling WITH US.

"Infirmities", do not necessarily refer to sin here, nor are they limited to sufferings; they cover all the frailties of human nature. The Lord not only came out of all His trials sinless; in Him sin did not exist. He came through all His temptations victorious (12:2). His sinless nature contained nothing that responded to temptation, as does ours (John 14:30). We have two things to help us:

Consciousness of possession The word, "having", a present participle, indicates that He exists and acts as Priest continuously without intermission. Our worship is now carried on in the heavenly sanctuary alone (Heb. 10:19; Phil. 3:3).

Contact with the throne To "draw near" is really to "keep on drawing near". There is Mercy for justification and Grace for sanctification. The mercy available to man, and obtainable from the Throne of Grace, is ministered by the High Priest.

Today there is no separating veil, no isolating distance, no thunder and no fire. We enjoy nearness, intimacy and abundance of grace and mercy through Christ. Our approach should become a daily spiritual exercise. There is a message for our conscience, "hold fast". Keep clinging to it and never give it up. There is a word for the heart, "Come right up". He understands and undertakes.

The excellency of His priesthood 5:1-10 His credentials

From the Supremacy of Christ as Priest (4:14-16) we turn to His Suitability for the Priesthood 5:1-4, and His Sufficiency as Priest vs.5-10.

The Qualifications of a True Priest vs. 1-4 The opening word "for" is almost equivalent to "now", giving an additional fact and demonstrating that whatever was essential to the office of a high priest is found in Christ. He had all the characteristics and qualifications of a High Priest, but had none of the imperfections of the Aaronic order. The essentials of priesthood are fellowship with man, sympathy with infirmity, and appointment from God.

Ordination (v.1) He must resemble man and be human. He must reveal God and be holy. This chapter is wholly given to interpreting the purpose and principles of the sacred office. Selected from among men and therefore no stranger to those whom He represents. He serves on behalf of men in their dealings with God.

Compassion (v.2) He is to be an individual of wide sympathy and compassion, moderate in his feelings. Neither too severe nor too lenient because he knows what weakness is. But this unmeasured mildness cannot be compared with the unlimited sympathy which the sinless Son of God feels for those who have wandered from the way (4:15).

Representation (v.3) Verse 2 presents the priest manward—sympathy; verse 3 is the priest Godward—acting for the people. Especially on the Day of Atonement when he identified himself with the people and offered for himself and the nation an expiating sacrifice. That ministry is, mediation before God, and ministering blessing to men. Christ's sacrifice was absolute and final (10:10). Under the old covenant no sacrifice was offered for wilful and persistent sin and this is also true under the new. This is a basic principle in the Epistle (cp Num. 15:22-23).

Call and Consecration (v.4). No man lawfully assumes the office of high priest unless divinely called to it. Any assuming the office were judged as was Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Only Aaron and his sons were called of God. Aaron's call honoured him (v.4), Christ's call glorified Him (v.5). Christ had Divine appointment (v.4), Divine approval (vs.1,2,5) and Divine anointing (v.10).

To verify His appointment, two quotations are made from the Psalms to show that He not only bears the insignia of the Priest in His character, but He receives His investiture through a heavenly calling. In Psalm 2, He is heralded as Son at the Incarnation, and in Psalm 110, He is honoured as Priest at His Ascension. God bestowed upon Christ the title, function and dignity of this priesthood. The double glory of Kingship and Priesthood, as seen in Melchisedec, is stated here. The glory of Kingship is Christ's (1:3; 2:9), and now the glory of the Priesthood (5:5), both of them received from His Father.

His appointment is better in its Source—by God; in its Relationship—"My Son"; and better in its Order—"of Melchisedec".

He was greeted in glory in the greatness of Sonship, and saluted in the Heavenly Sanctuary as Priest. He has all the credentials of high rank and noble office. Psalm 110 describes Messiah as King (vs. 1-3); Priest (v.4); and Conqueror (vs.5-7). Trace the references to this Psalm in the N.T. In His experience He encountered to the full the abandonment of obedience, the agony of suffering and the anguish of death (v.7). His prayer for deliverance was heard and His resurrection was the answer. May we worship as we muse on the indescribable wonder of *His Humanity*, of the Divine will which directed *His Movements*, the amazing sympathy which surrounded His Steps, His earnest Supplication, His Instruction through suffering and *His official Perfection* for His office (v.9).

His distinction as priest (v.10) When compared with Aaron He is better in qualification. "The Son" and "a Son". Like Aaron He was called, and like Phinehas He acquired a title to it (Num. 25). He was divinely chosen by God His Father (v.5). He was better in His consecration (v.6). Aaron's was a partial consecration, called, washed, robed, and anointed. Christ's priesthood is eternal (7:28). The period of the work of Aaron is transient, but Christ's is permanent. Christ is greater in His identification (v.7), in His humanity, humility and the intensity of His prayer life. He was greater by reason of His sinless suffering manhood, "in the days of His flesh". He was greater in devotion (v.8) and in His godly piety. He learned obedience experientially, always subject to His Father's will. He was greater in His accomplishment (v.9), He obtained eternal salvation. He was greater in recognition (v.10) being saluted by God as Priest in resurrection and ascension. He is greater in His resources (v.10), for the order of His priesthood eternal. There can never be any depletion of His resources (4:14-15; 7:25).

Christ is better in instruction (Mal. 2:7). His teaching for us today includes discipline and direction to make us partakers of His holiness. He is better in intercession which sustains and succours us (ch.7; Jn. 17). Christ is better in His benediction (Num. 6:25-27 with Luke 24:50). He gives us abundant life, abiding rest and abounding joy. May we consider just how great He is, how gracious He is, and how generous He is.

Christ the Select Forerunner (6:12-20)

In this chapter we have **exhortation** vs.1-3 "Let us go on." The Christian life is never meant to come to a standstill. **Exposure** vs.4-8 "going back," a warning about apostasy. **Encouragement** vs.9-20 "going through," the evidences of new life vs.9,10; the expectation of the fulfilment of the promises of God vs.11,12; the example of the man of faith vs.13-16; the established Anchor and the entrance of our Forerunner vs.17-20.

Trace the seven references to "salvation" and the "let us" in this book.

A shining example vs.13-15

Abraham's example as the inheritor of the promises is held up before us for inspiration. He was tested by God in many ways and came through triumphant, because he was patient. He learned to obey and trust God, he refused to be rewarded by worldly power, and readily offered up his best for God (Gen. 22).

We are encouraged to go forward by the promise to faith v.12, and the oath of confirmation in v.13, and "thus inherit the promises" of a God who cannot lie vs.18.

A secured hope vs.16-18

Abraham had a sure promise of double binding. It was God's Word, and that made it sure, and it was confirmed by an oath. God became His own witness and guarantor and that made it doubly sure. The promised blessing was realized in Christ.

In a sense we are like refugees v.18, but the refuge has been reached in Christ, and the believer is eternally sure. The illustration is the "cities of refuge" in Num. 35:9-15. There is no other hope of rescue from judgment than "Christ Jesus our Hope" 1 Tim. 1:1. Our Lord has opened a way to the Presence of God for every saint in every moment of need. The Anchor within the veil holds us safely who are yet outside, afflicted and tossed with tempests. "The present life is the sea; the soul a ship; the hidden bottom of the sea, the hidden reality of the heavenly word. The soul of the believer, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor within the veil, fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the veil" (K.S. Wuest).

A believer has to learn that there is a hope which identifies him with heaven, and his present blessing is the appropriation of Christ. The words "sure" and "steadfast" are not qualities of the Anchor, but refer directly to our hope within the veil. This hope of entrance is the anchorage in Heaven where Jesus is for us. He is the pledge that one day we will enter forever within the veil and rejoice when we see His glory (John 14:3; 17:24).

The successful forerunner vs.19,20

The Forerunner is already in heaven for us. Our hope rests on the fulfilment of the promise guaranteed by the oath and the presence of our High Priest within the veil. The risen Lord is enthroned in the glory as the "first fruits" of His redeemed people, there He performs His priestly ministry Psa. 110:4. Forerunner means a "pioneer" suggesting others will follow. The Levitical high priest did not enter the sanctuary as a forerunner, but only as the people's representative. The people could enter the court but never the sanctuary. Our Forerunner goes nowhere that His people cannot follow Him. He has entered on our account, for our advantage, as our representative. With our High Priest there, it is safe for us to follow, so "Let us draw near" and enjoy His help. Note the order "after Melchisedec." He is

an eternal High Priest and carries upon the shoulders of His omnipotence, and upon the heart of His infinite love, those who place their faith in Him, into the presence of God.

Christ is our Refuge—flee to Him with your troubles. He is our Anchor—faith links us with Him. He is our Forerunner—follow Him in all things. He is our Priest to fully meet all our need.

The Interceding Priest (ch.7)

The priesthood of Melchisidec is a fact to be recognized, more than a figure to be interpreted. The Son of God in His humanity is better than Moses and Joshua in the household of God, and now better than Aaron before the throne of God. Here we reach the summit in Priesthood. The Lord is the Forerunner who entered within the veil to dwell there as an abiding Intercessor. The priesthood of Melchisidec finds its continuance and consummation in Christ.

As Priest we see *His Sufficiency*, ch.2:16-18; *His Suitability* ch.5:1-10; *His Sympathy* ch.4:14-16; *His Superiority* ch.7; *His Sphere* ch.8:1-6; and *His Sacrifice* chs.9 and 10. May we avail ourselves of His perpetual ministry day by day.

This chapter is concerned only with the Person of the priest not with His work, because no priestly work is associated with Melchisidec in Genesis 14. Christ as our Priest ever continues and everlastingly cares. Melchisidec was the political and spiritual leader of his people. This will be true only when Christ reigns in righteousness and will unite kingship and priesthood in Himself (Zech. 6:13; Isa. 32:1,17).

The dignity of His priesthood vs.1-3

From this illustration we are helped in our understanding of what God is to us and what He has done for us. Melchisidec is the first personal instituted type of Christ as Priest.

It is special (v.1). "This" denotes something specially eminent in the person spoken of. God arranged the details of his life to make him a suitable type of Christ. His priesthood is not derived nor inherited. He is introduced as if he were one from heaven, appearing, reigning and officiating.

It is royal (v.1). "King of Salem" his amazing likeness to Christ; he stands alone in person, name, royal position and character (v.1). King of righteousness (Isa. 32:1; King of Peace (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6). Majesty and authority are invested in Christ.

It is helpful (v.1). "He blessed Abraham"—his priestly ministry. His order of priesthood comes in properly with the millennium.

The Title, "Most high God" connects itself with that golden age, when God will be supreme. His blessing upon Abraham and blessing God is typical of the very two things Christ will do" (Luke 24:50; Psa. 22:22; Heb. 2:12).

It is spiritual and peaceful (v.2). "Righteousness" in the OT prophecies is the fundamental characteristic of the Messiah and His kingdom (Psa. 72:1,2; Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5,6; Dan. 9:24), fulfilled in our Lord (1 Cor. 1:30). This is a higher order of priesthood than Aaron's. He was rightful in authority and peaceful in all activity. One who is anterior and superior to all mediators.

It is personal (v.3). This order of priesthood possesses a dignity undervived and unsurpassed, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. This man was a real person and his titles indicate supremacy. His priestly office was derived from his personal dignity, and in this he resembles the Son of God. Here is an office without ancestry or posterity, no one preceded or succeeded him.

In the Aaronic order the priests who could not prove their genealogy were disqualified.

It is eternal (v.3). "Abideth a priest." In the timelessness of his priesthood he resembles the Son of God. These are the qualities which differentiate the priesthood of Melchisedec from the ordinary priesthood. No one can follow him in his office. The characteristics of his priesthood were superiority and duration.

The superiority of His priesthood vs.4-10

A comparison of Melchisedec and Abraham prove the former's eminence, greatness and pre-eminence.

(a) *By benefaction* (v.4). The greatest of the Patriarchs acknowledged the grandest of the Priests, "gave the tenth of the spoils," to a Gentile priest. Thus the Aaronic priesthood is inferior.

(b) *By association* (v.5). Only the tribe of Levi had a warrant to take tithes from their brethren but Melchisedec received tithes from the founder of the nation.

His personal greatness entitled him to receive tithes. He had a special right before and above the law.

(c) *By distinction* (v.6). Abraham had special privilege and honour conferred upon him, "the promises" yet he received the blessing of Melchisedec, refreshing the weary warrior with the bread and wine of heaven.

(d) *By comparison* (v.7). There is no dispute "the less is blessed of the greater." Abraham was only a prophet but Melchisedec was King and Priest.

(e) *By duration* (v.8). The Levitical priests are mortal men, they retain their office for a time, the new order is marked by immortality. Thus the priesthood to which Christ belonged was before, superior to, and continues after the Levitical.

Ineffective The Aaronic priesthood was not only transitory but limited, it lacked finality of function and completeness of operation and effect. The whole system could never remove sin, nor grant a position before God (v.11).

Incomplete but the new is independent, a different priest and after another kind.

Inadequate (vs.12-14) It must be superseded for it did not restore the lost access to God. In our Lord the priesthood has passed from Levi to Judah, a tribe not mentioned in the legislation of Moses concerning priesthood. Thus the spiritual priesthood supersedes the legal and sacerdotal. The new priesthood is not limited by bounds of time, nor associated with a legal system. "Our Lord"—stresses Deity; "sprang"—His Incarnation (v.14). His priesthood is deathless, ageless and timeless in its administration.

The permanency of His priesthood vs.15-19

The supernatural advent of the Eternal Priest was preshadowed by Melchisidec and promised by David (Psa. 110). This priest is different in nature (v.15), in constitution (v.16). "Endless" is not duration, but the quality of the life. It cannot be dissolved. It was different in authorization and Divine acknowledgement (v.17).

The Father Himself solemnly declared Him to be so before the angels in heaven, and revealed it to men on earth by the prophet David.

Christ's priesthood will never be superseded, for it is marked by finality. God will never take Him away and give us another. Christ brings in a better hope, in Himself, with immediate access to God (v.19).

The perpetuity of His priesthood vs.20-25

The revelation of God's eternal decree in the solemn oath is further proof of the superiority of Christ's priesthood (v.19). The purpose of God is immutable and the divine oath establishes the Lord's eternal priesthood. Verses 20-22 stress its immutability and verses 23-25 its continuity. We have a better Surety and covenant bringing better privileges and results.

His priesthood is unique as to its origin (v.21); unchanging in its character (v.24); unfailing in its objects (v.25), because of His ability, assurance and acceptance. May we trust the changeless Christ who holds His office by virtue of the unalterable Word and Will of God.

The suitability of His priesthood vs.26-29

His power is absolute (v.25); He is always able to save and succour, so we need never change our priest. His lofty moral characteristics and the consequent perfection of His high priestly work make Him indispensable to us.

His perfections are apparent (v.26), Godward, manward and selfward. In Him we see true manhood at its highest and best, man without sin.

Superior in personality (v.27). Priesthood is based upon sacrifice and Christ's priesthood perhaps most of all, for He is in Himself the great Antitype of all priesthood. Trace the word "HIMSELF" and the many "NECESSITIES" in this letter. His work on the Cross was High Priestly in character.

His provision is adequate, for His glorified humanity is the pledge of His accomplished work.

Superior in potentiality (v.28). The contrasts drawn between His perfectness and their weakness, between His deity and their humanity emphasizes His superiority.

As we think of the perfection, power, purity and provision of His priesthood may we rejoice that He is just suited to our case.

The Impressive Minister (ch.8)

Displacement marks this Epistle: "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." The new Priest has been installed (ch.7). This necessitates a new sanctuary (8:1-6); and a new covenant (8:7-12); then the priestly family and the new worshippers (chs.9 and 10).

The Dignity of the Priest (v.1). Installed in majesty at God's right hand. The Sanctuary for the priest (vs.2-5a) heavenly, helpful, real and permanent. The Ministry of the priest (vs.3,4). Its necessity—"something to offer," locality not earth (v.4a), its suitability "ordained" (v.3a); its excellency (v.6a). The Better Covenant (vs.7-13). The limitations of the Old Covenant (vs.6-9); The satisfaction of the New Covenant (vs. 10-13).

A more excellent ministry vs.1-6

The Superior Priest (v.1) Here we pass from the consideration of the Person of the Priest and watch Him perfectly discharging the duties of His office in the new sanctuary. The chief point is "we have such a high priest." He is infinitely above all other priests, in position—"sat down," in dignity—"at the right hand," in authority—"at the throne of God," in supremacy—"the Majesty in the heavens." No other priest ever sat down in recognition of a finished work, nor had any the perfect right to this place of highest honour in Heaven. His sitting down is an indication of His royal position; for He is a royal priest. He is the antitype of Melchisedec—thus combining in Himself the two offices of Priest and King.

The Sanctuary Perfect (v.2). This living High Priest is the administrator of the holy things in the real tabernacle in heaven. There He has a work to do corresponding with the spiritual dignity of His office, and He never fails to

give us help. "The heavens" as referred to here, denote the eternal dwelling place of God Himself.

The word 'minister' signifies one who serves in an official capacity and it is used of the service of the priest of the sanctuary (Isa. 61:6; Jer. 33:21; Neh. 10:40). As there is only one Priest, Christ in Heaven, so there is only one holy place, the heavenly sanctuary (v.5; 9:24). "True"—real, abiding; opposed to that which was typical and temporary. His ministration there is more to us than all the old pompous ceremonies and services of the old economy. That perfection which the earthly tabernacle could never produce is reached here and in this tent God does really and personally dwell (Acts 7:48; 17:48). In this tabernacle the Lord Jesus is not only High Priest but Mediator likewise uniting in His person the offices of Moses and of Aaron.

A Sacrifice Essential (v.3). The purpose of priesthood is to "offer gifts and sacrifices." This was to be accomplished in and by Christ, which He did when He offered Himself (9:13,14). This theme is developed in chapter 9. "Gifts" covers all types of offerings presented to God; sacrifices, gifts in which an animal was slain.

Sphere of Priesthood (v.4). Heavenly not earthly. The teaching refers to Christ's present ministry in the Sanctuary, and not to what He did on earth. 'Sphere,' not time or place is in view here. Seeing that God had vested the earthly priesthood in the tribe of Levi (Exodus 28:1), the Lord Jesus who belonged to the tribe of Judah (7:14) would not violate that order, and consequently could not be a priest on earth. His priesthood must needs be heavenly and eternal, being connected with the new covenant.

Superior Ministry (vs.5,6). The quotation in verse 5, taken from Exod. 25:40, proves there is a real tabernacle in the unseen world of which the one that Moses built was a copy.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a figure of the way of access to God. The outer court represented the earth, and the holy place answered to heaven; the holiest of all corresponding to the heaven of heavens, the very presence of God Himself. The true tabernacle, the heavenly and the spiritual is designed and passed by God Himself. To go back to Judaism is to leave the substance for the shadows and this was retrogression not progress.

In contrast to the work of Aaron our Lord Jesus has a more excellent ministry; is the Mediator of a better Covenant giving to His own better promises. The superiority of His Priesthood is emphasized in the words "better" and "more excellent."

May we heed the warning here and not be tempted to go back from the Priest in the true sanctuary to the priests in the copy of the true.

"'In Him' we have a present priesthood, which we are to appropriate (v.1). It is royal and ministerial (vs.1,2), sacrificial (v.3), heavenly (v.5), and perfect (v.6)." W.H. Griffith Thomas.

The more embracing covenant vs.7-13

From Christ's Priestly acceptability (vs.1,2); and activity (vs.3-5); we turn to His Priestly assurance (vs.6-9) and announcements (vs.10-13).

Strictly the new covenant has application to Israel, but we have to read the spirit of it, we must be on the terms of the new covenant though not strictly under it. The covenant itself is made with Israel and Judah and will be under grace not law. It is a covenant of promise and the Son of God is the surety that the promises will be fulfilled (7:27).

Its Perfection Announced (vs.6b-7). God does everything in this covenant. A covenant is a contract in which each party lends himself to the other in certain conditions. The first covenant was not perfect (Exod. 24:7), its basis was the promises of man—"we will." The second covenant is perfect, the basis of it being the promise of God "I will" (Jer. 31:34).

The character of the Priest gives superiority to the Covenant (ch.7), but here it is the superiority of the Covenant which adds dignity to the Priesthood. Other contrasts might be noted; (ch.7) Christ is Surety of a better Covenant; (ch.8) He is the Mediator through whom all the terms of the Covenant are carried out.

The Old covenant though educative was impotent and temporary and its replacement is contemplated (v.7). The new covenant is redemptive, dynamic and eternal, its promise of spiritual blessings being the principle thing. The mind is directed to Heaven, the heart is cheered with the hopes of immortal life.

Its Provision Adequate (vs.8-12). It is promised by God (v.8), prophesied to be better (v.9), and providing fellowship with God for all (v.10).

The weakness is not with the old covenant but with the people (v.8). Their total depravity was brought out in their failure to keep the promises they rashly made. The law, revealing to man his sinfulness, was designed to be preparatory to the Gospel. God Himself set the old covenant aside because it was inadequate. In the new God is the principle party covenanting—"I will make" (v.8). His power and faithfulness are pledged to its fulfilment. Note this covenant is directly with the twelve tribes and does not apply to Christians today (v.8b). We enjoy the spirit of it today, forgiveness from God and fellowship with God. The new covenant is new in quality and in its scope, for it is going to unite that which had been divided and close the schisms.

What God promises He provides, for His promise is absolute. The new covenant is better because of its spirituality (v.10), and its efficacy (v.11), and its assurance of forgiveness (v.12).

The character of the covenant is stated negatively (v.9), and positively (vs.10-12). The effect produced will be permanent. The people of God will enjoy a deeper revelation, their understanding being enlightened—"My laws in their minds." Their affections will be engaged—"My laws upon

their hearts"; a new relation will be enjoyed. "I will be to them a God," and their allegiance will be expressed in being—"to me a people."

That coming day of blessing will also be marked by an intimate knowledge of the Lord—"from the least to the greatest," an experience of unparalleled mercy—"be merciful" and assurance of free forgiveness (vs.11,12).

Its Permanency Assured (v.13). The old is obsolete and ready to vanish. The sacrificial system did indeed vanish away with the destruction of the temple in AD 70. This covenant is faultless and final, based as it is upon the complete redemption in Christ (10:15-17). "Near to disappearance," this refers to that covenant and its outward administration—the temple, the priests and the order of approach to God.

The New will be permanent, for Jesus not Aaron is the Surety, the Guarantor from God's side. He is also the Mediator, not Moses, for only our Lord Jesus could secure and bring to fruition the terms of the covenant. What was prophetically foretold (Jer. 31:31-34), and historically fulfilled (Luke 22:20) and doctrinally expounded (Heb. 8:10-13), is absolutely guaranteed (v.8).

May we appreciate this revelation of love and mercy (v.12), of law and knowledge (vs.10,11), and the realization of fellowship (vs.11,12) and worship in the beauty of holiness within the veil.

The Sacrificial Redeemer (ch.9)

The theme of chapter eight is continued here, contrasting the Sanctuaries, the Ministries and the Sacrifices. The importance of the Tabernacle vs.1-5; the inadequacy of the old sacrifices vs.6-10; the incomparable ministry of Christ vs.11-14; the indispensable work of Christ vs.15-22; and the infinite sacrifice of Christ vs.23-28.

The Mediator in a Better Sanctuary vs.1-14

(a) *The Sanctuary Described* vs.1-5. The arrangement approved v.1. The old covenant had two things (1) ordinances of divine service (2) an earthly sanctuary. The sacred tent was material, of human construction, secondary and transitory. It expressed the requirement of man, but could not effect the remission necessary. The articles appointed vs.2,3. The furniture foreshadowed Christ. There was something about the Tabernacle that made special appeal to those who loved the old way of worship. It had now been superseded by Christ's saving work. He is the great Tabernacle pattern. The structure was a miniature creation, but Christ is the full expression of God 1:3.

These symbols were God given, to teach, to signify and illustrate spiritual truths. The type here is the Day of Atonement Lev. 16, in chapter ten it is the

Offerings. The writer shows that Christ is the greater priest, sacrifice and minister, the time of reformation has come v.10, for Christ has entered the Heavenly Sanctuary once for all by His own blood v.12. Christ is greater in provision. The tabernacle provided bread to renew, light to reveal, oil to anoint and incense to sweeten. Christ in all His fulness brings us light, life and love.

The Ark—the Person and Presence of Christ; the Rod that budded—the power of the Risen Christ; the Lampstand—Christ the Revealer of the Father, the light of His people.

The Bread of His Presence—refers to Israel, also the oneness of believers and their acceptance in Christ, 1 Cor.10:17.

“Wherein” and “having” v.2, v.4, refer to use, not to situation. The golden altar and its incense are mentioned as being used on the Day of Atonement. The high priest had to bring incense with him. In spirit and in function it belonged to the Most Holy Place, 1 Kings 6:22.

(b) *The Service Detailed* vs.6-10. Tabernacle spiritually inadequate. The grand ritual, the gorgeous robes and all the ceremonies, could not establish the right of access, or open the way of approach to God. All speak of restriction v.7—“alone;” limitation—“once yearly;” exclusion—“high priest alone.” No attendants, no assistance. The condition—“not without blood;” imperfection—“not yet made manifest.”

It was a symbolical representation of better things to come. In the N.T. the Holy Spirit explains to us eternal redemption by means of these types. Verse 6 mentions the regular service, but verse 7 the special service of the Day of Atonement. Both these services remind us that the veil remained unrent, the mercy seat unapproachable and redemption unaccomplished.

The animal sacrifices only brought external adjustment, they could never clear the guilty conscience v.8. They had no moral power. Now all is changed and the good things have come.

(c) *The Substance Divine* vs.11-14. Here we see the glories and perfections of our Priest and His sacrifice on the altar of Calvary. Westcott mentions four ways, by contrasts, of His perfect work. “(1) His sacrifice was voluntary. An animal dies because it has to die; Jesus chose to die, John 10:18; (2) His sacrifice was spontaneous. Animal sacrifice was the product of law; the sacrifice of Jesus is entirely the product of love. (3) His sacrifice was rational. The animal victim did not know what was happening. Jesus died knowing whence He had come, whither He was going, and what He was doing. (4) His sacrifice was moral. Animal sacrifice is mechanical, the ritual was carried out in the prescribed way.”

We have an Abiding Priest v.11, who brought an acceptable offering v.12. His is an accomplished work v.12, and we an assured people—“purged” v.14.

It was not necessary for our High Priest to present His blood, but only to

present Himself vs.12-14, NOT 'taking His own blood' as in the R.S.V. this is an unscriptural idea, to be rejected. But 'THROUGH,' that is by means of, or because of, His death as Man, when His blood was shed.

The Mercy of a Better Ministry vs.15-28

His ministry is efficacious vs.15-22. The ceremonial offerings could expiate for ceremonial guilt, but not moral guilt. They failed to remove the guilt of sin and provide inward cleansing. Finality marked the sacrifice of Christ. "He appeared once", "entered once", "bore sins once", v.12, vs.26,28. "How much more"—inconceivably more, its measure is infinite; He is the superlative Christ, He is Mediator and Testator. The Covenant is ratified by death v.15. The Lord Jesus came for this purpose Mark 10:49 with Isa.53, the great Atonement chapter. The new Covenant has been established by His death; His full and voluntary surrender gives validity and efficacy to the new Covenant Matt.26:28,29; Luke 22:20.

"The 'Covenant' of which Christ is Mediator is identified with the 'Testament' of which Christ is the Testator, and His death has brought us into the benefits of this Covenant."—F.W. Grant.

The old covenant was not inaugurated without the shedding of blood Ex. 24:3-8. All the provisions of it were solemnly ratified by Moses when he sprinkled both the people and the book with the blood vs.20,21. The blood of Christ purifies the conscience, removes the transgression, establishes the new Covenant, and the pledge of it is in His presence at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Trace the references of "blood" in this chapter and to "once", "once for all" in the Epistle.

There cannot be any remission of sins granted through the "unbloody" offering of the Mass. Since admittedly there is no blood in the mass, it cannot be a sacrifice for sin v.22. The thin red line runs through the Scriptures from Abel's offering to the song of the redeemed in Rev. 5. Christ has provided the sacrifice that perfectly meets the claims of God and our need.

His ministry is effectual vs.23-28. The blood of Christ always refers to His death, laying down His life in death in sacrificial dying. We are redeemed and reconciled by His death, we live by the present, risen, ascended, glorified life of Christ. There is representation before God v.24; He has entered heaven on our behalf and we appropriate Him as on our side. He is there for us, the Minister of the Sanctuary. In chapter 10 "we" enter in, we have boldness to enter the Holiest.

The purification of the heavens is accomplished by the better sacrifice of Christ v.23.

He did not enter God's presence to offer His sacrifice, this He offered at Calvary when He gave Himself. The Levitical priests offered continually, but Christ's offering was once for all. Here is the completion of His work

v.26. In this act we have the revelation of His amazing grace, to reach us, to redeem us, and make us rich, 2 Cor. 8:9.

There is no need for a second offering which would require a second dying; finality and uniqueness mark the sacrifice of Christ v.26.

He died to put away "sin" not sins. Sin is the evil principle from which sins spring. We rejoice in atonement for our sins and we are delivered from the penalty, pollution and power, and its guilt is forgiven. Sin must be put away and creation will be delivered from its groaning in a coming day, Rom. 8:20-22.

The High Priest even on the Day of Atonement could offer no sacrifice which could put away sin, 10:4, but Christ's sacrifice was able to annul sin altogether, John 1:29. The examination of all men must take place, for the Tribunal is set up, v.27, Acts 17:31. Death does not go alone; judgment follows after, there is an end of the day of grace, the visible manifestation of the Lord is for the deliverance of the Jew. Even as the Israelites waited on the great day of atonement for the appearance of Aaron at the end of that busy day in his robes of glory and beauty, apart from sin, unto salvation, Lev. 16:23-24. This is not the "Rapture" of saints, which is the Church's hope, 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54, this is His coming to reign, Rev. 1:7; Zech. 14, His manifestation in glory.

"In chapter 9 the Tabernacle and all its furniture are brought before us and they all speak of Christ—the gate, of Christ as the Door. The foundation—of Him as the only basis; the linen curtains—of His righteousness, the altar of His atoning work; the laver—of the cleansing power of His Word; the five pillars—of Christ in what He is in His five-fold character in Isa. 9:6; the Candlestick—Christ as the Light; the shewbread—of Christ as the Bread of Life; the altar of incense, of Him as our Intercessor; the veil of His flesh; the four pillars of what He is made to us according to 1 Cor. 1:30; the ark of His Deity and Humanity; the mercy seat of Him as the Meeting-Place; the manna of Him as the Humbled One; the rod of Him as the Risen One; the law of Him as the Perfect One; the curtains of His variegated glory; and the offerings of His perfect work, Godward and manward." Author Unknown.

May we rejoice in the Lord, for in His vicarious and atoning death, we find Heaven opened, Hell defeated, sin answered for, self crucified, the world condemned and God glorified.

The Indispensable Christ (ch.10)

In this passage we come to the heart of the whole matter, the finished work of Christ. Our Lord Jesus is God's final Word to man. There are some who reason that Christ came to do the will of God by being completely

subservient to the Father. That will is not expressed in vague generalities, short of the nature of atonement.

Verse 10 makes clear that in the offering of Christ's body there is fully expressed the will of God. Preparation for Christ vs.1-4; the Incarnation of Christ vs.5,6; the Dedication of Christ vs.7-10; the Perfection of His Work vs.11-18; our Association with Him in the Sanctuary vs.19-25; and the rejection of Christ vs.26-39.

Here is the more excellent sacrifice.

The Necessity of His Work, vs.1-4

Having stressed the validity of His work in chapter 9, he closes his doctrinal argument by emphasizing here the finality of His work.

"For" in v.1 links these chapters together. The subject is resumed and by a series of contrasts the glory of Christ and His work are established. The Law was only a shadow, a representation of the substance. Being only an outline of greater things to come, it ought to have kindled in the heart a desire for Christ, who fulfilled all things in detail. The old sacrifices were oft-repeated v.2, and kept before the worshippers the remembrance of sins. By the shedding of Christ's blood remission was eternal. The old made no-one perfect, removed no fear, nor did they give to God a sufficient atonement, or cleanse the worshippers. The memory of sins committed, was revived by the continual repetition of the yearly sacrifice of the Day of Atonement. What a contrast today as we "remember" Him who blotted out our sins and remembers them no more.

His Suitability for the Work, vs.5-7

In marked contrast to animal sacrifice we have the advent of Christ and the work He accomplished. Verse 5 tells of His Incarnation—"cometh into the world," and His declaration—"He saith." When He comes types and shadows are no longer needed. They cease and the body prepared for the Lord was accepted by Him and presented to God in sacrifice.

The source of His sacrifice is the Will of God, vs.5-7; the virtue of it is in His obedience, vs.8,9 and the design of it is our sanctification, v.10.

"When He cometh" assumes the pre-existence of Christ and the precious intercourse of the Son with the Father. His willingness to do what God required involved the sacrifice of Himself. Note the change of language in v.5 and that of Psalm 40. The word "Delight" is omitted here, perhaps to emphasize the demands of the Will of God. In Psalm 40 "the ears are digged", here a "body prepared." His body was the organ of obedience, the "bored ear" was the symbol of willing obedience.

From the moment the Lord Jesus assumed human form His ear was opened to hear the voice of God and His obedience expressed itself in absolute surrender to altar sacrifice.

The Efficacy of His Work, vs.8-10

The four offerings of Leviticus are in view in verse 8, “Sacrifice” refers to the peace offering; “offering” to meal offering, also the burnt and sin offering. “The Lord in His sacrifice supersedes all these old offerings and He has done what they could not do. The holy requirements of the throne of God having been satisfied the first covenant is taken away and the second covenant is established by God. This last clause is the key to the argument in this Epistle. The believer is set apart to God and His service by the finished work and by the once-for-all character of Christ’s sacrifice, v.10. There is an air of finality about this sacrifice. Nothing can be added to perfection.

The Finality of His Work, vs.11-18

Here we see the crowning proofs of the completeness and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifices the Levitical priest offered repeatedly were totally unable to deal with sin, v.11. The priests of old always stood, their work was never done; but our great High Priest is sitting at the right hand of God, v.12, “This Priest” is contrasted with “many priests.” Instead of many sacrifices, Christ offered ONE. His sacrifice is not only pleasing to God but it has absolute power. It issues in perfect sovereignty, the posture of one being ministered to as a king. The full consequences of His holy passion in the routing of His enemies, and the perfecting of His people, vs.13,14. It indicates that the One sitting has completed His work and salvation is accomplished.

Sanctification in the Hebrews is viewed as the work of Christ for us. The shed blood of Christ justifies us from sin, the offered body of Christ sanctifies us and makes us God’s people. The Holy Spirit’s witness is objective, v.15, and subjective—“put my laws into their hearts,” v.16. Sin as a debt requires forgiveness, bondage requires redemption, and alienation requires reconciliation. All these have been accomplished for us by our Lord Jesus.

The Sufficiency of His Work, vs.18-25

Here is the practical application of the work of the Lord for us. Privilege and responsibility lie side by side. We have freedom of access, v.19; a faithful High Priest v.21, and the fellowship of saints vs.23-25. We should draw near in faith v.22, hold fast in hope v.23, spur one another on to love v.24, and appreciate Christian fellowship v.25. We are welcomed guests in God’s Presence vs.19,20. The privileges must be used; the duties must be discharged. Because we possess we ought to use and enjoy.

To approach to God was a priestly prerogative under the old order, the author describes the Christian’s access to God in sacerdotal metaphors. Sincerity is the prime requisite in our approach to God, Psalm 51:4; John 4:24; The work and priesthood of Christ gives us acceptance with God and

an uneasy conscience is as real a barrier to fellowship with God, as ceremonial defilement was to a Jew.

Privileges Exercised by the Saints, vs.22-25

There is the exercise of faith—because of access. The exercise of hope—because of assurance, and the expression of love—because of association. In meeting together we enjoy fellowship and exercise gift in worship and ministry. There is no substitute for worshipping together, may we not lose faith, but try to encourage each other for He is faithful that promised.

Their Rejection of the Work of Christ, vs.26-39

Here is further warning to professing Christians as in ch.6, who were in danger of slipping back from their outward christianity to their former Judaism. Their presumption—"they sin deliberately;" privilege—"received the knowledge of the truth;" prospect—fearful judgment. To deliberately repudiate the knowledge of the truth and reject the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ and turn back to a religion founded on good works is fatal.

They thus deny the Deity of Christ—"Son of God," treat the blood of Christ as common, and do despite to the Spirit. These are all signs of apostasy. After the exposure of sin vs.26-31 comes encouragement to the saints vs.32-39.

The Encouragement of Former Days, vs.32-34

The writer had confidence in the first readers of the Epistle; the light enjoyed when their faith had emerged unscathed from a great contest of sufferings. The early persecution they endured, their merciful care of others, and their slender hold on this world's goods, all gave him an indication that they were not likely to abandon faith.

Despite the personal risk involved, they did not shrink from visiting those of their brethren who were imprisoned for the sake of the gospel, and willingly ministered to their needs v.35.

The prospect is bright "an abiding possession" v.34 (R.V.). Matthew Henry writes 'In Heaven they shall have a better life, a better estate, better liberty, better society, better hearts, better works, everything better.'

Exhortation for Future Days, vs.35-39

A call to courage v.35 "Let not go your confidence." We have need of endurance and the nearness of the reward should strengthen us. Holiness will be its own reward; self-devotion for Christ will be its own rich recompense, Matt. 5:12; 10:32.

The 'IT' in Habakkuk refers to the vision—the coming of Christ to reign. IT becomes HE in Hebrews and refers to the Rapture. Until then may we have patience, Luke 21:19. Faith is the means of preservation, in contrast to

apostacy. The cheer of His coming v.37 challenges our hearts v.39. The writer quickly disassociates himself and his fellow believers from those who draw back to destruction. They are not the faint-hearted faithless class who draw back, but exercise faith daily and look forward to the reward.

The Inspiring Christ (ch.11)

This chapter is an exposition of chapter 10:38 “the just by faith shall live.” We are called to live and walk by faith. True faith is active and energetic and courageous. Verse one is a description of what faith does for us.

Faith is acting now on the basis of promises not yet fulfilled. Faith is acting here on the basis of power not here visible. Faith conquers time and space. We see: The value of faith vs.1-7; the visions of faith vs.8-22; the vigilance of faith vs.23-29; the virtues of faith and the victories of faith vs.30-40.

The Lord Jesus promoted every feature seen in these men of faith and each was found perfectly expressed in His own character 12:2.

Abel—Christ the Righteous One, Acts 3:14; 1 John 3:12

Abel was the first shepherd and by faith brought his lamb to God for acceptance. His offering was commended by God, being offered in God’s way. Cain’s did not acknowledge the claims of God. Abel’s gifts were accepted, and his righteousness attested, Rom.10:10. His sacrifice is still speaking by telling of the necessity of blood shedding for acceptance with God, ch.9:22.

Our Lord is the Good Shepherd who gave His life, shed His blood, and its efficacy is available to all who by faith accept Him, 12:24. He is the only way to God, John 14:6. The nation of Israel, like Cain, slew the Righteous One and are guilty before God, Acts 3:14.

Noah—Christ the Rejected One

“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” Gen. 6:8. Our Lord was “full of grace and truth” and was every pleasurable to God. Noah’s righteous character portrays the Person of the Lord Jesus and the Ark the work of Christ in saving power. His message of “righteousness” 2 Peter 2:5 was rejected by the people, as were the warnings of judgment by the Lord. Noah by his life of faith and work in building the ark condemned the world. He became an heir of righteousness. Our Lord is the “Heir of all things,” Heb. 1:3; and our Refuge, Isa. 32:2; Heb. 6:18.

Enoch—Christ received up into Glory, Gen. 5:22; 1 Tim. 3:16

“He pleased God,” his faith acknowledged the existence and beneficence

of God, v.6. Our Lord Jesus was dedicated to the Will of God, John 6:38. He brought pleasure to the heart of God, Matt. 3:17; 17:5 and His testimony through Enoch indicates His coming in glory, Jude 14. Abel did priestly work, and Enoch acted in the prophetic office. In daily living we ask of every action, "Does it please God?" Like Enoch, we do not divide life into sacred and secular and await the day of translation to Heaven, 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:17.

The whole of God's revelation is viewed in these verses: creation v.3, redemption v.4, and glorification v.5. Our Lord is the Creator and Redeemer and we will be glorified with Him, Rom. 8:30.

Abraham—Christ the Stranger and Pilgrim

Our Lord like Abraham regarded the life to come as of more importance than this one. Abraham ventured on God and responded to an unusual call from God in unhesitating obedience. He lived as a stranger and had companions in his son and grandson. His godly life left its mark on them as did the life of the Lord on His disciples, Acts 4:13.

His seed were heavenly and earthly. The "stars" may suggest the heavenly seed, the Church of God; the "sand" may illustrate the earthly seed, the Jewish nation, the kingdom of Israel.

There is a City where Architect and Builder is God, it is the Celestial City, at the end of our pilgrimage. Our Lord was a Stranger, Luke 24:18, but is also the way to celestial bliss, John 14:6; Rev. 20:15,16.

Isaac—The Son Sacrificed, v.17

See Genesis 22 and compare the similarities between Isaac and Christ the Beloved One in the N.T., over twelve in number. Our Lord laid down His life and was raised again from the dead, John 10:17,18; Rom. 8:34; 4:25. Isaac was the promised Seed, v.11, his birth was by promise and not in the power of the flesh—it was miraculous, Gal. 3:16.

The Risen Lord will have an innumerable seed that will gladden His heart eternally, Isa. 53:10.

Jacob—The Servant, v.21

The closing scene in Jacob's life honours him as a hero of faith, dying, blessing and worshipping. His devoted love in serving fourteen years for Rachel illustrates Christ's love for His Church and His service to His saints, Eph. 5:25-27.

Jacob was faithful, Gen. 31:38-41; Hosea 12:12, and faintly portrays the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Isa. 42:1-3; 52:13. His staff had been his life companion, the witness with himself of the goodness of the Lord. It completes the picture of his life as a pilgrim and stranger.

Jacob's remarkable prophecy regarding his sons in Gen. 49 intimates the Lord in His sufferings, priesthood, kingship, refuge, resurrection, the Prophet, and in Joseph and Benjamin, His reign and conquests.

Joseph—Christ the Sovereign

Much in Joseph's life foreshadowed the Lord Jesus as the Son, recognised by his father, and rejected by his brethren. Suffering reproach for his words and his works, Gen. 37:4,5,8; John 5:18; 10:30,31. He served his father and sought his brethren, yet they stripped him and sold him into Egypt. There he became a servant and all things prospered in his hands, 39:2,3. Like our Lord he suffered at the hands of the Gentiles, Acts 4:26,27. The Revealer of Secrets, ch.41:16-25,37-39, was duly exalted and set over all Egypt. His authority and glory were publicly acknowledged, 41:43; Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:9,10.

His brethren went forth to proclaim his glory, 45:9,13; reminding us of restored Israel going forth to declare the glory of the Lord, Isa. 66:14.

Moses—Christ the Apostle and Prophet vs.24-29; Heb. 3:1-6

Note faith's courage, v.24; choice, v.25; consideration, v.26a; confidence, v.26c; consciousness, v.27c; and consistency, vs.28,29. Moses is one of the greatest leaders and administrators the world has known.

He illustrates and typifies Christ as Apostle and Prophet. Think of the following similarities; both were preserved in childhood; fast forty days; suffered at home; endured murmuring, and introduced a new dispensation. They were divinely commissioned and supported in their work; both had seventy helpers, had radiant faces, made intercessory prayers and established memorials. Their seven mountain experiences are worthy of study. But Deut. 18:15,18-19 portray a greater than Moses, for the words of the Lord Jesus are authoritative, John 10:14-25; 6:63.

Through Moses and the Law there was but a partial revelation. In Christ there is fulness and finality, the revelation is complete, John 1:17; 14:9; Heb. 1:2. In Heb. 3:1-6 the Lord is better than Moses as a Builder and as Son over God's House. Moses was a servant in the house. The Lord is superior in glory.

He is also greater than Gideon as the Conqueror; than Barak as the Light; better than Samson in His Strength; than Jephthae as Leader and Samuel as Judge and Guide to Israel, v.32; Jer. 15:1.

David—The Beloved One v.32

His faith shines out in family life and in national life. He was anointed three times; in his father's house, then over Judah and lastly over all Israel. Our Lord is the Anointed One, Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9; and the Shepherd, Ezek. 34:23.

He is the Root and Offspring of David, Rev. 5:5; 22:16. Like David He is the Overcomer. He alone gave David courage as he faced Goliath, also the confidence and competence in gaining his decisive victory.

Our Lord had victories over sin and disease, as every form of 'signs' in John's gospel demonstrate. He is the great 'I AM' the totality of truth

preceding yet succeeding David. Christ as the Beloved One was the illustrious Son, the industrious Servant, the inspired Seer, and will be the incomparable Ruler, Isa. 11:1-10.

David's writings are full of Christ, Psalm 8,16,21,22,23,24 and 110; Matt. 22:42-45. David is seen at his best in kingship and better than any of his successors in his generosity, integrity, ministry and in his conformity to God's will, Acts 13:36,37. David was never defeated and saved Israel from all their enemies, 2 Sam. 3:17,18.

The Leader of His People (ch.12)

The Christian life is like a race, and the Christian himself like a runner. We derive inspiration from others, men and women of faith, named and unnamed in chapter eleven. Preparation is necessary, "lay aside weights" get rid of all superfluous flesh. There will be opposition and conflict so the race requires concentration of purpose and singleness of aim—"let us run." The Lord alone is both pioneer and victor and we need a renewed vision of Him as the Commencer and Completer, the cause and crown of faith. The message of the chapter is "Looking unto Jesus", a continual act is intended.

For diligence in the race vs.1-3

Verse one gives us the *Course* and verses 3,4 the *Champion*, we must look to Him the whole time. Look away from all else, let nothing obscure your moral vision.

Christ is the goal, the all sufficient Saviour, and if our eyes are upon Him, we find at once the perfect example and energy for the race.

Verse two emphasizes the steadfastness and unflinching will to conquer on the part of Jesus. He is not only the Author but the Consummator of faith. He will bring faith to final attainment.

His motivation—"the joy set before Him." This was the anticipation of His glory with the Father, the outcome of His finished work on the Cross. "Jesus" not the title "Christ," to emphasize His humanity. This name is connected in a special manner with His life on earth, His true humanity and His humiliation. He is the triumphal Victor who endured shame and reproach. He went through humiliation to glorification, through rejection to recognition.

Our consideration (v.3). The word means to reckon, to calculate, to count the cost. As Jesus exercised faith, we are to live by faith, and follow after Him.

For discipline in suffering vs.4-11

God is our Coach and He trains us for the race. He allows setbacks,

disappointments and rebukes to discipline and prepare us for all that the race demands.

We have to resist powerful enemies, they are subtle and powerful. Sin with its power to entice, the world and its contradiction, and burdens with their paralysing pressure. For victory we have the Lord IN US (Col. 1:27). He is above us and underneath us (Deut. 33:27); and at our side (Psa. 16:8). He has promised never to leave us (Heb. 13:5).

Discipline is training, correction from a wise Father (Psa. 94:12). It is a proof of sonship (vs.7,8). These verses are full of the blessing of suffering (vs.5-11). Where discipline is lacking, true fatherhood is wanting. Sufferings are the very proofs of our nobility and standing as members of God's family (vs.5-7). God is interested in us. He is moulding us because He loves us. His method is "scourging" and it is done lovingly and tenderly (v.6; Rom. 8:28).

His motive (v.10) "for our profit" that our lives should be changed into His image of holiness. Separation from sin and worldliness is the purpose of this ministry. Love and chastisement are not contradictory. Discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but it keeps us fit for the race and will bring forth the fruits of righteousness in daily life.

May we not faint under it (v.3); avoid it (v.4); despise it (v.5); but benefit from it (v.11).

"Looking unto Jesus" for diligence in holiness vs.12-17

We have duties selfward (vs.12,13); manward (v.14) and Godward (vs.15-17). We need to press on to the goal. Drooping hands must be lifted up to be engaged again in service. We require strong hands and knees which do not grow tired. They must be strengthened in the exercise of prayer. Looking unto Jesus gives us renewed vigour and fatigue disappears.

The lame must learn to tread straight paths and be healed (vs.12,13; Psa. 97:11).

Among the saints there must be peacefulness and fellowship cultivated. Peace and holiness are absolutely necessary (1 John 2:4).

We are expected and exhorted to be a help for the reviving of others (Isa. 35:3,4). Beware of falling short, of bitterness, fornication or profanity (vs.15,16). Uncurbed desires lead to unchecked demands. Esau was earthly minded, wanted material things, and voluntarily sold his birthright, to his eternal loss.

Delight in fellowship vs.18-24

Here are privileges to be valued by us. The contrasts drawn between the Old and New Covenant point out the advantages of going on in Christ, over a return to Judaism because of persecution (ch.6:11). Faith delivers us from the Law of Terror (vs.18-21). This is marked by distance, blackness, darkness, burning and tempest (vs.18-21). Grace brings us to Mount Zion

with all its glories. Here is tenderness and mercy. We have liberty—"ye are come;" beauty—"city of God;" the company of angels; unity and harmony—"Church of the firstborn;" purity—"just men" and Jesus the Mediator as the Surety. These spiritual possessions in fellowship with Jesus Christ should fill our vision and warm our hearts to listen as God speaks to us.

Discriminating worship vs.25-28

To reject the grace of God in Christ is to invite certain judgment. When God spoke from Sinai, those who did not accept perished. He speaks from Heaven to win us by His love in Christ. Everywhere in the Epistle it is God who speaks, and that the Son made known God as He is in truth, and all things are true and abiding.

Our response in appreciation of an unshakable kingdom is worship. One day God will shake Heaven and earth, they will utterly disappear. He will bring in a new Heaven and a new earth, establishing a Kingdom of righteousness.

There should be a feeling of gratitude, "grace" or thanks to God in all our service. This is worship that is well-pleasing to Him. Called to such heavenly destinies, we must be heavenly minded and be watching and waiting (Luke 12:35; 1 Pet. 1:13).

We have a continual privilege—the kingdom is ours, a daily need—have grace or "let us show gratitude;" may we hear God's call—"serve God with reverence, and awe," and ever remember, that "our God is a consuming fire."

We need today a renewed listening to God, a fresh recognition of the authority of His commands, a restored conscious devotion and dedication of our hearts and lives to Him.

Live looking unto Jesus, daily.

The Abiding Christ (ch.13)

In a scene of change and decay it is good to look heavenward and rejoice in the Unchanging Christ (1:12; 13:8). He is incomparable (ch.1); indispensable (chs.2,3); interested in us (chs.4-6); interceding for us (chs.7,8); has intervened on our behalf (chs.9,10); daily inspires us (chs.11,12); and has promised never to let us down or leave us (ch.13).

A sense of His immutability should affect us in various ways:—

Sympathy for saints vs.1-3

The chapter deals with domestic matters (vs.1-6); church matters (vs.7-21); and personal matters (vs.22-25). The final words of advice are aimed at

their behaviour and their belief, both vitally important. The sweetness of love for members of the family of God (v.1). This is a normal course of action and should continue (John 13:34,35; 1 John 3:18).

Hospitality to the needy is a practical manifestation of love (v.2). There is encouragement and very pleasant surprises too. Abraham found it worth while (Gen. 18:1-15). Sympathy with suffering saints in severe trial is a family trait. Your turn may come, so remember them (1 Cor. 12:27). Think of and pray for those who are in jail because of their testimony for Christ.

Purity of morals v.4

Chastity in marriage should be regarded with deep reverence, it is a divine institution. The marriage bond and the sexual life within that bond, are to be held in high honour. Fleshly lust and the love of money (v.5 R.V.) are the selfish appetites which most commonly get the better of men. All sins of impurity are sins against God's holy ordinance of marriage. He will judge those who violate this fundamental law.

Certainty of help vs.5,6

Honesty with regard to money should mark the whole course of our life and walk before God. Handle money with caution, never covet it, for it is inconsistent with the Christian life. Let love for Christ supersede love of material things (1 Tim. 6:9,10).

The attitude to adopt—"be content" the assurance given "for He hath said," the adequate help we have—"I will never leave thee."

Contentment with present possessions should characterize us, for we are assured of the Lord's presence and provision.

His personal presence—"He, I will;" His perpetual presence "I will not at any time, for any cause, leave thee." His protective presence—"I will never withdraw my aid or help."

We have a well-founded confidence (v.6). In Christ we have perfect security and perfect peace.

Stability of heart vs.7-9

Past memories (v.7 R.V.). Remember your past leaders; the exhortations they gave, the example they left, the experience of God they enjoyed. Imitate the faith and fidelity of former leaders and rely upon the Immutability of Christ (v.8). He is always with us (v.5); He is always the same. Christian leaders (v.7) will come and go, but He remains the same.

Present difficulties (v.9). The fallacy of false teaching is exposed. Judaism with its legal observances brought no lasting spiritual benefit. Legalism was barren of spiritual reality, but Christ and truth is the strengthening food of the New Covenant. Rules concerning foods and drinks do not promote holiness.

Loyalty to the Lord vs.10-14

In view of our possession—"an altar," invisible and intangible. Our altar is Christ, this includes all the blessings associated with His atoning work. He is Priest and Sacrifice. There is no salvation apart from Christ so the readers are challenged to make their choice—to go forth with Christ outside the earthly Jerusalem and bear the reproach of Christ (v.3). Verse eleven reminds us that the burning of the bodies of the beasts without the camp has its answer in Christ's suffering. Meats never did contribute anything towards the removal of sin.

There must be separation from everything that savours of Judaism (vs.12,13). Our privilege of association with Christ in reproach is a test of loyalty. We have the alluring prospect of a heavenly destiny in realization shortly (v.14).

Responsibility of priests vs.15-17

All believers are holy priests who enter the sanctuary of God to worship (1 Peter 2:5). The precious exercise of praise to God continually is not limited to one gathering, but a daily joyful ascription of glory to God. The praise of "our lips" is a sensitive barometer of the condition of the heart. Manward there should be benefaction "doing good" is always pleasurable to God. Words of praise and works of power are acceptable to God. Sacrifice to God is priestly work, submission to godly guides is a mark of spirituality. Remember them (v.7), recognise them (v.17) and respect them (v.24).

Sincerity in living vs.18-21

Fellowship in prayer is requested by the writer that he may be restored to them soon.

He prays that the blessed work of grace in their lives may be perfected. He prays that their troubled hearts may have peace, they need the God of power to cheer their trembling souls. The Great Shepherd helps prevent our tendency to wander. His care restores. His shed blood guarantees our everlasting safety. God can perfectly equip us for daily living. He can mend broken lives and bring us into a condition of soul to be usable. He desires that we do His will and all is executed through our Lord Jesus.

What a doxology—"to Whom be glory for ever and ever Amen."

Our God is the God of peace, of power, of provision, who planned the everlasting Covenant (v.20). A God of perfection and of purpose who accomplishes all through His goodness and grace. In that day our glorious Lord will be worthy of every sceptre of sovereignty, every garland of glory, every wreath of worthiness and every trophy of triumph.

His mediation and redemption secures all for God and His saints. This praise will be without intermission, without end.

The book closed with salutations, giving us exhortation (v.22),

information (v.23), and salutation (v.24). This grace gladdens the heart; refreshes the soul; assures the mind; covers all the saints everywhere, every day and can be enjoyed today. Amen.

Hebrews

The Minister of the Sanctuary

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Emulate Him

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Our WEALTH

“The Testing Room” ch.1. Men test metals and God tests men. God tests our patience by severe trials, our prayers by His readiness to bless us. His promises are to enrich us and to enable us to be victorious. The Devil allures us by the world and the flesh, and the new life must be guided by God’s Word.

“The Assembly Room” ch.2. The work complete the machinery is put together and in this room there must be consideration of the Royal Law, for by it all are tested. The value of a machine is assessed by the work it does. Faith is endorsed by good works, confirmed by Abraham and Rahab.

“The Training Room” ch.3. In learning how to exhibit faith by good works we must guard our tongue and govern our temper. Watch what you say and how you behave. We need heavenly wisdom to emerge from our training subdued yet successful

“The Examination Room” ch.4. Under Divine scrutiny we learn the cause of wrangling and the curse of worldliness. Our hearts must be exercised about Godliness and we must avoid censoriousness. Our planning must be governed by the Will of God and guided by the Word of God.

“The Work Room” ch.5. We are warned here of the lure of Riches. Retribution will follow any injustice in our search for Godless gain. Wait for the Lord’s coming when all injustices will be rectified. As we wait and work we may have to suffer and this calls for prayer which is mutual, prevailing and restoring vs.16-21.

Jottings on James

Introduction

This letter is named after the writer, who is James, the Lord’s half brother (Gal. 1:19). He was one of the “pillars” of the Church (Gal. 2:9,12). The first mention made of James is in Matt. 13:55, then later in John 7:5 and Acts 1:14.

He with others in his family was an opponent of Christ. “Neither did His brethren believe in Him” John 7:5. He was probably converted through a personal appearance of the Risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7). He rose to a position of authority in the Church at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19; 2:9) and when the Apostles and elders met to consider on what terms Gentiles should be admitted to the Church, James was the presiding elder (Acts 15:13-21). He may have been the chief pastor of the church there (Acts 21:18).

He knew Paul personally and was apparently on good terms with him (Acts 9:27,28; Gal. 2:1-10). They both agree that “the first thing to do with faith is to live by it.” The difference in emphasis of these two men has been

summed up thus, "Paul is concerned with the means by which a man becomes a Christian; James with the characteristics of his life as a Christian" (Leon Morris). James stands for a down-to-earth, robust, practical christianity. He is more concerned with daily duties and ethical piety than with doctrinal discourse.

DATE. This cannot be arrived at with certainty. The Judaic type of Christianity presented in this book would suggest an early date. Probably written before the Council in Jerusalem AD 50-51, Acts 15. It may have been written before that controversy emerged, or after the last echo had died away.

The meeting place of the Church was still the synagogue, a Jewish term, for later an assembly of Christians was definitely called the "ekklesia". Now the persecution under Herod Agrippa the first, took place in AD 44 (Acts 12:1). James wrote this Epistle long before Paul wrote Romans, so it was not written to combat that epistle.

DESTINATION 1:1. Jews residing outside Palestine who were Christians; a class of believers whom he terms "the Dispersion", residing perhaps in Syria and in Babylon. The term may be symbolical referring to the spiritual Israel, the church regarded as the people of God (Gal. 6:16).

STYLE. James is like one of the O.T. prophets in severity. His writing is bold and forthright, stressing the importance of practical Christian action. Dean Alford writes: "Ethical rather than didactic. Full of earnestness, plain speaking, holy severity. The brother of Him Who opened His teaching with the Sermon on the Mount, seems to have imbibed deeply the words and maxims of it, as the law of Christian morals".

A practical book it deals more with daily duty than with doctrinal discourse. James wastes no words, his phrases are brief, rugged, abrupt, sometimes poetic and often picturesque. His metaphors and illustrations are excellent: the testing of metals, reflection in a mirror, the bridle in a horse's mouth, a ship driven by the wind, and the flower of the grass. Study his use of imperatives, over twenty times they are used as a test of reality. His wise injunctions are intended to gird our loins with truth and guard our lives against temptation. Trace and meditate upon the expression "My brethren" and "my beloved brethren".

PURPOSE. To show that faith reveals itself in loving deeds and godly living 1:26,27. To comfort and instruct them 1:2,3; 1:12, to correct disorders and evil tendencies 4:1-11.

His letter is practical rather than doctrinal. They had been rightly taught and needed now the goads of exhortation. Each chapter gives practical

precepts for daily duty. Instruction is given concerning trial and its reason, temptation and its source, wisdom and its necessity, pure religion and its worth, works and their value, the tongue and its use, prayer and its results. He desires to see actions, not words; a living, loving and practical faith. For living faith does two things—it sees God, and it serves man. We need a vision of God and to venture forth in faith (Isa. ch.6).

Chapter One

Eight Men

The Delightful Man vs.2-4

James tells us that we can use our varied trials as instruments for advancement into Christ-likeness.

(1) *A Progressive Experience* “Count it all joy”. We can turn trials into triumphs by a candid assessment of certain truths. We are related—“brethren”; our faith is tested; life’s trials result in steadfastness—stickability, v.3. This, when allowed, produces a consistent Christian character, “lacking in nothing”; see Rom. 5:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7.

(2) *A Practical Experience*. Trials are inevitable, and they come uninvited and unexpected. What attitude can we adopt? A victorious spirit, v.2; counting all trials a joy is an act of the will based on faith in the overruling goodness of God. We can rebel, Heb. 12:5, faint, or rejoice. Our values determine our evaluations.

(3) *A Productive Experience*, v.4. Submit to God, “let”; then He can accomplish His work in us. He can develop patience and character in our lives through trials. To have its full effect, this special work requires courage, knowledge, patience, time and high purpose. The issue is a mature, full-balanced life of holiness.

The Defective Man vs.5,6

“Deficient in wisdom”. The requirement is “wisdom”, with encouragement, “ask of God”. Trust God as Job did, Job 13:15.

(1) *Wisdom Required*. Wisdom is the basic need of life. We need God’s wisdom to enable us to tackle our problems in a new and positive way. We need spiritual insight that saves us from slipping back to former ways of folly.

(2) *Wisdom Requested*, “ask of God”. James speaks of the failure to pray, 4:2-3. The selfish petition is not prayer. Endure the trial, using your privilege of prayer, with dependence on God through the ever-open door of intercession.

(3) *Wisdom Received*. God gives, without asking embarrassing questions or harsh words. He loves supremely. He gives liberally and generously, without reproaching us.

(4) *Wisdom Refused*, vs.6-7. The most important condition for answered prayer is “faith”. Where there is “wavering”, v.6, and double-mindedness,

v.8, instead of simplicity and sincerity, God will not answer. Ask in faith, Eph. 3:12.

The Double-minded Man vs.6-8

Like Reuben, “unstable”, Gen.49. What a graphic description of this unfortunate man: doubting, driven, double-minded, destitute, unable to receive anything from the Lord, v.7. Doubt—in a state of continual flux and upheaval, threatens one’s very survival spiritually.

(1) *Loss of Protection*, v.6. “Blown hither and thither by the wind”. The wavering man is not wholly committed to the Lord. He is looking two ways at the same time. He lives like a cork on the waves, tossed back and forth. He is immature and has no stability, Eph. 4:14, being vulnerable to every destructive agency. He is caught in the cross-currents of life.

(2) *Loss of Potential*, v.7. Deprived of inward peace, he disqualifies himself of divine blessings. We deceive ourselves with vain hopes and thoughts. We distrust God, we pray doubtfully. We lose the potential of prayer through unbelief, Mark 6:5-6.

(3) *Loss of Purpose*, v.8, “can never keep a steady course”. Here is the deadly effect of harbouring secret doubts. God never fails His child who wholly leans on Him. Doubt spells the death of desire and devotion. Abraham-like, may we “stagger not” at the promise of God through unbelief, Rom. 4:20. The doubting man lacks fixity of purpose and clear vision on the path of progress.

The Dual-role Man v.9

Two extremes, poverty and riches. The poor man who has Christ should rejoice in his spiritual wealth. Disparaged by man, but distinguished by God, so he rejoices.

(1) *The Emphasis*: “but”, v.10. Wealth can seduce a man’s mind, and he finds satisfaction in worldly ambitions. Wisdom appreciates true values; it enables us to see heaven clearly, and to see earth clearly. There is a disposition among Christians to exaggerate the importance of the rich man and despise the poor man, 2:2-4.

(2) *Enrichment*. The poor man rejoices in spiritual wealth, Eph. 1:3; 2:13. Exiles have been exalted; strangers are now fellow-citizens, 2:19. The rich brother is enabled to see his wealth in its true colours, transient, fading and perishing.

(3) *Evaluation*. The rich man, as a rich man, fades away; the Christian, as a Christian, never fades, by reason of the mercy of God. He is enabled to go on with God because his eyes are opened to see how perishable are earthly things.

The Disappearing Man vs.10-11

This man is like the flower of the field. Riches are not altogether

inconsistent with Christianity, but they can be a great snare. It is a hard matter to enjoy the world without being entangled with its cares and pleasures. "The crown of the wise is their riches", Prov. 14:24.

The affluent society has produced self-sufficiency. The rich man should see that all his wealth is perishable—there one moment and gone the next. He is really no more stable than the "grass"; the burning heat of some calamity reduces him to mere ashes. We should learn to accept from God things that we cannot change. The rich man rejoices in his humiliation, v.10.

The Durable Man vs.12,14

He remains steadfast in trial. Never has this quality of spiritual durability been under such pressure. The man emerging from trials is blessed, and gains a crown.

(1) *The Principle Involved*. By the operation of an impartial, inexorable law, nature ensures the survival of the hardiest strains, whether of plant or of animal life.

"Tried" means "approved", Rom. 16:10; 2 Cor. 10:18. Christian maturity can be reached only by travelling the path of suffering, 1 Pet. 1:6-8. Like Job, only when we are tried, shall we come forth as gold.

(2) *The Promise Invoked*, "the crown of life". This is a wonderful promise from the Lord preserved for us only by James.

This beatitude is a great encouragement, because it promises a crown to those who patiently endure trials, Rev. 2:10-11; 3:10-11.

The Disciplined Man vs.19-21

Here is the highest form of discipline engendered from within. This issues in a right relationship to the truth of God.

(1) *The Influence of the Word*, v.19. There is silent contemplation—"slow to speak", and solitary communion—"swift to hear", leading to saintly conduct—"slow to wrath". Spiritual growth comes through hearing and obeying the Word of God.

(2) *The Importance of the Word*, v.21. We not only listen, we receive the Word. The Word saves us and sanctifies our service. There must be the continual appropriation and application of the Word to assure moral rectitude and maturity.

The Deceived Man vs.22-26

He sees himself in a mirror and goes on his way. Reception of the truth brings reality into the life. The doer is like the one who looks carefully into the mirror of revelation, sees what needs to be done, and does it. "Looketh", v.25, signifies a careful, earnest gaze, and involves stooping down and "peering into", because there is something important which the viewer desires to see. This is used literally of Peter and Mary, Mark 16:5; John

20:5,11, and is applied spiritually in 1 Peter 1:12. By so doing we will be empowered with energy, endowed with beauty, and graced with purity. This holy activity brings a continuous blessing to the heart and life. Do not be self-deceived, v.22; be disciplined, v.19; be durable, v.12; never double-minded, v.8; accept trials as from God, and you will be delighted, v.2, and daily manifest a practical love for those in need. Is your religion true? v.27.

Chapter Two

True to our christian faith

Pure religion not only affects our character in the world 1:25,26, but our conduct in the Church 2:1-13. James is more of a moralist than a theologian. Here he is enforcing that the believer's conduct must be consistent with the faith he holds. What he has seen in his Lord ought to determine his attitude and actions towards his fellows.

Lessons are:— Our imitation of the Lord vs.1-7; obligation to the Law vs.8-13; the consecration of our life vs.15-26. Social distinctions are inexcusable, the demands of the Law inescapable, the demonstrations of faith irrefutable.

Respect of persons is not commendable vs.1-5

With James saving faith is a virile, active, powerful quality in a believer. That faith, and "respect of persons" are totally incompatible becomes particularly apparent in relation to the person of Christ as the "Glory" v.1 R.V. This is a reference to the radiance of the Shekinah light that draped the Tabernacle and Temple with the glint and glow of heavenly glory. The "Glory" is a title of our Lord, and partiality is out of harmony with the character of Christ 2 Cor. chs.3,4,7; Heb. 1:2,3.

The "Faith" here is that body of truth respecting our Lord as the Lord of Glory, and allegiance to such an One does not express itself in acceptance of persons Deut. 1:17; Matt. 22:16. James is making the affirmation that Christ is none other than the visible presence of God. Favouritism, i.e. to be unduly influenced by a person's social status, power, influence or wealth, is condemned by God Lev. 19:15; Mal. 2:9.

It is James' fear that snobbery may invade the Church. Ostentation ill becomes those who claim to follow the Lord, Matt. 11:29. Alas that partiality is still prevalent among us today! What a man has should not determine the action of a believer in Christ v.3. What a man is or may become, in the sight of God, is the thing that matters.

James describes two visitors who come into a local church meeting. One is well-dressed and obviously wealthy. The other is shabby and down-at-heel. To say to the one, "you have a seat here please", and to the other "you stand there", is inconsistent with Christian profession.

Reproach of the poor condemned by God vs.6-7

We should not mistake clothes for character, or rings for righteousness; snobbery among Christians is an abomination. The charge made in v.6 against the rich is serious and is three-fold. They dishonoured the poor, domineered the needy and derided the honourable name of our Lord Jesus Prov. 17:5; 22:7; Amos 5:11. James calls them to the serious consideration of this important matter. The name called over us may be a reference to baptism Matthew 29:19. The important point is that to call the name over a person was to demonstrate ownership or validate kinship Gen. 48:1-6; Deut. 28:10; Amos 9:12. Called by His Name Acts 11:36; 2 Tim. 2:19.

The rich and the great of this world were the persecutors of the early church. They "oppressed them", "drew them" before the lawcourts. James is condemning the conduct of riches without sympathy.

The royal law of God contemplated vs.8-10

James shows that respect of persons is also disobedience to the law of God. Belonging to Christ places us under obligation to the moral demands of God.

The command to love one's neighbour as oneself is taken from Lev. 19:18, and in the context we read "you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great" Lev. 19:18. Because this law has been affirmed by the King of kings, it is binding on all true subjects. It possesses that sovereign authority over man that a king exerts over his subjects.

The retributive law should control our conduct vs.11-13

The law of God is an organic whole and to break a part of it puts one on the wrong side of God's law as a whole. William Penn said, "Man must be governed by God, or he condemns himself to be ruled by tyrants." As the law is the expression of the will of God, whatever commandment we break we contravene His will. The law is one great whole, because it proceeds from the single Lawgiver v. 10. The law of liberty is the code by which we are to be tried 1:35; 2:12. The person who loves God will love his fellow man. These two evidences are the external expression of a regenerate life. If we act inconsistently with our profession we shall have "judgment without mercy". This is an echo of the teaching of Christ in Matt. 6:14. May our conduct be sobered by the certainty, standard and principle of judgment v.13.

Faith's loud profession vs.14-17

The first example of spurious faith is the armchair philanthropist. He is a man who claims faith in God but is devoid of concern for men within the Christian fellowship. A picture of real need is before us in v.15, and a profession of love unattended by service is mere sentiment, v.16.

Faith's liberal practice vs.18-20

Christianity is not mere mental assent to a fact of history but is a life

commitment in love to the person of Christ. Faith is an act and attitude of the will, an obedience of the heart. There are not two kinds of Christianity, one devotional and the other practical v.18. Believing and behaving cannot be separated.

If our response to God is merely emotional, or an intellectual assent to certain facts v.19, it will not save us. An actionless faith is barren and worthless. A spurious faith has no visible fruit, either manward in deeds of kindness, or Godward in peace and assurance.

Faith's living proofs vs.21-26

Here are two examples of genuine faith vs.21,25 and the lessons applied vs.22-24,26. Two well-known illustrations from the Old Testament are quoted. Here is faith demonstrated by works. Claims are matched by conduct; it proves its sincerity by its action. Abraham is the first example of true faith. Faith believes to the point of commitment. It trusts to the point of dependence. It loves to the point of obedience. Abraham as a sinner was justified by faith Gen. 15:3-6, and as a believer he was justified by works Gen. 22.

Rahab, the harlot, at the other end of the social scale from Abraham is James' second example of true faith. She imperilled her life by sending the spies on their journey by another way.

Rahab represented all the things that the Jews despised; she was a Gentile, a harlot, and a traitor to her own people Josh. 2:1,21. Her own testimony in vs.9-12 shows that she had faith in the Lord God of Israel.

Her faith was fruitful manward, Abraham's faith was productive Godward. Rahab's faith was demonstrated in self-forgetful concern for the welfare of others.

Chapter 3:1-12

Control your tongue

The tongue is the index to both the regenerate and degenerate life. By its instrumentality we minister or misrepresent the truth, magnify or mutilate love and maintain or menace Christian liberty. James deals with the tongue and its dominion vs.1-4; its danger vs.5-6; its difficulty vs.7-8; and its deceitfulness vs.9-12.

The helpful or harmful word vs.1-12

"Masters" relates to authority, "teachers" relates to instruction. James begins by pointing out that those who teach will be judged very strictly. It is still a principle to be carefully observed that greater privilege means greater responsibility.

Believers should be in no haste to become public instructors as not all are suitable for the office. It is fatally easy to distort the truth or to teach not God's version but our own version of the truth.

The power of the tongue vs.1-4

There is terrible judgment for the man who is idle and unfaithful as a teacher. There is need for sensitive care against the spirit of assumption vs.1-2. The themes he deals with are so sublime that glib, ill-considered speech, shallow assumptions and dogmatic pronouncements are to be dreaded Jer. 23:28; 1 Cor. 4:1,2.

James was more fond of illustrating than insisting. He gives us seven different pictures of the tongue and its activities. The horse's bridle, the ship's rudder, the spark and its stubble, the taming of beasts and birds, the poison, the fountain and the tree. These show the potential and power of the tongue vs.3-5. Read Prov. ch.8 with this chapter and see the accumulative values of wisdom from above in the use of the tongue. Wisdom supplies a discernment and discrimination which teaches the soul and trains the spirit in the right use of the tongue. We need the Spirit of God as a hand upon the helm of life.

The swaying and guiding, directing and governing features of life, are likened to bit and bridle, rudder and helm. James' wise advice is first to take the control of the tongue seriously and then to use it as a disciplined instrument to the glory of God. Beware of having a censorious or critical tongue that is always seeking to set other people right Matt. 12:36,37. It is an imperative duty to keep a watch over our tongue. Our words are as much the index of the mind and heart as actions are Matt. 12:34.

The propensities of the tongue vs.5-6

Here James passes from the dominion to the danger of the tongue. It is a little member but destiny is determined by the words we speak. The spirited horse v.3, may be a symbol of the flesh and the "rough winds" which beat upon the ship are suggestive of the world.

How prodigious has been the effects of the tongue. It has both stilled and stirred the passions of men. How often by a very whisper has it infuriated many and roused a tempest of popular commotion and how often by the charms of its eloquence, laid the conflicting elements of such a storm to rest! Evil conversation corrupts good manners. A sinister doubt, a sordid tale or a silly remark have stifled aspiration and stained and wrecked many a life. The tongue of fire v.5 speaks of its intense energy, illustrated in a good sense in Acts 2:3. The tiny spark, neglected, may become a conflagration and destroy cities. The scorching power of the tongue is even more destructive than fire. It may degenerate into a "world of iniquity"—the sum total of unrighteousness. It "defileth the whole body". It does so by its influence in exciting and inflaming those appetites, lusts and passions, the gratification of which constitute moral defilement and shame. Watch your words Psa. 17:3; 39:1.

Where it is "set on fire by hell" this destructive agency is of infernal origin.

Fed by the fuel of envy and hate it can destroy the sterling qualities of a noble character. Let us pray like David in Psalm 141:3; and heed the exhortation of Paul with regard to the tongue 1 Tim. 1:5,6; Titus 1:9-11.

The problem of the tongue vs.7-8

We have two natures, the old corrupt nature inherited from the first Adam; and the new and holy nature received from our Lord when we were born again. When man was created, God invested him with dominion over the inferior creation; placing all in "subjection under his feet" Ps. 8:6,7. Man has shown great skill as a tamer of beasts, yet he is unable to control his tongue. The member in question is shown to be untameable and uncontrollable. It is an unruly evil and full of poison more deadly than that of a serpent. Was not the tongue of the old serpent "full of deadly poison", when he whispered to Eve, "ye shall not surely die"?

The untamed tongue is full of deadly poison which kills character, happiness and even life. The influence of the tongue can be bad, or beneficial Prov. 10:11.

Start a slander on its way, and before you can overtake it, it may smirch the character of half a dozen godly men. Truly did Solomon say—"Life and death are in the power of the tongue". There is something satanic about the wrong use of the tongue.

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds
But you can't do that when you are flying words;
Thoughts unexpected may sometimes fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

The perversity of the tongue vs.9-12

No one can over-estimate the power of speech. Deceit and duplicity are illustrated in verse nine. We need consistency in the use of words and speech. The tongue should be the instrument of the Holy Spirit and be reserved and kept solely for holy uses. The perfection of the Servant of God is Isa. 53:9 was seen specifically in His controlled tongue. "There was no deceit in His mouth". We must think on lovely things and "keep the heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Phil. 4:8; Prov. 4:23). Words can be assuring or angry, they can bless or blast, honour God or curse our fellows v.9.

The proper use of the tongue is to bless God (Psa. 51:15; 145:10). "Some birds sing in winter as well as in spring. Stir up one another (Eph. 5:18), as one bird setteth all the flock a-chirping" (J. Manton).

Acts of piety are counterfeited when acts of charity are neglected. What strange inconsistencies in life are revealed by the tongue. Sweet water and bitter cannot flow from a single fountain, and blessing and cursing from the same tongue are incongruous.

No tree can bear different fruit from that which God assigned to it, neither should the tongue bless and curse, be pure and impure. We need to learn from the basic law of consistency and order in nature.

Is there a cure for this little member? Yes, all our members need to be surrendered to God. The tongue needs a governor and if it is controlled by God He will steer it to infinite heights of bliss and service. Controlled, cleansed and anointed by Him it will bring comfort, healing, cheer and nourishment to all men everywhere. To control the tongue is to control the whole person v.2, a sign of maturity and mastery. May we daily pray—"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer" (Psa. 19:14).

Chapter 4:1-10

The danger of worldliness

We have a tendency to think of the eve of the first-century Church as a time when all Christians were very spiritual. It was not a virtual Utopia, all believers living in perfect harmony, spending much time in prayer and obeying the Word of God. The early Church had its problems similar to what we meet today, and so James shows the great need of reality in prayer vs.1-3; relinquishing the world vs.4,5; reliance upon God vs.6,7; resisting the devil and resorting to prayer vs.7-9; refraining from evil speaking vs.10-12; and reference to the will of God vs.13-17.

The prevalence of strife vs.1-3

THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN Wretched janglings and discord seemed to prevail among these saints. The trouble in ch.3 came through the tongue but here it is traced to its source—a carnal heart.

We need wisdom from above as it safeguards us from protracted strife.

The source of carnality v.1. "Wars" These are not national conflicts, but rather personal squabbles, disputes and discords. Our "members" are the field of battle, in which the conflict is fought (1 Pet. 2:11). "Lust" here is used in the broader sense of gratification of all kinds and the thirst for worldly pleasure. The Christian's battle really rages against three enemies, all of them mentioned in this chapter. In vs.1,2 we have the flesh; v.4 concerns the "world"; and v.7 the "devil".

The signs of carnality vs.2,3. The putting of self at the centre. The demand that self should be satisfied leads to wars in the Christian fellowship. At a moment's notice we are ready to go to war against anybody who stands in the way of our self-gratification. Note the word "YE" mentioned eight times in these three verses. Continuing resentment leads to murder, if not in act certainly in the heart. King Ahab and King David both knew that for a fact.

The Peril of worldliness vs.4,5

THE CONCERNED CHRISTIAN The opening word presents a real

difficulty as most versions give “ye adulteresses”. The word should be taken figuratively not literally. The same word is used as a feminine adjective by our Lord in the expression “an evil and adulterous generation” (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38). They were disloyal and unfaithful. The charge is unfaithfulness, adultery in a moral and spiritual sense, professing loyalty to God and yet consorting with the world. No-one can have God and the world as friends.

There are two possible translations of v.5, which in the end give much the same sense. “God jealously yearns for the devotion of the spirit which He has made to dwell within us”, OR “The Spirit which God has made to dwell within us jealously yearns for the full devotion of our hearts” R.V. See Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Zech. 9:2. God loves us with such a passion that He cannot bear any rival love within our hearts. The Holy Spirit does not cause us to lust to envy or to love the world.

Principles of spirituality vs.6-10

THE COMMITTED CHRISTIAN Humility in the Christian’s life is seen in his disposition vs.1-5 and in his devotion to God vs.6-10. We are not naturally humble and only the abounding grace of God can bring about this transformation. Much encouragement is given in seven exhortations. They are the imperatives of the separated Christian life, and guidelines for faith vs.6-10. They are challenging and give practical help to failing saints. Here is God’s remedy for every ill in the assemblies of God today.

The Display of wisdom vs.11-17

Wisdom is displayed when it silences criticism of others vs.11,12; stimulates conformity to God’s will vs.13-16; and stirs conviction over neglected duty v.17.

Practice of sinful criticism vs.11,12

THE CRITICAL CHRISTIAN James is here condemning censorious deprecation of others. This may be done in a variety of ways. Wilful false accusation is one of the worst forms of it. Defamation is a dreadful thing; it touches our relationship and attitude towards other people. A harsh uncharitable spirit that is ever finding fault with other people can cause disturbance to the peace of any Christian community. If we speak ill of others, or slander or judge a brother, we condemn the royal *law of love* which forbids all such practices Matt. 5:1-5.

Plan for a successful life vs.13-15

THE COMMERCIAL CHRISTIAN Here are further matters for serious consideration. We ought to stop a moment and think the matter out. Many consume all their thought and energy in making the dream of material

wealth and temporal happiness a reality. One result of being in harmony with the world is that man soon thinks he is master of his own destiny. This shows that he is not conscious of God's sovereignty over creation.

Business and religion must go together in every aspect and department of life, because of:

The uncertainty of life vs.13,14. When we make the future our goal, we should not overlook the never-ending future that begins after things are no longer important. Real security is eternal in character (Prov. 27:1). "Go to now" is an expression of arrest used by James to bring his readers back to reality concerning life's uncertainty. In business all things should conform to the will of God. Pride and worldliness express themselves in presumptuous self-reliance in relation to the future.

We cannot choose our time or select our place of business without first seeking the mind of God. Man does not know "what shall be on the morrow" v.14a. We do not know what God has determined for our lives. It is pure presumption to neglect God when we contemplate any future aspect of our lives on this earth. "What is the nature of your life?" v.14b. It is so brief a thing, "a vapour", there a moment, gone the next. James is opposed to the attitude whereby a Christian plans as though he were a worldly man, completely ignoring God.

The certainty of God v.15. To attempt to direct our lives without God's guidance and help is completely foolish. It is to assume that we are equals of God. The uncertainty and frailty of our life should move us to rest humbly on the will of God. Recognising the Lordship of Christ begets desires to please Him and serve Him. Christians are not fatalists; they are futurists. Only by taking God into account can we be sure of a future glorious and satisfying. When Christ is rightfully recognized as Master of our lives our motivation and attitudes will be transformed.

A Principle to guide life vs.16,17

THE CARELESS CHRISTIAN To seek material advantages and physical pleasures, as though they were supremely important, exhibits a degrading of capacity. God intended our aspirations to be directed to higher things. These saints erred in two ways, they were confident of prospects and boastful of success. Our plans may not be within the purpose of God.

Chapter 5

Faith applied to patience and prayer

James is here seen in the role of a prophet of social justice. He declares his mind without fear or favour. Here wisdom expresses itself in service faithfully rendered vs.1-6; suffering patiently endured vs.7-12; supplication conscientiously offered vs.13-15; and the salvation of fallen saints effectively

pursued vs.16-20. Prayer and patience are the prominent words in this chapter.

1. **The danger of prosperity—ignoring the Lord** vs.1-6

Read Amos 2:6,7; 6:6, with these words of denunciation of the rich man's future v.1, his present vs.2,3 and his past vs.4-6. Wretchedness is not associated with want but with wealth, and judgment is coming soon. Perhaps James foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem when their wealth would disappear v.3. He condemns the ungodly rich for their covetousness v.3, their corruption v.4, their carelessness v.5, and their cruelty v.6.

Selfishness lay at the root of the sinfulness of these men. They were unprincipled, selfish and tyrannical and their wealth was idle and tainted. Enough of this world's goods do not bring security vs.1-3. It is God's business how you get what you possess. This is a moral universe. Right will triumph at last.

2. **The delight of His people—wait for the Lord** vs.7-12

Here is a lesson on Christian conduct in an unfriendly world. Christian conduct is indispensable as a proof of salvation and as a testimony to the power of the Saviour (Luke 5:25,26). The previous verses deal with the oppressor. These verses with the problems of the oppressed.

(a) *The coming of the Lord* vs.7-9. To encourage our patience we are reminded of the processes of nature v.7, the Lord's return v.8, the example of the prophets v.10, and the experience of Job v.11. James instructs us how to live amid trials and temptations 1:2; and his prescription is patience and prayer 1:3-5. We need patience to endure and prayer to strengthen. His wise counsel is both varied and valuable. Be patient vs.7-8, don't grudge v.9, do not envy, don't swear v.12. The coming of the Lord will bring the only solution to all life's problems. His coming is certain, comforting and challenging. It should lead to a vigorous and virtuous Christian service characterised by victorious living. Absolute justice will be established when the Lord comes v.9.

(b) *Patience of the saints* vs.10-12. The prophets of old were examples of patience in suffering for righteousness and God wrought on their behalf v.10. Remember Isaiah, or Amos or Jeremiah who showed patience in their afflictions. This should characterize every child of God. Suffering was a mark of God's approval upon them that He trusted them to suffer for His Name's sake.

May we guard and discipline our tongues. It is irreverent to swear or make vows for they dishonour God and His creation.

3. **The dignity of prayer—depend on the Lord** vs.13-18

James reminds us here of the privilege, place, purpose, practice and profit

of prayer, communion and fellowship with God. It is the greatest source of happiness in sickness or in health.

(a) *The encouragement of prayer* vs.13-15. God's Name was to be used in prayer, not in trivial oaths v.12. Swearing has no place in a believer's life, but prayer should be given a prominent place.

(i) Prayer provides help in suffering v.13. "Afflicted" means suffering hardship or suffering evil v.10. It does not refer to being physically ill. The sovereign remedy for all suffering is prayer. Its significance is seen when we realize that it puts us into contact with the God who loves and provides, "Take it to the Lord in prayer".

In times of pleasure, sing unto the Lord. Say with the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits" (Psa. 68:19).

(ii) Prayer procures healing in sickness vs.14-15. "Faith healing" as practised today is different from that which James suggests. The instructions are clear and concise. Elders are to be called, they should pray and anoint with oil. It is prayer, not merely the symbolic anointing with oil which heals the sick v.15.

In sickness we should be aware that frequently this condition is due to violation of nature's laws. Intercession in the Lord's Name may be efficacious in achieving recovery. It may not bring recovery (1 Cor. 11:30; 2 Cor. 12:7-9).

(iii) Prayer promotes humility for sin v.16. God forgives sin if we are sincere, not hiding our sins but confessing them one to the other. Confession of sins to God brings forgiveness. Confession of faults one to another brings fellowship. What a restoring ministry for today.

(b) *The efficacy of prayer* vs.16-19. Elijah became what he was, and wielded the power which he did, through prayer. He was a man of the same fibre as ourselves, a frail man, but he dared to believe in God and his prayers were answered in a very remarkable way. May we emulate his integrity of character and intensity in prayer (1 John 3:22). Confession and supplication lead to restoration vs.15-16.

4. A diligent pursuit—work with the Lord vs.19-20

This practical book closes with a word on the glorious work of soul-winning. James is concerned about the spiritual state of the believer. His chief concern is the restoration of a brother in fellowship. Think of the solemn possibility, "to err from the truth".

The glorious work of recovery is worth any sacrifice, tears, prayers, visitation and sympathetic understanding of the erring soul. Co-operation WITH the Lord is partnership for eternity. What does the Devil strike against today? The blessed hope, prayer and soul winning. He has defeated us as servants of the Lord. Let us get back to the teaching of James who begins with asking in faith and closes with praying in faith.

The First Epistle of Peter

“The Pilgrim’s Calling”

Writer: Simon Peter, ch.1:1; 5:1; 2 Peter 3. It is full of Apostolic Dignity and Authority.

Readers: Elect Saints scattered abroad, ch.1:1; 2:9,10; 3:6.

Purpose:

(a) To instruct them in the Doctrines of Grace, 5:12. Doctrinal Sections, 1:3-12; 2:1-10.

(b) To inspire them during times of trial 1:7.

(c) To incite them to Holy Living, 1:16

Place of Writing: Babylon on the Euphrates, 5:13

Theme: Victory over trial as exemplified in Christ.

Suggested Analysis

Introduction—ch.1:1-2. Description of Saints; The Dignity of Saints, v.2.

“The Pilgrim’s Calling” ch.1:3-12; 2:1-10

(a) SALVATION ENJOYED ch.1:3-12

1. *The Thrilling Future*, vs.3-5

Rejoicing in God—blessed be God

Resting on Christ—His resurrection

Reserved in Heaven—incorruptible

Revealed to Saints—in the last time

2. *The Testing of Faith*, vs.6-9

Seemingly Grievous—in heaviness

Sanctifying Process—more precious

Satisfying Love—joy unspeakable

3. *The Theme fully investigated*, vs.10-13

Apostles proclaimed salvation, v.12

Saints received salvation, v.9

Prophets investigated salvation, v.10

Angels contemplated salvation, v.12

(b) SALVATION EXHIBITED ch.2:1-10

Sin Discarded—put away once for all, v.1

Sincere desire for the Word—as babes, vs.2-3

Significant Design—built up to offer, vs.4-5

Solid Foundation—laid in Zion, v.6

Spiritual Fellowship—Ye are, v.9

Special Favour—But now, v.10

“The Pilgrim’s Conduct” ch.1:13-25; 2:11—4:6

(a) **PERSONAL HOLINESS** ch.1:13-25

Controlling the Mind, vs.13-14

Commanded by God, vs.15-16

Effected by Christ, vs.17-18

Exhibited in Christ, vs.19-21

Expressed by Love, vs.22-25

(b) **PUBLIC HONESTY** ch.2:11-25

(1) *In our civil relations* vs.13-17

Commendable behaviour, vs.11-12

Consistent behaviour, vs.13-17

(2) *In our social relations* vs.18-25

The Priceless Grace—Patience, v.20

The Perfect Pattern—Christ, v.21

The Personal Change—Returned, v.25

(c) **PRIVATE HELPFULNESS** ch.3:1-12

The Discreet Wife, vs.2-6

The Difficult Husband, v.1b

The Design for Happiness, vs.10-12

(d) **PATH OF HONOUR** ch.3:13—4:6

Good Conscience, 3:13-17

The Great Example, 3:18-22

The Grand Encouragement, 4:1

“The Pilgrim’s Character” 4:7—5:11

Christian Fellowship, 4:7-11

Commendable Features, 4:12-19

Constant Faithfulness, 5:1-11

Conclusion, 5:12-14

Grace, v.12

Love, v.13

Peace, v.14.

God’s Pilgrim People

CHRIST OUR GUARDIAN
PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS

Designation 1:1
 Election 1:2
 Sanctification 1:2
 Benediction 1:3
 Reservation 1:4
 Preservation 1:5
 Commendation 1:7
 Salvation 1:9
 Redemption 1:18
 Association 2:5
 Foundation 2:6
 Translation 2:9
 Satisfaction 5:10
REMEMBER YOUR CALLING

CHRIST OUR GUIDE
PLAIN PATHS

(a) *Be Ye Holy* 1:16
 A Guarded Mind 1:13
 A Godly Life 1:15-17
 A Genuine Love 1:22
 A Good Hope 1:21
 (b) *Be Ye Honourable* 2:17
 Personally 2:11
 Civilly 2:13-17
 Socially 2:18-25
 Privately 3:1-7
 (c) *Be Ye Helpful* 3:8
 For your calling's sake 3:9
 For your conscience's sake 2:19
 For Christ's sake 2:13; 4:13
RESEMBLE YOUR MASTER

CHRIST OUR GOVERNOR
PRACTICAL PRECEPTS

Abstain 2:11
 Refrain 3:10
 Arm 4:1
 Be holy 1:16
 Be subject 2:18
 Be of one mind 3:8
 Be pitiful 3:8
 Be courteous 3:8
 Be ready 3:15

Be sober 4:7; 5:8

Be humble 5:5

Be vigilant 5:8

RESPECT YOUR OBLIGATIONS

The Landmarks

THE COVENANT 1:2

THE PASSOVER 1:18-19

THE RED SEA 1:21

THE BRAZEN SERPENT 1:23

THE STONES IN JORDAN 2:5

THE LAND 1:4

The Second Epistle of Peter

Writer. Chapters 1:1; 3:1 are sufficient to mark the Epistle as from the pen of the Apostle Peter. This Epistle is a Holy writing inspired by God chapter 3:16.

Purpose. To commend perseverance in the Truth 1:5-8.
To confirm by their living the call of God 1:10.
To counteract prevailing erroneous teaching ch.2:1
To condemn practical infidelity 2:12-22.
To corroborate the teaching of Paul 3:15-16.

Date. Probably between 68-70 A.D.

Message. 1. Progress in the Christian life. (a) By active co-operation, 1:5-8. (b) By accepting the Truth, 1:19-21. (c) By acceptable living, 3:11.
2. Perversion of Divine Truth. (a) By denial of the person of Christ, 2:1. (b) By denial of the promise of Christ, 3:9.

Suggested Analysis of the Epistle

CHAPTER ONE

Knowledge Expressed in Production, "Wheat"

Introduction. vs.1-2. Saints united in Faith, v.1. Sure of an unlimited supply, Grace and Peace, v.2.

1. *The Abundant Provision of God* vs.3-4.

Divine Power exercised, v.3.

Divine Promises given, v.3.

Divine Prospect mentioned, v.3.

Divine Protection assured, v.4.

2. *The Actual Progress of the Saint* vs.5-11.

The Starting Point—Faith, v.5.

The Splendid Qualities—Seven Features, vs.5-7.

The Simple Principle—In and abound, v.8a.

The Satisfying Portion—Fruitful, v.8b.

The Sad Possibility—Blind, forgotten, v.9.

The Strenuous Effort—Make sure, v.10.

The Sure Reward—Entrance, v.11.

3. *The Accurate Prophetic Word* vs.12-21.

Remembering the Truth—To establish, vs.12-13.

Recording the Truth—To encourage, vs.14-15.

Re-affirming the Truth—To enlighten, vs.16-18.

Recognising the Truth—To enrich, vs.19-21.

CHAPTER TWO

Knowledge which Ends in Perdition “Tares”

The Methods and Miseries of False Teachers.

1. *Their Satanic Doctrine*, vs.1-3.

They deny the Lord, v.1.

They defame the truth, v.2.

They delude the Saints, v.3.

2. *Their Sure Destruction*, vs.4-9.

It slumbereth not, v.3.

Swift in execution, vs.4-5.

Striking in examples, vs.4-6.

3. *Their Shameful Deeds*, vs.10-22.

Defiled minds, v.10.

Despisers of Government, v.10.

Destitute of the Spirit, v.12.

Degraded in Living, vs.13-20.

Delivered to Death, vs.21-22.

CHAPTER THREE

Knowledge Effects Preparedness “Harvest”

The Preparation of the Faithful Soul.

1. *Beware of unbelieving men* vs.1-7.

They scorn purity of life, vs.1-2.

They scoff at the promise of Christ, vs.3-4.

They shut their eyes to judgment, vs.5-7.

2. *The Believer's unswerving Faithfulness*, vs.8-18.

By dependence upon truth, vs.8-9.

In view of that day, vs.10-11.

By devout living, v.12.

By diligent demeanour, v.14.

By discreet study, v.16.

By daily duty, v.17.

Doxology of Praise. Glory for ever, v.18.

2 Peter ch.1

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

The Christian life is one of inward peace, vs.1-3; upward progress, vs.4-7; governing purpose, vs.8-12; gracious privilege, vs.16-18; guiding prophesy, vs.19-21; and glorious prospect—the coming of the Lord, v.16.

Equality of Faith, vs. 1-4

We need to realize there is no aristocracy of faith. A great apostle and an obscure convert have common footing before God. We all receive the same benefits of redemption impartially, and all have the same open door to endless growth in the knowledge of the Saviour. In spiritual experience, Simon is the old man, Peter the new man. "Bondman" Peter was caught, controlled and captivated by his Lord. He belonged wholly to his Master, and was at His disposal to do with him what He would, 1 Cor. 6:19.

Faith is the subjective basis of all Christian experience. Because faith begins with knowing, we find frequent emphasis upon "knowledge", 2 Pet. 1:2,2; 3:18. Multiplication of grace and peace is obtained in the spheres of the knowledge of God. In no instance in the New Testament is divine knowledge divorced from Christ. In Him all its treasures are stored, Col. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:6.

The inexhaustible supply in verse 3 opens the door to the inestimable wealth in verse 4. Divine power provides everything necessary for life and godliness, and a divine Person pledges these promises. Divine power commences, continues and completes all that God has purposed, and it all becomes available to us in union with our Lord.

Maturity of Faith, vs. 5-8

There must be a human response to such rich provision, and the call is for diligence. Holiness calls for earnestness, industry and perseverance on our part, "In your faith supply virtue". There must be employment of our spiritual endowment.

These seven virtues set before us the natural progress, the notable purpose, and the needful perseverance, all of which are obligatory. Here is a heavenly ladder set up on the Christian highway: beginning with faith, it is crowned with love. Two preparatory additions, moral force and practical wisdom. Faith to achieve and to endure, to triumph and to suffer in the will of God. Faith must issue in resolution, or strong purpose, if it is to be fruitful. Faith is the attitude of dependence, and devotion rightly directed, and is the only reasonable attitude towards a righteous God. Virtue is manly energy, or courage to do what is right, and calls for resolution, Phil. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:9. Faith must combine zeal with good sense. The impact of Christ's character on us leads to commitment, v. 3, and this same quality of life is to be worked out in our lives. These first two graces are active, and we cannot dispense with knowledge. This is the steersman of the ship, which prevents zeal from landing our craft on the rocks.

The second two graces, temperance and patience, are passive or defensive additions. Self-control is described by Jeremy Taylor as "reason's girdle as well as passion's bridle". This is a day of extremes, and Christians must avoid extremes. We should demonstrate by moderation that we are daily

under the government of Christ, and the guidance of the Spirit of God. Do not be like Samson.

Patience is the power over that which is without; endurance is the temper of mind which is unmoved by difficulties and distress. True faith endures, Rom. 5:1-3. Patience has two elements, endurance and perseverance. Job is a classical example of fortitude under trial; he was never beaten by disappointment, nor baffled by apparent misfortune.

There follow three aggressive additions, "godliness", "brotherly kindness" and "love". These concern us in our relation to God, to fellow believers, and to the world. Godliness embraces reverence for the Lord, and that awareness of Him, which are at the heart of true piety. We should faithfully represent the character of God. Grace makes us fit for heaven, godliness makes us fit for earth. True reverence and real piety are at a discount today.

"Kindness" is manward, as "godliness" is Godward. It is a protection against a hard self-righteousness. It is restrained in judgment of others, considerate, unselfish, merciful. It is the most distinguishing mark of new life, John 13:34,35.

There is nothing higher than love, for God is love; it is to be the general attitude to all men. A fuller conception of love will deliver our love of the brethren from becoming narrowed into a parochial channel of exclusive sentiment. With these virtues, Christian character finds poise and spiritual equanimity.

The Memory of Faith, vs.8-11

The importance of character as the result of persistent action cannot be too over-rated. Peter adopts the concept by setting forth in sharp contrast two classes of people, distinguished by their fruitbearing; see Matt. 7:20. Fruit can indicate either the kind of tree, or the health of the tree as in verse 8. Peter wanted his readers to put their memory to the highest use, in order that they might hold to the truth about Jesus Christ, and to His glorious return. When truth is forgotten, there are always harmful moral consequences.

Depth and reality of character as the result of diligence will be productive, and our lives will be established. This will shield us from spiritual short-sightedness, seeing only what is near at hand. Lack of diligence will result in lack of spiritual power, perception and privilege, so be not indolent. A short-sighted saint has forgotten that he was purged from his sins, John 13:10; Heb. 10:2. We have a worthy goal and the urgency of Peter's plea should encourage us to live for God. Diligence assures us of present steadiness and ultimate triumph, 2 Pet. 1:11.

Testimony of Faith, vs.12-15

Peter as a witness was devout, determined, diligent, and definite in his

purpose. He thought it worthwhile to be going over the same truths again. He knew dangers faced by believers, and would inspire their enthusiasm by his experience. "Established" is the word the Lord used when he addressed Peter, Luke 22:32. Truth is given to strengthen and Peter is doing the very work His Master commanded. If the past inspires enthusiasm, the present enjoins earnestness, v.13. The word "tabernacle" and "decease" are reminiscent of the transfiguration, vs.14,15. Peter's attitude to death is refreshing; it means entry into the Lord's presence beyond the grave.

Authority of Faith, vs.16-18

Peter's message was a divine revelation, and his methods were not marked by trickery, skilfully trying to deceive, Titus 1:14. The substance of his message was "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus", His coming with power and great glory, Matt. 24:30, namely His regal advent. Peter was a personal witness of the realities of the revelation of Christ. He had personal knowledge and experience of the splendour on "the holy mount". The transfiguration was the second advent in miniature, Matt. 17:1-8, the pledge and earnest of that which was afterwards to be revealed, 2 Pet. 1:16. "Majesty" expresses the divine majesty of Christ revealed in the transfiguration of Jesus.

The message is corroborated by God, "honour" referring to the attesting voice of God saying "my beloved Son"; "glory" referring to the light which enveloped the Person of Christ. The three apostles saw and heard, and were therefore ear-witnesses as well as eye-witnesses. The voice of the Father finally settled Christ's identity, and for ever sealed His victorious humanity as being absolutely holy and altogether perfect.

The Verity of Faith, vs.19-21

We have heard the voice of Peter, the voice of the Father, and now we are directed to the voice of prophecy, or of Scripture. The prophetic word is now perfected; no greater confirmation could be given. May we rest today, not upon startling voice or sensational vision, but upon the unerring Word of God which does not depend on any human witness. This is now the sole and all-sufficient authority for faith and practice. The written Word has been proved inspired by fulfilment, v.19a. It is not only sure, but shines in a dark, squalid, gloomy place. Verses 20-21 are classic references to the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Peter is referring to the initial giving of the revelation *to* man, not the interpretation of the message *by* man. It is the prophet's grasp of the prophecy, not that of the readers that is here in view, v.21. The emphasis is upon the *origin*, not upon the *meaning* of Scripture. The prophetic word calls for attention and careful study—"take heed", v.19.

The apostles and prophets are one in their witness to Christ. They were

under a divine influence which was above human capacity and effort. The Spirit who inspired must interpret; we need today, as then, the illumination of the Spirit. Holy Scripture is Spirit-taught and Spirit-learned; thus Peter warns against misinterpretation of the Word of God. May we like the prophets be passive instruments in the hand of the Spirit of God.

The foundations of spiritual assurance are safe, sure and strong, namely, prophetic revelation, vs.19-21; apostolic confirmation, vs.16-18; and personal attestation, vs.12,19. Listen and learn each day.

2 Peter ch.2

CORRUPTING DOCTRINE

In chapter 1 we have the construction of character through the truth, but in chapter 2 we have corrupt doctrine intent upon the destruction of the unwary. Peter gives a vehement description of false teachers whose denials of Christ's glorious return equalled a denial of the Lord that bought them. An attack against Christ in His consummation is an attack against Christ in His redemption.

Peter strips these false teachers of all pretence and displays them in their true light. The chapter reveals how sensitive the kingdom of error and evil always has been to the proclamation of truth and goodness. The false teachers of the apostolic age were a very gross and shameless lot. We have many false teachers today, but they are often more subtle. Some are in the church, v.1; many more are on the fringe of the church in institutions of so-called culture. In the end their denials of Christ are spiritually and morally destructive as were those of the blatant seducers in the early church. Study their programme, vs.1-10; philosophy, vs.11-19; and penalty, vs.20-22.

The Character of False Teachers, vs.1-4

In this chapter of unrelieved gloom, the darkness is appalling. Here we meet and face the awfulness of apostasy. The word "also", v.1, implies false as well as true prophets. The Old Testament gives many examples of such: in the days of Ahab, 1 Kings 22:12; Isaiah, Isa. 9:15; 28:7; Jeremiah, Jer. 14:14, and Ezekiel, Ezek. 13. Our Lord in His discourses gave warning of these things, Matt. 7:15; 24:11; Peter now confirms these predictions.

a) *Their Pernicious Ways* v.1. What is illustrated in the Old Testament, and foretold by the Lord, is now described by Peter. "But" sets them in contrast with the holy men who were Spirit-inspired, 1:21. When truth is malignd and misrepresented, the result is expressed in heresy, heterodoxy and hypocrisy. False teachers deny the complete body of doctrine from the atonement to the advent. Three distinct marks are mentioned in verse 1; they will introduce heresies, deny the Lord, and experience swift destruction.

“Heresy in the New Testament implies false conduct, a deliberate and wilful severance from right thought and righteous paths. These men are as untrustworthy as their message. Their teaching was flattery, their ambitions were financial, their lives were dissolute, their conscience was dulled, and their aim was deceptive” (Mayor). Here is error in full bloom, short-lived, and going on to destruction. “Privily”—they introduce secretly their heretical views, cf. Gal. 2:4. They may declare the truth in correct phraseology but deny the spirit thereof. They are blatant in their blasphemy, denying the Sovereign Lord that bought them.

(b) *Their Powerful Influence*, vs.2-3. Their success was widespread, and their influences were deep-rooted. It spread to infect others, and brought discredit on the Christian cause, v.2. Their teaching was immoral, blasphemous and treacherous; they made “merchandise” of their hearers. These self-constituted prophets, never called by or owned by God, were counterfeits of the true, and actuated by false motives. Thus the denial of Christ is the same thing as departure from the truth. The fabricated words deceived their dupes as they trafficked in holy things. Lawless insolence and licentious indulgences may run riot, but the end is sudden destruction.

The Condemnation of False Teachers, vs.4-9

(a) *Their Punishment Assured*, vs.4-9. Jude and Peter write in testimony to the inflexible righteous judgment of God upon sin. Peter announces the spread of unscriptural theories; Jude dwells upon the desolating effects, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. Their judgement is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. Three illustrations are given which graphically portray the end of those who despise the warning voice of God in His Word. Angels rebelled against the word of God; the men of the old world ridiculed the word, and the men of Sodom rejected the word of God. These were examples of the impartial judgment of God, and it is certain to fall even though it seems to linger, vs.9-10. These warnings are solemn and the issues are serious to all who disobey, disregard or despise the Word of God. The nature of the sin of angels is not specific. They fell through pride and rebellion. In Jude 6-8, their guilt is placed on a level with that of Sodom.

Peter makes clear that man's case in relation to God must be considered judicially, not sentimentally. No degree in supernatural status, v.4; no defence in seeming solidarity, v.5; and no defence in social security, vs.6-8, can exempt from the justice of God in judgment.

The presumption of angels must be punished, and the procrastination of the antediluvians deserved judgment such as they experienced.

The cities of Sodom seemed secure, but they gave themselves over to such vileness that God destroyed them with fire from heaven. The context makes clear that these false prophets and teachers fell into the unnameable vices of those cities. They, like the Sodomites, set at defiance the laws of nature, as well as of man and of God.

(b) *The Preservation of the Godly*, vs.5,7-9. It is good to know that the deliverance of the godly and the destruction of the ungodly are both the work of God, v.9. He saved Noah and delivered just Lot. We know not how we will be delivered but our God is able, ready and willing. How marvellous is the knowledge of the Lord! He understands the weaknesses of our physical, mental, nervous and moral inheritance, yet He gives us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Conduct of False Teachers, vs.10-22

What a catalogue of sins is listed against these ungodly men. Licentiousness, wilfulness, vs.10,11; brutishness, recklessness, v.12; sensuality, hypocrisy, infamy, vs.13-16. They are marked by emptiness, v.17; boastfulness, seductiveness, heartlessness, v.18; powerlessness, 19. Where there is no internal government, bringing carnal lusts under subjection, all outward restraints will be held of no account. Wilful contempt of all authority is rife in our country today. Revelry, defiance, and unbridled license in conduct are on the increase.

(a) *Diabolical Deeds*, vs.11-15. Whenever there is deviation from the principles of truth, righteousness is deserted and depravity and brutishness mark the apostate. Such men never tremble as they blaspheme glories, yet elect angels do not presume to bring accusations against evil ones, v.11.

Language seems inadequate to describe these irrational men, such is the depth of the infamy and impurity to which they sank, v.12. Everyone who throws his conscience overboard, and lives by his instincts, is no better than an animal. Let us remember every time that we do something "just because we want to", we are no better. Balaam stands out as the ringleader of those who advocated indulgence and indecency.

(b) *The Dreadful Description*, vs.15-19. Trace the satanic orders enumerated in Deuteronomy 18:9-14 which led to the fall of Israel. The faith of the Christian is threatened by grave perils such as spiritists' meetings, magic art, fortune-tellers, sooth-sayers and the occult art of divination. Avoid these as you would a plague, remembering the emptiness of such things, v.17. They have no settled principles, v.17. They are boastful and seductive, promising liberty which consists of unbridled license, and are bondslaves of corruption, vs.18-19.

(c) *Degeneration and Doom*, vs.20-22. Having become ensnared they will not escape the judgment of God. People who live for pleasure have no anchor, no roots; they are adrift, driven along haphazardly by whatever attraction happens to come along. Moral disaster and spiritual degeneration are the results of entanglement, v.20, ending in utter apostasy, vs.21,22.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will,

And with a clear and shining lamp supplied
 First put it out, then take it for a guide,
 Halting on crutches of unequal size,
 One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
 They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
 Sure of nothing but to lose the race.

Author Unknown

2 Peter ch.3 **CONTROLLED BY DIVINE TRUTH**

Peter gives a timely word for today. The knowledge of Christ should mould our habits and prepare us for His soon return. The doctrine of false teachers in relation to our Lord's return was dangerous and sceptical. The promise of His return should become a radiant reality, and a reason for holy behaviour during the short time we are left in this world. His coming is remembered, vs.1-2; ridiculed, vs.3-4; is reliable, vs.5-9; seems delayed, vs.10-12; and is recognized by devotion, diligence and deportment, vs.14-18.

The Thoughts of the Pastor, vs.1-2

Peter opens this new section with a word of encouragement which is affectionate and practical. He claims divine origin for his, and the other apostles' writings. They are placed on a level with the Old Testament writings. He arouses these saints thoroughly to the dangers within and the difficulties without.

There is ever present the duty of remembrance, and the peril of forgetfulness. The conjunction of "prophets" and "apostles" indicates that the prophets are New Testament prophets; cf. Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11.

The Taunts of the Scoffer, vs.3-4

Dangers ahead must be faced. These scoffers are marked by sinfulness and scepticism, and are already present, v.3. Neither human agreement with, nor antagonism against, can fulfil or frustrate the purpose of God. These scoffers hate the truth of His coming, because it interferes with their own selfish desires and sordid living. Notice how invariably impure living is joined with heretical teaching.

Thorough Exposure, vs.5-7

Peter shows the unreality and deliberate sin of the attitude of the scoffers. A wilful ignoring of the great deluge is an accompaniment of scoffing and denial. Their sneer is, "It will never happen". They question the veracity of God's Word; yet the truth of the second advent is in almost every book of the

Old and New Testaments. It may be derided, but to laugh at a thing does not make it any the less real. How long you have to wait for the “day” makes no difference, v.8. The wicked of a bygone age did not escape the water, v.6, nor will the wicked of a coming day escape the fire, v.7.

The assumption of these men is refuted by Bible history, vs.5-6, and Bible prophecy, v.7.

The Teaching of Scripture, vs.8-10

Do not be perplexed by the delay. You can rely on the wisdom, mercy and righteousness of God, vs.8-10. Wilful men usually deny truth that they do not understand. Peter shows that God works in eternity, and is not bound by time limitations as is man, v.8. The delay is not due to God’s sloth, but to His mercy. He does not wish any man to perish, cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; Rom. 11:32. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, 1 Pet. 3:20.

This is the day of God’s mercy, that is why He tolerates human suffering; He is not cruel, He is kind.

Note the certainty of the coming, “will come”; its character, “as a thief”; and the consequences of the coming, “the elements shall melt”.

Suddenly, quickly, and speedily refer to the nature of the event, more than to the time factor. For “as a thief”, see Luke 12:39,40; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.

The day of the Lord is marked by the dissolution of heavenly things, and a dissolving of earthly elements. This “day” is always associated with terror and judgment, Isa. 2:12.

Time of Sobriety, vs.11-13

The day of the Lord refers to His judgments that precede the millennium, Rev. 6-19; the day of God is the ushering in of eternity, when God shall be “all in all”, 1 Cor. 15:28. With the dissolution of the present order, v.11, there is the introduction of a new order, v.13.

These great events should produce godliness of character, and holiness of conduct in the saint who longs for the return of the Lord. It leads us to sobriety and godly walk, expressed in complete separation from all evil. The glorious advent brings brightness and buoyancy into life, and cheers our hearts amid the gloom of this age. We are exhorted to live spotless lives, free from sin-spots and world-spots of all kinds.

This is man’s day, yet it is the day of salvation, 1 Cor. 4:3; 2 Cor. 6:2. Christ’s day is the day of glorification, 2 Thess. 2:2; the day of the Lord is the day of tribulation, and the day of God is the day of realization and satisfaction.

The basis of our hope is the sure word of God, v.13.

True Spiritual Growth, vs.14-18

The practical aim of the passage and of the Epistle is toward intelligent,

stable, consistent Christian character and conduct. We have at least three obligations in view of the second advent, they are: "know", "show" and "grow".

Chapter 1 stresses knowledge that is Christ-centred and full. The times call for maturity in faith, a grasp of deeper doctrines, an ability to receive strong meat. We need Bible men; "without spot" is an external feature, "without blemish" is internal, "peace" is personal and communal. Reverence and patience are also expected from us, vs.11,15. The look of hope must produce the life of holiness, v.14.

We understand that our Lord's long-suffering is designed for the salvation of sinners, v.15a.

Peter was conversant with Paul's Epistles and bears testimony to the value and veracity of Paul's writings. They are inspired of God, equal scripturally with the Old Testament books. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets was active in Paul and Peter.

The false teachers twist Paul's teaching; they also twist other Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament. They did not submit their actions to the searching scrutiny of the Word.

The Epistle ends, where it began, with the subject of growth and progress. The late John Ritchie said, "the Christian life is like riding a bicycle, unless you keep moving, you fall off".

Its development consists in getting to know in greater measure our inexhaustible Lord and Saviour. Grow in grace by reading the Word daily, by prayer, by the direct use of every means of grace. The benediction is delightful, v.18b; to Christ belongs the glory for ever.

Glory is given to Him not only as the One equal with God essentially, but as the glorified One now in Heaven, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The false teachers detracted from Christ's glory by a wicked life, and by denying His coming. Peter determined to reverse both trends; may we follow his example and teaching, and glorify God daily until that great "day".

Glimpses of Christ

Trace in this epistle His essential deity, eternal relationship, effective cross-work, exaltation in glory, and the establishing of His everlasting kingdom.

He effects our salvation because He is God our Saviour, 1:11; 2:20; 3:2,18. Saviour is one of the great names of God in the Old Testament. He is our Lord, and deserves our consecration, 1:2. He wrought our redemption, and we belong to Him, 2:1; 1 Cor. 6:20. He gave revelation to Peter of his own deace, 2 Pet. 1:14.

A glimpse of His kingdom glory was seen on the holy mount; it was marked by majesty. This kingdom is eternal; it belongs to Him, Matt. 16:28. It is still future and entered by relationship to Him, 2 Pet. 1:11. He is the

Messianic Son associated with, and acknowledged by, the Father, 1:17; Heb. 1:5.

We look forward to the kingdom, the day of the Lord, 2 Pet. 3:10; the day of God, 3:12; a new heaven and earth, 3:13, in which our Lord will be the Centre and glory.

1 John

“Matter for Meditation”

The First Epistle to John is the most truly “catholic” of all the Epistles, containing no references to Churches nor individuals. It was intended for Jews and Gentiles, for new converts and mature Christians. Such are addressed under three stages of experience as “fathers”, “young men”, and “babes”. Its object is clearly stated in chapters 1:3,4; 2:1,12-14; 5:13. Bishop Lightfoot calls it, “a postscript to the Evangelist’s Gospel.” Trace the references throughout the Epistle to the ministry of the Lord in John 13-17. It abounds in keywords: Love, Loved, Loveth, 46 times. Words for “knowledge”, 36 times, sin, sins, 24 times, “abide”, “dwell”, “continue”, 24 times, life, 15 times. Trace other words, “true”, “truth”, “light”, “darkness”, “death”, “little children”, and “write”, “written”.

Theme: “Christian Fellowship”. Its nature, ch.1—2:28. Its fruits, 2:29 to 3:24. Its Laws, 4:1-24. Its Root, 5:1-20.

Study: “one another” Fellowship enjoyed, 1:7, love enjoined—The Message, 3:11.

The commandment, 3:23, the exhortation, 4:7, obligation, 4:11, manifestation, 4:12.

“*Ye know*” all things, 2:20; He is righteous, 2:29; He was manifested, 3:5; no murderer hath eternal life, 3:15; Spirit of God, 4:2; Eternal life, 5:13.

“*We know*” Him, 2:3; are in Him, 2:5; the last time, 2:18; He shall appear, 3:3; passed from death, 3:14; of the truth, 3:19; abideth, 3:24; Spirit of Truth, 4:6; dwell in Him, 4:13; by loving and keeping, 5:2; hear us, 5:15; born of God, 5:18; are of God, 5:19; Son of God is come, 5:20.

“*Satan*” The Wicked One overcome, 2:13-14; spiritual connection, 3:12; cannot snatch us away, 5:18; controlling the present age, 5:19.

“*This is*” 1:5; 2:25; 3:11; 4:23; 5:3,4,6,9,11,20.

Message Rejoice in the Life, Reflect the Light, Reproduce the Love Divine.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

Introduction. Fellowship 1:1-4.

The Revelation of Divine Life v.1. The Confirmation of Divine Purpose v.2. The Participation in Divine Fellowship, v.3. The Realisation of Divine Joy, v.4.

A. The Function of Divine Light 1:5 to 2:28.

1. *What walking in the light encourages*, 1:5 to 2:11.

Association with God, 1:5-7.

Confession of Sin, 1:8-10.

Imitation of Christ, 2:1-6.

Affection for Saints, 2:7-11.

2. *What walking in the light excludes*, 2:12-28.

Threefold reasons for writing, vs.12-14.

Avoid an Alluring World and its Ways, vs.15-17.

Avoid the Antichrists and their Teaching, vs.18-26.

The Assured Place of Safety in Christ, vs.27-28.

B. The Fellowship of Divine Love 2:29 to 5:5.

1. *The Evidence of Sonship*, 2:29 to 3:24. "Righteousness".

Because of our Relationship, 2:28 to 3:1.

Because of our Prospect, 3:2-3.

Because of our Birth, 3:4-10.

In our Behaviour, vs.11-24.

2. *The Enemies of Sonship*, 4:1-6. "Erroneous Teachers".

Error is Deceiving, v.1.

Can be Detected, vs.2-3.

Easily Distinguished, vs.4-5.

The Divine Mark, v.6.

3. *The Enjoyment of Sonship*, 4:7 to 5:5. "Love".

Fountain of Love, vs.7-8.

Fulness of Love, vs.9-11.

Features of Love, vs.12-21.

Faith Expressed in Love, 5:1-5.

C. The Fulness of Divine Life 5:6-20.

1. *The Divine Witnesses of Eternal life*, vs.6-12.

Historical, v.6. Reliable, v.8. Indisputable, v.9. Personal, v.10. Indispensable, v.11. The Essential, v.12.

2. *The Divine Fruit of Eternal Life*, vs.13-20.

Life, v.13. Prayer, vs.14-16. Knowledge, vs.18-20. The final Injunction, v.21.

1 John

Walking in Fellowship with God

ITS BROAD FOUNDATION

The Fact Established

by: Divine revelation, 1:2

Historical manifestation, 1:1

Personal experience, 1:2

Apostolic testimony, 1:3
 Perfect propitiation, 2:2
The Fellowship Enjoyed
 Its: height 1:3
 happiness 1:4
 holiness 1:7
 hindrances 1:6,8,10
 helpfulness 2:1
 honour 1:3a
 hope 3:2

ITS BEAUTIFUL FEATURES

Godward

Acknowledgement of sin 1:9
 Abiding in Christ 2:28
 Accepting His advocacy 2:1
 Acting like the Lord 2:36
 Answered prayer 3:19,24

Saintward

Obeying the truth 2:7,11
 Loving the brethren 3:11,18
 Helping the needy 3:17,18
 Revealing our relationship 4:7

Worldward

Love for the world is:
 incompatible 2:15
 irreconcilable 2:16
 impossible 3:18

ITS BEWILDERING FOES

A Wayward Heart 1:8; 2:4

Denial of sin 1:8
 Deception of heart 1:8
 Dreadful condition 1:10
 Remedy—work of Christ 2:12

World and its Ways 2:15-17

Its seductiveness v.15
 Its emptiness v.16
 Its transitoriness v.17
 Remedy—the will of God v.17

The Wicked One 2:13

Character described 2:13; 3:8,12
 Control revealed 5:19

Conflict depicted 2:14

Conquest declared 2:18; 3:8

Remedy—the Word of God 2:14

Wily Teachers 2:18,27

Activity and apostasy 2:18,19

Assault upon foundation 4:3

Remedy—Spirit of truth 4:1; 4:27

ITS BLESSED FULNESS

Responding to divine love 4:7,11

Love's origination 4:18

Love's manifestation and demonstration 4:9,10

Love's obligation and consummation 4:11,12

Revealing Divine Likeness 4:13,21

Life experienced vs.14,15

Love exhibited vs.16,21

Liberty enjoyed vs.17,19

Rejoicing in Divine Life 5:4-21

Complete victory vs.4-5

Confirmed witness vs.6-12

Conditions for prayer vs.13-17

Certainty of truth vs.18-20

Conscious possession v.20

Closing warning v.21

1 John 4:7 to 21

Wonderful Love

1. The Association of love v.7

Love has its origin in God. God is love. Love is the nature of God.

Love is the *expression* of the nature of God.

Love is the *evidence* that I am born of God.

2. The Perfection of love v.8

The absence of love is evidence that we know not God.

To us as sinners past

In us as saints present

With us as sojourners looking to the future

3. The Manifestation of love v.9

Demonstrated in Jesus Christ.

A love which holds nothing back —sacrificial

[illegible]

God sending.
God sending His best.
God sacrificing His best.

4. The Provision of love vs.9 and 10.

<i>Life</i>	gives man an object for which to live.
<i>Peace</i>	restorer of the lost relationship with God.
<i>Power</i>	by His Spirit.
<i>Boldness</i>	judgment is past.

5. Intention of love v.14

The <i>revelation</i> of life	'we have seen'
The <i>declaration</i> of life	'do testify'
The <i>demonstration</i> of love	'the Father sent the Son'
The <i>intention</i> of love	'to be the Saviour of the world'.

To save us from: ourselves
our sins
our habits.

6. Realisation of love vs.15 and 16.

The *fact* of it 'the love that God hath to us'
As a *foundation* 'known and believed'
A *force* in life 'God dwelleth in Him'.

7. Satisfaction of love vs.17 to 19.

The *confidence* we have ‘boldness’
The *calmness* we have ‘casteth out fear’
The *connection* we have ‘because as He is, so are we in this world’.

L Liberates from sin, v.10
O Offers life in the Saviour, v.9
V Valueable power, the presence of the Spirit, v.13
E Ensures our future safety, v.17.

The Second Epistle of John

I would call II John, III John and Jude the neglected books of the New Testament. In this little letter we have a message for our day and generation. It is the shortest book in the New Testament, but it is one of the sweetest.

Its teaching could be built around four words:

- vs. 1 to 3* The need of **truth**
- vs. 4 to 16* The need of **love**
- vs. 9 to 11* The prevalence of **error**
- vs. 12 and 13* The joy of **fellowship**

Truth, love, error and fellowship. They were with the early saints in John's day, and they are very much in evidence today. So, here is guidance for today. Here is encouragement to live for the Lord Jesus, to love one another, to love the good Word of God, and live according to the standard that God has raised.

- v. 1* Here is truth **qualifying** our love
 - v. 2* **motivating** our love
 - v. 3* **gladdening** our hearts
 - v. 4* **guiding** our steps
- These verses are concerned with the truth.

The following verses are concerned with love.

- vs. 5 and 6* Teaching regarding love

First of all love **exalteth**

v. 5 If you read the upper room ministry, John chs. 13 to 17, this word 'love' occurs 26 times. Whatever else the Lord Jesus intended to impress upon the saints of the upper room, He wanted this to live with them, and live in them, that 'ye love one another'. Has brotherly love gone out through the window?

Love is **expressed** and **exhibited**

Walking after His commandments. Love is not all *talk*, it is meant by God to *walk*. We need Christianity in *boots*, not *books*. God wants to see love walk, and live.

vs. 7 to 11 is the burden of His message, this is the prevalence of error. And in verse 7 it is described, 'they confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh', or they deny the incarnation and the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is very up to date. It is still being attacked, and still being denied. Truth centres in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the

touchstone of truth, and every thing has to be judged according to how He lived, and according to what He taught.

v. 7 Error described; v. 8 Error discerned

We must ever be diligent and able to discriminate, and to avoid like the plague any error relevant to the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 9 Error damned

The apostates are not believers. They cannot be. A believer never becomes an apostate. He might become a backslider, but never an apostate. So here it is judged. They go beyond the revelation of the truth of God, given in Christ. They do not abide by His teaching, and going beyond is not progress, but apostasy. It is not enlightenment, but darkness.

v. 10 Error disowned

Do not wish such people well. Error has to be rejected. Never pander to the Jehovah's Witnesses. Don't buy their literature and then put it in the fire. Refuse it to their face. We must take a stand for the truth, bring our backbone to the front, and stand for God. Don't receive them into your house, don't give them any greeting, don't give them any welcome, and don't give them the blessing of God. Verse 11, error must not be tolerated. Never pander to the enemies of the cross, or the enemies of Christ.

Then he closes with a note of fellowship.

*v. 12 Fellowship **desired**.*

There is something wrong in my heart and in my life if I do not seek and desire the fellowship of the saints.

*v. 13 Fellowship **delighted** in.*

*v. 13 Fellowship **demonstrated**.*

What is the message of II John? Is it relevant today? I believe that the Bible is the most up to date book in the universe of God. Whether we read in the Old or the New Testament, God has a message for you today. God can give me a message to meet my need at this particular moment from any portion of the Word of God, and I realise the joy of Bible study, and of meditating on divine things.

I want to think of six things that lie on the surface of this letter. What are the days like in which we live?

1. *vs. 1 and 2* **Days of division**

This epistle teaches the truth concerning the fellowship of saints. Notice John designates himself the elder, and he designates the lady, the elect. Theologians can never agree as to whether this is a personal letter to this lady, or whether it refers to a church. I am inclined to think it is to the elect lady, but some of the language used is relative to the church.

In verse 1, John has a burden for Christian fellowship. Here is an elder who *cares*, who is *concerned*, and who *communicates* his love.

As an elder, he is marked by *maturity* and by *sincerity*.

In *verse 4* he *commends*. The saints were *embracing* the truth, *enjoying* the truth and *exhibiting* the truth.

In *verses 7 to 11* John *condemns* error and evil. He describes these individuals as the deceiver, and as the antichrist. He generalises in his first epistle, and reminds them that there are many antichrists in the world, but here he says, that man is a deceiver, and he is an antichrist. So these people are to be excluded, and never to be welcomed into the home, or into the assembly.

Verses 12 and 13. John *communicates*.

We see here the *burden* of fellowship. What then is the *basis* of fellowship? The confession of truth has to be living, not only oral but demonstrated in our lives. The truth is personified in our Lord Jesus. Trace the references to the Lord Jesus and to God the Father in this little letter. The basis of all our fellowship is *life* in Christ, *love* to Christ, and *loyalty* to Christ.

He is not only the indwelling Christ, but also the abiding Christ.

The *beauty* of fellowship. In Christian fellowship there is the evidence of truth. John says, I love you sincerely, and in verse 2, for the truth's sake.

There is not only the *evidence* of love, but the *enjoyment* of love.

Now the *breadth* of this fellowship. v.1 'all they that have known'. The breadth of christian fellowship is *inclusive*, 'all'; 'they' *exclusive*.

v.10 it is exclusive, and in v.11 it is conclusive. We see here the horror of error; avoid it like the plague. It can corrupt your thinking, morals, and your life.

What about the *bond* of fellowship? Verse 2 says; 'For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us'. Here is the unity of the bond of truth, as well as the unity of the Spirit seen in the body of Christ. It is truth that keeps us together; it brought us together, and will give us happiness and holiness. We are not bound by nationality. We are not bound by emotion. What is it that brings us together, and keeps us together? It is love for the Man that died on the centre cross. We are one body in the Lord. We are attached to Him, and we should have affection for Him, and that will enable us to understand our fellow believers. We are bound together by the Person of Christ, the Truth of Christ and the Spirit of Christ. And in days of division we need to learn the truth of Christian fellowship.

2. v. 3 **Days of distress**

Here is truth concerning the fulness of God. If I have to live in fellowship with others, and adorn the doctrine of our Saviour in all things, what are the divine resources? There is grace, and mercy, and peace.

Grace What does grace do? It has enriched our lives, and has linked us with Christ. This is grace that never fails. It is *abundant*, *abiding*, and to be *appropriated*. It has been personified in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was full of grace and truth.

Mercy This is the channel of our salvation. *Mercy* instead of *misery*. *Grace* instead of *grief*. Here is something to establish my heart, and the mercies of God are new every morning. I need the mercy of God to meet my weaknesses, and the grace of God to understand and support me on the highway to Heaven.

Peace The peace of God can keep our minds and garrison our hearts, until we see our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is truth *providing*

Mercy is truth *pitying*

Peace is truth that is *pleasing*, establishing my heart in the things of God.

It all comes from One who is our Father, and that is a mystery, yet it can bring us holy joy. I do not approach God as a Judge, nor yet as a Creator, but in all humility we can address Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This means that I am related to the God of heaven. That relationship is *permanent, powerful and pleasing*.

I am not only related, but all the resources of heaven are at my disposal. We need to appreciate that in days of depression, He has grace that never fails, mercy that cannot change, peace that cannot be destroyed or disturbed, coming from God as my Father, and from my Saviour, who I acknowledge as my Lord. Truth cannot fail. Grace cannot fail.

3. *vs. 4 to 6* **Days of delinquency**

Here is teaching concerning a Christian home; teaching concerning a family living in the good of divine things. Now your standard and mine, relative to a Christian home will vary. What does God expect in a Christian home, and from a Christian home? Am I different from my neighbours next door, who may be unbelievers? I should not need to tell them that I am going to Heaven, I should be enjoying days of Heaven upon earth, and living like my Lord.

What is the first feature of the Christian home?

This family was well *balanced*: they had truth and love.

They were well *behaved*: they were walking in the truth of God.

They were well *blessed*: they were loved by all the saints who entered their home.

A Christian home is a place where God is *honoured* and His truth obeyed.

God's standards are *high*. They were walking in truth. Truth is never divisive; it is always straight. But the Christian home is the place where divine supplies can be enjoyed, as seen in verse 3—Grace, mercy, and peace coming from God, our Father.

According to verse 6, it is the place where His truth is obeyed. Law and love are not incompatible. Truth is the basis of my love, and love is the

expression of my truth. What is the standard of my life? Is it my opinion? God does not tolerate that. The Christian home is a place where His love is enjoyed. In this Christian home there was obedience, service, unity and love.

From verses 9 and 10 we see that the Christian home is the place where our loyalty is tested. Watch what you receive into your home, and watch who you receive into your home. The troubles in our assemblies, almost invariably, are not fundamental, but about the government of the assembly. There is a generation rising up who believe that we are antiquated, that we are not 'with it'. There is no harm in having a chorus at the breaking of bread. There is no harm in having a house party, and praying to the Spirit, and speaking in tongues. That is foreign to this book.

From verses 5,6,12 and 13, we gather that the Christian home is marked by hospitality to strangers, but do not receive those that are bringing error. Truth is the rule of my life, whether it is my private life, my public life, or my assembly life. It should all be measured by the word of God, and we should all manifest the love of God.

4. *vs. 7 to 10 Days of departure*

Here we have truths regarding the fundamentals of our faith. Notice that these fundamentals are being attacked. Many deceivers are entered into the world, confessing not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. They deny the sinless humanity and the miraculous birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if there is no incarnation, then there is no possibility of any fellowship with God. The incarnation is vital to the atoning death and the glorious resurrection. It is only through Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life," that we can enjoy fellowship with God as our Father, and with the Saviour as our Lord.

This is a definite peril that we face today. If we have divine progress outlined for us in verses 4 to 6, the path that we should travel, it is to keep out the peril that we daily face.

Firstly, the fundamentals are *attacked*.

Then the fundamentals are *abandoned* (v.7).

This man is a deceiver and an antichrist. Notice his relation to the saints—a deceiver. His relation to Christ—he is an antichrist. His relation to God—he is an apostate, and is departed from the truth.

Then the fundamentals are *announced* (v.9).

What are the fundamentals? One would gather from this epistle that we must believe in the Sonship of Christ. He is designated the Son of the Father in verse 3. This suggests His *essential* and *eternal* relationship with God. The very fact that He is come in the flesh, would hint at His incarnation, and His sinless humanity. The doctrine of Christ embraces all these things, including His death and resurrection.

5. Days of denial

Notice what it says concerning these men:

Their *character* a deceiver, and an antichrist.

Their *coming* v.7 “they are entered into the world”. They have arrived. They are here. They are very active, and they are deceptive. So be on your guard, be discriminate, be vigilant. Test them by the Word of God, and nothing else, q.v. John 4:1.

Their *conduct* They transgress, and they do not abide in the teaching of Christ. They have run too far, and they are outside the Book. No allegiance to Christ, no communion with Christ. They have abandoned these things, and they are propagating error and evil, and that is what they are here for. Error is across the world, while truth is lacing its shoes. We believe this Book; we endeavour to behave like this Book, but we are not so keen on propagating the truth of God, in tract form or in any other form.

Their *condemnation* v.9 They have left God behind them, gone beyond what God has revealed in His Word, relative to the Person of the Lord Jesus, and so they are apostates.

Their *contamination* They come into a home or an assembly as teachers. They are on a mission and they are missionaries like these apostles. But their message is not the truth of God, and is not relative to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is easy to be contaminated by them.

John does not end on this note for in verses 12 and 13 in:

6. **Days of doubt** we have truth about our good friends. Have we got friends in our town, in our assembly? John would remind us in verses 12 and 13 of these friends. So here are words of:

counsel v.11

caution v.11

cheer v.12 here is communication with friends. Do you write to missionaries? Out of sight; out of mind.

concern v.12 but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face.

communication having many things to write unto you.

communion speak face to face.

Malachi 3:16 “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another”. Not one about another. There was a book of remembrance written, and God took note of their conversion. On the road to Emmaus, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, things concerning Himself. What is the subject of your conversation? Is it the Book? Is it the good things about the believers? Is it the good things of the assembly? If you hear of the failure of a brother or a sister, keep it to yourself, and take it to the Lord in prayer.

In days of **division** may we appreciate the fellowship of the saints.

In days of **distress** think of the fulness of God.

In days of **delinquency** think of the family at home, living for Christ.

In days of **departure** keep to the fundamentals of the faith.

In days of **denial** think about our foes, and keep them outside.

In days of **doubt** and **difficulty** think of the many friends we have in Christ.

The Analysis of Second and Third John

II John

1. *The Characteristics of Christian Fellowship* vs.1-2
Its Basis—The Truth; Its Beauty—Love in Truth
Its Breadth—All that Know; Its Blessing—Truth with us for ever.
2. *The Charm of Christian Felicity* v.3
The Choice Fountainhead—Father and Son
The Constant Flow—Grace, mercy, peace
Grace for our Poverty. Mercy for our Misery
Peace for our Security. Truth and Love bringing Harmony
3. *The Cheer of Christian Fidelity* vs.4-6
The Family's Pleasure, Progress and Principles, v.4
Fidelity brings Pleasure to the Elders, v.4a
Fidelity begets Progress in the Life, v.4b
Fidelity burns with a passion for others, v.5
Fidelity brightens the pilgrim pathway, v.6
4. *The Call to Christian Followers* vs.7-8
A Call to Vigilance—Dangers around you
A Call to Diligence—Rewards Ahead, v.8
5. *The Challenge to the Christian Faith* vs.9-11
The Foundation described—Christ, His Deity, Humanity, Atonement
The Foundation discarded—"transgresseth", v.9a
The Foundation defended—abide in the doctrine, v.7b
The Fellowship defined—not for erroneous teachers, v.10
6. *The Communications of Christian Friends* vs.12-13
Abundance of matter—many things
Anticipation of meeting soon—face to face
Affection greeting—greet thee

III John

1. *Commendation of the well beloved*—"Gaius" vs.1-8
Worthy of love, v.1
Prospering in soul, v.2

Walking in truth, v.3
 Training the children, v.4
 Encouraging the servants, v.5
 Entertaining the workers, v.6
 Helping the truth, v.8

2. *Condemnation of the wicked leader*—"Diotrephes" vs.9-10
 Loving the first place, v.9a
 Refusing the saints, v.9b
 Rebuking his sins, v.10a
 Rejecting apostolic commendation, v.10b
 Expelling hospitable saints, v.10c
3. *Cheering the well balanced brother*—"Demetrius" vs.11-12
 Words of counsel—pursue the good, shun the evil, v.11
 Word of commendation—pattern of godliness, follow him, v.12
4. *Confirmation of worthwhile fellowship*—"John" vs.13-14
 Brevity of his letter—not write now, v.13
 Brimful of expectation—shall shortly see thee, v.14a
 Blessing from friends—greet them by name, v.14b

Character Cameos in II & III John

THE VICTORY OF LOVE

WALKING IN THE TRUTH

- (a) **The elect lady**, 2 John
 Loved in truth v.1
 Living the truth v.2
 Led by truth v.4
 Listening to truth v.5
 Loyal to the truth v.6
- (b) **The exemplary elder**, 2 John
 Writing to cheer v.1b
 Loving the children v.2
 Greeting the family v.3
 Rejoicing in progress v.4
 Warning of danger v.7
 Visiting the home v.12
- (c) **The excellent Demetrius**, 3 John
 A reputed brother v.12a
 A righteous life v.12b
 A respected servant v.12c

THE VALUE OF HELP**WITNESSING TO THE TRUTH**

- (a) **By life**—gracious Gaius 3 John
 - Well beloved in heart v.1
 - Well blessed in soul v.2
 - Well balanced in walk v.3
 - Welcomed saints to the home v.4
- (b) **By labour**—Godly servants
 - The evangel defended 2 John 7:7
 - The enemy denounced 2 John 10,11
 - The evangelist helped 3 John 5
 - The encouraging way 3 John 6
 - The enterprising work 3 John 7
 - The excellent motive 3 John 8
- (c) **By love**—the genuine mark
 - In the home 2 John 1
 - In the Lord 2 John 3
 - To the saints 2 John 5
 - In the assembly 3 John 6
 - To the servants 3 John 5
 - For the truth 3 John 8
 - To the Lord Jesus 3 John 7

THE VOICE OF TRUTH**WANDERING FROM THE TRUTH****The Egotistical Diotrephes**

- Exaltation of self 3 John
- Exposure of sin
- Evil speaking
- Exercising authority
- Excommunicating saints

The Exposed Deceiver 2 John

- (a) *Revelation of the evil* v.7
 - Opposing Christ's Deity
 - Opposing Christ's Humanity
 - Opposing Christ's Atonement
- (b) *Our relation to the evil* vs.8-11
 - Unfailing watchfulness v.8
 - Unswerving devotion v.9
 - Uncompromising attitude vs.10-11

The Neglected Epistles

II John, III John, Jude

II JOHN

THE PLEASURE OF HOSPITALITY

The Happy Elder vs.1-3,12

Loving the children v.2

Greeting the family v.3

Rejoicing in progress v.4

Warning of danger v.7

Visiting the home v.12

The Healthy Family vs.3-8

Loved in the truth v.1

Living for the truth v.2

Led by truth v.5

Listening to truth v.5

Loyal to the truth vs.6,8,10

The Hurtful Heretics vs.9-11

Their character v.7b; condemnation v.7c

Their conduct v.9; craftiness v.10

The Helpful Fellowship vs.12,13

Communication v.12a

Conversation v.12b

Satisfaction v.12c

Appreciation v.13

BE HELPFUL

III JOHN

THE PRIDE OF HOSTILITY

A Warrior for the truth vs.1,5,11

Affectionate v.1; Appreciative vs.3,5;

Abundant joy v.4; Associated with truth vs.7,8

Walking in the truth vs.3-6

G-godly v.1; A-agreeable v.1;

I-instructed v.3; U-unselfish v.5; S-steadfast v.6

Workers for the truth vs.6-8

Encouraging v.6; Enterprising v.7; Enabling v.8

Wandering from the truth vs.9-11

Egotistical, dictatorial v.9

Hypocritical, disagreeable v.10

A Witness to the truth vs.12-14

Reputable, righteous v.12

Respected v.12c, refreshing

BE HUMBLE

JUDE**THE PERIL OF APOSTASY***Deluding Apostasy* vs.4-16

Described v.4

Dealt with vs.5-7

Defiling v.8a

Defiant vs.9-10

Displayed vs.11-13

Denounced vs.14-15

Deluding vs.16-19

The Divine Antidote vs.1-3,20-24

The Sanctifying Father vs.1-2

The Sacred Faith vs.3-20

The Spoken Word vs.14-17

The Securing Love v.21

The Sure Hope v.24

The Saviour God v.25

The Sovereign Lord v.24

BE WATCHFUL

Truth for the Times

Jude 4-19

THE PERIL OF APOSTASY

Jude realized that the need was not so much to expound the faith as to rally Christians in defence of the faith. There had secretly slipped into the churches ungodly men who were immoral in life and heretical in belief; for other types of evil influence see Gal. 2:4,5; 2 Cor. 11:26; 1 Tim. 4:1. Jude describes these men and denounces their heresies. They are described as (1) ungodly, (2) perverters of grace, (3) denying the sovereignty and Lordship of Christ, 2 Pet. 2:1.

Apostasy Described, v.4

Their craftiness, character, conduct and contention. An apostate is an ungodly man, destitute of reverential awe towards God. He may not be iniquitous, criminal or depraved, but is of his father the devil, John 8:44. Even a born-again person may embrace some heresy, but cannot become an apostate. An apostate may have received light but not life. They deliberately reject the truth, 2 Thess. 2:10; Luke 8:13; 2 Tim. 3:5. They refuse to submit to God, acting independently of, and in opposition to, God.

The grace of God has never reached their soul nor controlled their conscience. When grace is perverted into licence to sin, apostasy has come in. Theologians apply the name “antinomianism” to this phenomenon of lawlessness. These men argued that, since they were under grace, the law was irrelevant and its ethical demands no longer obligatory. They were marked by blatant immorality. They denied the Lord and Master in a two-fold way, in doctrine and in life, 1 John 2:22-23. They denied His universal sovereignty, pre-existence, Saviourhood and Messiahship. They represent Him as a mere man neither pre-existent nor virgin-born, and deny the resurrection of our glorious Lord.

Jude diagnoses the malignant disease that saps away spiritual virtue even as a surgeon detects a hidden cancer that is depleting physical vitality.

Apostasy Dealt With, vs.5-7

History is devastating in its witness to the fact that ruin follows the corruption of truth. Jude begins his words of caution by a scriptural reminder, v.5. He discloses the gravity of the dangers that threaten faith's fidelity, and shows the downward progress of apostasy, Tit. 1:16. The things described in verse 4 are illustrated in verse 11.

The seven examples enumerated supply a solemn warning to us. The purpose is to deliver us from that careless state of soul which takes for granted that no harm can happen.

The Disbelief of Israel, v.5b

Israel was highly privileged and began well, 1 Cor. 10:1-4, but unbelief manifested itself when the time of testing came. They were saved from Egypt only to be destroyed later because of the corruption of their faith. Why did they disobey God? The book of Numbers depicts their attitude. They were governed by the lust of the flesh, the mind of the flesh and the will of the flesh. They despised the manna, they disregarded all the gracious deliverances given by God, and their presumption and unbelief ended in destruction, Heb. 3:18,19.

God is sovereign to save and destroy, James 4:12. As Christians we are instructed not to be ignorant of these things and not to lust after evil things, 1 Cor. 10:6. Israel fell through infidelity and rejection of the provision and purpose of God for them.

Disobedient Angels, v.6

This is the second picture from Old Testament history of past judgments upon apostates. Angels were marked by anarchy against God's sovereignty. Here is presumption in the supernatural realm. Their fall was due to pride, rebellion and lust for the forbidden thing. They were not content to keep the estate given them by God. They had their own initial distinctive order as purely spirit beings, but abandoned their proper sphere of dwelling by cohabiting with mortal women, Gen. 6:1-6; "sons of God" in the Old Testament is used exclusively of angels, Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7.

Giants in those days were the progeny of these unholy unions. Israel is spoken of as a son of Jehovah, Exod. 4:22; Isa. 43:6. The angels' assertion of self-will, and the assumption of independence, led to acts of self-indulgence unworthy of their elevated standing, leading to their downfall.

The lesson is clear for the arrogant false teachers. These angels were too arrogant to "keep" their position, so God "kept" them in punishment. We are warned not to be high-minded or haughty, for divine righteousness demands final retribution.

The Degradation of Sodom, v.7

Notorious for their sin, these cities were destroyed by the fire of God. The godless inhabitants of the plain have been a byword for infamy down the ages. The city of culture and commerce became the synonym for sensual corruption, and is proverbial to this day.

"In like manner" implies a resemblance to the sin of angels; there was a degradation of nature. Since these cities are mentioned in connection with

apostasy, the inference is that they were guilty of this great sin. Sodom became a stronghold of the powers of darkness, the city of corruption, which ridiculed the restraints of righteousness and paved the way for the vengeance of eternal fire. Lot had to be rescued from the doomed city—a saved soul but a lost life. Our Lord foretold that the conditions prevailing in the last days would be as they were in ancient Sodom, Luke 17:28-30. Gomorrah's godlessness was a fearful manifestation of the depths of depravity to which a degraded humanity can sink.

Apostasy is Defiant, vs.8-10

Jude here compares the evil men of his day, v.8, with the false prophets whom Scripture condemns, Deut. 13:1-5. These prophets corrupt the nations and seduce the people from their loyalty to God. The false teachers failed to heed the warnings of history, vs.5-7, seen in their “dreaming state”—as natural men who are spiritually asleep; their sexual immorality—“defile”; their insubordination—“despise authority”, and their slander—“speak evil of dignities”.

These moral lepers, stained with evil imagination and inflamed with inordinate desire, became more depraved than brute beasts. Vice and virtue, corruption and comeliness, can never harmonize in the same society.

Presumption is illustrated in verses 9-10. In contrast to those who despise earthly and heavenly dignities, Michael durst not rail, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee”. He did not treat the devil flippantly, nor did he reply rudely to him. The false teachers despise and defy all authority and rail at things they do not understand. “Physically they became immoral; intellectually they became arrogant; spiritually they became disobedient to the Lord”, M. Green.

Apostasy Displayed, vs.11-13

In the conduct and catastrophe of this trio; “Cain”—rationalism, “Balaam”—mammonism, “Korah”—anarchism.

“The way of Cain” is false religion. “The error of Balaam” is false ministry. “The gainsaying of Korah” is false worship and rebellion against God's authority”, H. Ironside.

DISPLEASURE: *Cain*. This is the way of envy, hatred and malice; the fatal fruit of it is murder. Trace the downward steps in the initial calamity of sin's entrance into the first family, Gen. 4:1-7.

His offering revealed human thought as opposed to divine revelation. A religious natural man who rejects blood redemption.

His offence human wilfulness as opposed to the divine will, v.5. He resented the rebuke, because it wounded his pride and wicked jealousy.

His opportunity, v.6: human pride instead of true humility.

His outrage, v.8: human hatred as opposed to divine love. He even repudiated responsibility for his crime.

His obligation, v.9: human hostility to divine responsibility.

His objection, v.13: reveals remorse but not repentance; cowardice always cringes.

His outgoing, v.16: human loneliness preferred to divine fellowship, he completely abandoned God.

His occupation, v.17: human achievement without reference to divine standards.

His offspring, vs.17-24, seemed to flourish without God but judgment overtook them.

DUPLICITY: *Balaam*, the man who played a double game. He bartered between two masters, and perished in quest of the lure and lust of material renown. He was governed by greed and seduction, making merchandise of the things of God, Num. 22-24. He involved Israel in idolatry and immorality at Baal-peor, 31:16. Balaam, and many like him in this generation, stifled his own convictions and led astray those directed to him. He represents a super-sensuous religion bereft of divine morality: "ran greedily after" like a torrent that has burst its banks. This describes the reckless godlessness, the price men pay as they rush after gain like Balaam.

DEFIANCE: *Korah*. Here is a religion bereft of divine revelation. Numbers 16 tells of Korah's "gainsaying"; it consisted of his despising and resisting the authority that God had delegated to Moses and Aaron.

His selfish ambition, v.3: "Ye take too much upon you". He was possessed of a domineering disposition and challenged the divine appointment, presuming to know a more suitable person for the task.

His self advancement, v.10. He was not a priest, neither were any of his rebellious company. He rose up against the God-appointed way of worship. This has its answer in Unitarianism today. They need no mediator between God and themselves, for they believe that all men by nature are children of God.

This trio was against the Word of God. Cain ignored it; Balaam opposed it, and Korah rebelled against it. Apostates chose the way of Cain, instead of the way of Christ, the error of Balaam instead of the truth of Christ, perishing like Korah rather than the life of Christ.

The Apostates Character Described, vs.12-16

They are marked by spiritual sterility, vs.12,13. Here are further characteristics of apostasy, telling of the selfishness, helplessness, fruitlessness, shamelessness and the hopelessness of apostates. "Hidden rocks", R.V., in their love feasts: wrecking them; shepherds feeding

themselves, like the evil shepherds of Ezekiel 34:2 neglectful of their flocks; “clouds” like sandstorms of the desert: empty, useless, unstable, Prov. 25:14; autumn “trees” with faulty roots and rotten fruits; “waves”: restless, unsettled, frothy, v.13; “twice dead”, once by nature, a second time by apostasy, visibly proved dead.

“Wandering stars”, v.13, from which no one can take reliable bearings, plunging into ever-deepening darkness and eternal destruction, Matt. 8:12. Their shame and their deception reveal their lack of spiritual reality, Isa. 57:10.

Enoch’s prophecy told of the doom of the opponent’s truth. A judgment day is coming at Christ’s second advent when every enemy will be destroyed.

The final count in this review of sin is having “men’s persons in admiration”, and how true this is today, Job 32:21,22. May we not be deceived and led astray by these ministers of Satan, 2 Cor. 11:13-15.

Apostasy is Deluding, vs.18-19

In verse 16 we have three descriptive terms of things which blight humanity. Now they are asked to remember the past teachers of truth, v.17. The apostles taught what the mockers would be like, and when they would appear. They scorn the teaching of the Word of God, and are led about with their own lust. In verse 19 is another threefold cord telling of their actions—“separations”; appetites—“sensual”; dominated by their senses and without the Spirit, having no experience of God.

Truth for the Times

Jude 1-3; 17-23

THE ANTIDOTE TO APOSTASY

In these verses we have seven safeguards and seven exhortations to help us. There is a threefold call in Jude 17-23; adhere to apostolic teaching, vs.17-19; advance in the separated life, vs.20,21; be active and compassionate in service, vs.22,23.

From the gloom and darkness of apostasy, we turn to the light and warmth of apostolic teaching, and learn that there is no cause for despair.

The Appreciation of Position, vs.1,2

We are called, beloved and kept, telling of the work of the Trinity for our salvation. Our calling is the work of the Spirit, and God has called us to holiness, Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2. Sanctification is something God has given us and which He expects us to exhibit in character and express in conduct. We respond to the call of the gospel by the Holy Spirit, 2 Thess. 2:13,14. We are

“beloved” of God as He loves His own Son, John 16:17; 17:21-23. We are the permanent objects of divine love, here and throughout eternity. “Kept” or preserved; kept guarded by God the Father, ever under His watchful care, 1 Pet. 1:5; John 17:11. This teaching has a prominent place in the later epistles.

This position with election and preservation assures us of provision, v.2—an abundance of mercy, peace and love. “Mercy” usually occurs against a background of false teaching. Mercy is God for us, peace is God in us, and love is God with us.

The Avoidance of Perils, vs.4-13

The results of the deflection and disaster of apostates have been described in a previous paper. Undesirable agents, that creep into the circle of Christian fellowship secretly and undetected, prove detrimental to the company by both their teaching and practice. The past, as our teacher, warns us to avoid the infidelity of Israel, the anarchy of angels, the sensuality of Sodom, the indecency of Gomorrah, the animosity of Cain, the hypocrisy of Balaam and the knavery of Korah. Their failure led to wilful and wanton sin and wickedness, and since God could not compromise the principles of divine justice and judgment, so judgment was executed upon them.

May we not fail as they did through lack of fidelity, integrity, purity, sanctity, piety, reality and humility.

The Acceptance of Prophecy, vs.14-19

God had His servants to speak His prophetic messages in both the Old and New Testament times. These testimonies are complementary and corroborative. Prophecy is reliable; the revelation of God is sure, vs.14,15.

The coming of the Lord is sure. Enoch was given a vision of the future. John beheld the same coming, Rev. 19:11-16. Coming with “holy myriads” is also mentioned in Zechariah 14:5. He comes to execute judgment upon the nations, Psalms 96:13; Joel 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:31-46. The coming will not only be revealing, as the Son of man coming in His glory, it will be retributive, Jude 15.

The apostles confirm this teaching, and identify these false teachers, v.19. John says the same thing, 1 John 2:18,19. In the light of these things we need:

The Allegiance of Prayer, v.20

The battle against false teachers is not won by argument but by prayer, 2 Cor. 10:3-5. False teachers had given up prayer, but we must live in communion with God daily; “Lord, teach us to pray”, Luke 11:1. It is a sacred duty, it is not optional; remember the importance of prayer in the Holy Spirit.

The Assurance of Promise, v.21

Look for the mercy of God. Awaiting our Lord's return fills us with hope, since we will be delivered from this corrupt scene. We need mercy daily and at the last, 2 Tim. 1:18, in the consummation of eternal life; cling to the promises of God in times of trial and depression.

The Abundance of Power, vs.24,25

Thus we are kept safe, for our God "is able". As He kept Daniel when surrounded by lions, so will He keep us in the midst of apostasy and anarchy. What a thrilling doxology on the power of God!

We cannot live for Christ in an atmosphere of false teaching and seductive morals apart from divine power to establish us, Rom. 16:25; to energize us, Eph. 1:19-20, and to encourage us, Phil. 4:13.

God will keep us from stumbling and later we shall stand in the presence of His own glory, being brought into His presence exultant. In the light of such a prospect the letter ends with:

An Ascription of Praise, v.25

To our "Saviour God". He is the Eternal One, who is Himself God over all, blessed forever. This is one of the messages of Isaiah 43:11; 45:21-23; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Titus 3:4-6.

Victory in the war against false teaching can be won only through our great Saviour and Lord. We rejoice in His displayed excellence—"glory", His regal splendour—"majesty", His perfect rule and absolute authority—"dominion and power".

SEVEN EXHORTATIONS, vs.3,20-23

Heroic Work—"Contending", v.3. Jude intended to write about "salvation" but necessity was laid upon Him to write about Christian belief, "the faith" or body of belief of the universal Church. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is here affirmed. It is the noble deposit, the truths of the gospel, the complete revelation of God in His Word, 1 Cor. 15:1-3. Its purity "most holy", v.20; its finality, "once delivered". No other revelation of the faith is needed, for it is complete and final. We believe in:

F—finality and fulness of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16.

A—authority and atonement of Christ, Rom. 3:25.

I—incarnation, immaculate conception of Christ, Luke 1:35.

T—teaching of the apostles, Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:16.

H—hope of the coming of Christ, Jude 21.

Like Nehemiah we must battle as well as build; verse 3 reminds us of the sword of Nehemiah 4:17,18 and verse 20 of the trowel. Today we need to

contend strenuously for the faith. Its defence will be costly and agonizing; we cannot get behind the New Testament teaching nor can we get beyond it, 2 John 9,10. The test of progress is faithfulness to the apostolic preaching about Christ, 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13,14.

Living a sanctified life in all its simplicity and sincerity is the finest safeguard to the testimony of Scripture and the truth of salvation that we can possibly render.

Healthy Work—"Building", v.20. Build a holy life; this is the super-structure built on the foundation of Christ by means of faith. It is necessary to sit down and count the cost of the enterprise on hand. Paul reminds us to look well to the materials we use in building up the assembly of God, 1 Cor. 3:13.

Each of us is building an edifice, and we need the Spirit of instruction and edification to direct our energies in this good work. The blue prints and specifications are provided, and we are expected to work to a definite design and pattern, and the structural plan is embodied in "the faith".

We build on the foundation of all that God has done for us in salvation. He has given us the Holy Spirit and made us partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. "The faith" is different, set apart from all others. It is unique in its teaching and the moral transformation it produces.

Verse 20 is personal work, 1 Corinthians 14 assembly work, and Acts 20:32 is pastoral work.

Holy Work—"Praying", v.20. Building is character-forming by applying the truth to heart and life. Praying is communion with God and dependence upon God. It has been said, "Prayer is love in need appealing to love in power". We need a Spirit-energized prayer life, praying *in* the Spirit, not *for* the Spirit or for the gift of tongues. It implies praying intelligently, reverently, and discerningly by virtue of realized intimacy with God. Here is prayer indited and controlled by the Spirit, and when we know not how to pray, the Spirit makes intercession in accordance with the will of God, Rom. 8:26,27.

Prayer cultivates an aptitude for spiritual tastes, and increases our appetite for spiritual truth. Like Abraham, may we have a right attitude toward heaven and toward human relationships, and remain in communion with God, Gen. 18.

Happy Work—"Keeping", v.21. We are "beloved", v.1—the divine side; we are to remain in the sphere of God's love—the human side. Cultivate a love relationship with God, John 15:9,10. In the old covenant relationship in Exodus 24:1-8, God promised to be their God but that relationship depended upon them obeying the law which God gave them. As we live in

this sphere of safety, we will keep ourselves in the place of blessing. Living in the love of God—there is nothing higher, nobler or better than this.

We should delight in God's love, for love is the active character of God's nature. Walk in the light, and live in the love into which grace has brought us through the death of our Lord Jesus. The manifestation of this love is in our Lord, John 3:16; its demonstration is at Calvary, I John 4:10; its impartation is made by the Spirit, Rom. 5:5; its production comes through the influence of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22; and its final realization will be ours when we are presented in Heaven to the Father, Jude 24.

Habitual Work—"Looking", v.21. We are to live in eager anticipation of the coming of our Lord, keeping alive the fire of Christian hope. Trace this word "looking" in your New Testament.

It suggests our attitude as we await the return of our Lord, and the appearing of the kingdom, Luke 23:51; or waiting for the consolation of Israel, like Simeon in Luke 2:25; wanting to see the realization of redemption, Luke 2:38; welcoming the radiant prospect of the coming, Luke 12:36, and living in wonderful anticipation of that blessed hope, Titus 2:13.

Note the teaching linked with the return of our Lord Jesus in the closing Epistles of the New Testament. Glorification in Thessalonians; the manifestation in Timothy and Titus; salvation in Hebrews; vindication in James; reservation of the inheritance in Peter; perfect resemblance and reflection in John's writing; our preservation in Jude, and the realization of all things with perfection stamped on all our Lord's work in Revelation. We await the Sovereign Lord.

Thank God apostasy has not diminished the rights and reach of His Lordship. He is the Sustainer of His people, the Supervisor of the ages, and the end is eternal life.

Heart Work—"Plucking", v.23. We need an inward look, "building"; the outward look, "praying"; the upward look for the coming Lord; the forward look to "eternal life", and now the sympathetic look, leading to action, showing mercy and snatching out of the fire, Zech. 3:2.

Mercy is to be shown to those who have been bewitched and bewildered by false teachers. Rebuking, snatching and pitying relate to those who are in doubt, in danger and in definite sin.

Honest Work—Noting, v.23. The garment here is the inner tunic worn next to the body, Matt. 5:40; 10:10. Study the law of leprosy in Leviticus 13:45-47, for sin contaminates. Garments indicate a nature, mentality, and condition, and we are to love the sinner but hate his sin lest we become defiled.

The leper's garment had to be burned, and like Joshua we need a change of

raiment, Zech. 3:3; Isa. 61:10. Like those in Sardis, may we keep ourselves in unspotted loyalty and live in undeviating devotion to our Lord, Rev. 3:4. The book closes with—

Priestly Work—Worshipping, vs.24,25. Jude means “praise” and he closes this brief, brave book on the brightest note, triumph, testimony and thanksgiving to God. The God of power—He “is able”; He is the preserver—“keep”; the God of purpose—“to present”. He is determined on our perfection—“faultless”; He will have pleasure in His own, “joy”; He alone is worthy of praise, v.25; “glory and majesty, dominion and power” express the aggregate of the divine Omnipotence in its full eternal character.

Suggestive Outline of Revelation

“SIGNIFY” To speak figuratively, picture language, in language of symbols, ch.2:30-33; 21:19. The veil is uplifted by one with Omniscient knowledge to reveal the future. The Lord with Omnipotent power to accomplish every event foretold.

Date: Probably written during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian about A.D. 95.

Plan: The vision of Christ ch.1; of the churches chs.2-3; of the consummation chs.4-22. All that God has recorded has a MORAL purpose in view. The plan in 1:19 has a past, a present, and a future in the book.

(A) A vision of the Almighty God “*All Supreme*” ch.1

The superscription 1:1-3

Divine origin v.1; object v.2. Divine benediction.

Salutation vs.4-8

Readers v.4, greetings vs.4-5a, designation vs.5b-6, revelation vs.7-8.

Vision vs.9-20

The circumstances vs.9-11; the content vs.12-18;

the consequences vs.19-20; “angels” v.20—the collective leadership in the churches.

(B) A vision of assuring grace “*All Sufficient*” chs.2-3

Note the way the Lord is presented to each Church.

Ephesus—His sovereign control v.1

Smyrna—His supreme conquest v.8

Pergamos—His searching comprehension v.12

Thyatira—His superior character v.18

Sardis—His sterling competence 3:1

Philadelphia—His steadfast constancy 3:7

Laodicea—His supreme counsel 3:14

Six things are said to each Church.

(C) A vision of authoritative government “*All Subduing*” chs.4-20

(a) *The revelation of His position* chs.4-5

(1) The Greatness and Holiness of God ch.4. The Throne in heaven 1-6. Established, occupied, informed. The Throng in heaven 7-11, their dignity, capacity, ministry.

(2) The Glory and Honour of Christ ch.5. The sealed book 1-4; the Sovereign Lord 5-8; the song of praise 9-14.

- (b) *The record of His punishment of evil* chs.6-19
 - On moral and social apostasy chs.6-11
 - On political apostasy chs.12-14
 - On religious apostasy chs.15-19
- ch.6 *Days of Tribulation*
 - Matt. 24. Seven seals. Ruthless conquest, bloodshed, famine and death.
 - The panic of the last days vs.12-17.
- ch.7 *The saved Remnant*
 - The suspension of judgment 1-3; the sealed Jews 4-8; the saved Gentiles in heaven 9-17.
- ch.8 *The seven Trumpets*
 - Preparation and prayer 2-5. Sounding of the first four trumpets 6-13.
 - These are illustrated in the plagues of Egypt, Exod. 5:7-10.
- ch.9 *The seriousness of Judgment*
 - Satanic deception. Fifth trumpet, first woe 1-12, staggering carnage, sixth trumpet, second woe, 13-21.
- ch.10 *The special Angel*
 - His attire and assertion 1-4. His agency and assignment 5-11. Source and substance of ministry.
- ch.11 *The two Witnesses*, 1-12
 - Description 3-6, termination 7, translation 12-14. The seventh trumpet 15-19, announcement 15, acclaim 17, anger 18, the ark 19.
- ch.12 *The sun-clothed Woman*, 1-2
 - Satanic forces 3-6, the struggle in heaven 7-12, the salvation enjoyed 10-12, the serpents wrath 13-17, political apostasy judged, chs.12-14.
- ch.13 *Satan's regent Princes*
 - The false prince *political* 1-10. His appearance 1-2, acclaim 3-4, activity 5-7, authority 7-10.
 - The false prophet *religious* 11-18. His wonders 13, wiles 14, world commerce 16-17.
- ch.14 *The seven Visions and six Angels*
 - The Saviour and the sealed 1, singing 2-3, sanctified 4, sincere 5, the Everlasting Gospel 6-7, the executed sentence 8-11, the enduring saints 12-13, the effective slaughter 14-20.
- ch.15 *The seven Plagues-Judgment on Religious Apostasy*
 - The sign in heaven 15:1, the sea of glass 2, the song of Moses and the Lamb 3-4, the seven angels 5-6, the smoke of judgment 7-8.
- ch. 16 *The seven bowl Judgments*
 - Upon institutional order of men 1-2, the natural order 3, the social order 4-6, the governmental order 8-9, the political order 10-11, the racial order 12-16, the national order 17-21.
- ch.17 *The religious system of Babylon*
 - Its severe judgment 1-2, the scarlet woman 3-6, the secret explained 7-11, the Satanic forces 12-14, the system destroyed 15-18.

ch.18 *The commercial crash*

Babylon's misery 2, merchants 3, multiplied sins 5-6, melody 7, monarch 9, mourners 9b-11a, merchandise 11b-14, mariners 17-19, musicians 20-23, murders 24.

ch.19 *The marriage of the Lamb*

(a) *Joy in Heaven* 1-10. The saints adoration 1, suitable retribution 2-3, the seraphs worship 4, the servants praise 5-6, the suitable bride 7-8, the supper of the Lamb 9-10.

(b) *Judgment on Earth* 11-21. The advent of Christ 11-13, the armies of heaven 14, the authority of Christ 15-16, the Armageddon array 17-19, the abominable destroyed 20-21, Ezek. 39:17, Zech 14:2.

ch.20 *The end of man's day*

(a) *The Millennium* 1-10. Satan relegated 1-3, the angel, authority and abyss v.1, Satan's character and confinement v.2, destiny, duration, liberty v.3, Saints reigning vs.4-6. Authority, company, loyalty v.4. The first resurrection is an "OUT" resurrection, leaving many others still in death v.12. Society rebels against God vs.7-9. Ready allegiance 8-9a, ruin announced 9b, Satan's final doom 10.

(b) *The magnitude of judgment* vs.11-15. The setting 11-12, the summons 13, the sentence 14-15.

(D) **A vision of abiding glory** *All Satisfying* chs.21-22ch.21 *The eternal state* 1-8

Provided by God 1, a new order of things. Its purity and pleasure 2, the privilege of the presence of God 3, Paradise regained 4:7, its perfection 5-6, the portion of the unsaved 8.

The millennial situation vs.9-27

The Holy City, its perfection 11, protection 12-13, construction 14-19, preciousness 20-21, pleasure 22-25, prosperity 22:1-5, fulness of life and blessing.

ch.22 *The closing sayings*

Their application to us vs.6-21. Words of cheer 1-5, of comfort 6-17, of caution 18-19, of confirmation 20-21. The last declaration v.6, last exhortation v.7, last revelation v.8, last attestation v.16, last invitation v.17, last admonition 18-19, last proclamation 20, last benediction 21.

'WILL YOU BE READY WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM COMES?'

"The Incomparable Unveiled Christ"

"The Unveiling of His Person"

Revelation Chapter 1

This book brings to a conclusion the entire revelation of the plan of God. In its pages Christ is set forth as Head of the Church in Grace, Judge of the Nations in Government, and King of the entire World in Glory. The many splendid glories of Christ portrayed are:

(1) **The Sympathetic Kinsman chs.1-3**

His Lordship. The administrator revealing in light.

(2) **The Stern Avenger chs.4—8:1**

His Heirship. The executor recovering by law.

(3) **The Strong Redeemer chs.8-13**

His Kingship. The mediator redeeming to life.

(4) **The Superb Bridegroom chs.14-22**

His Headship. The adjudicator regenerating in life (C.J. Rolls).

The Informing Christ 1:1-3

Not only from Him, but of Him. *Divine in its origin* v.1. The chain of communication was: God the Father, to Christ, to an Angel, to John, to God's servants. *Comprehensive in scope* v.2. Confirmation of the truth revealed. SIGNIFIED—SIGN-IFIED v.1 A book of signs and symbols. A unique communication 'The Word of God', it stands for a prophetic message. (1 Sam. 9:27; 2 Sam. 7:4; 1 Kings 12:22). *Benefaction* v.3 Beneficent in its effects. Study the seven beatitudes in this book. A special promise and a special period—"the time is at hand", it is imminent. KEEP observing them. Our practical conduct governed by them.

The Indispensable Christ vs.4-8

The salutation begins with a blessing and a benediction. So carefully communicated a matter should receive the greatest attention. Read, hear and obey. The readers are the seven churches and the greeting is from the Trinity. These churches are representative of the Church down through the age. Trace the "SEVENS" in this book—49 in all.

Jehovah in the eternity of His being. The Spirit in the perfection of His activities, v.4. The Lord Jesus in His threefold vocation, v.3.

In manifestation: 'Faithful Witness';

In resurrection: the 'First Begotten';

In administration: 'Prince of the kings';

In mediation: 'Lover';

In redemption: 'Loosed us';

In association: 'A kingdom and priesthood';

In recognition: 'Glory for ever and ever'.

The moral division of the book:

"The Faithful Witness", the Prophet (chs.1-3).

"The First Begotten from the dead", the Priest (chs.4-5).

“The Prince of Kings”, the King (chs.6-22).

In His Vindication, “He cometh”, His second advent.

The Source of Truth, “Alpha, Omega”, the Omniscient One.

The Source of all life, “The Beginning and the Ending”, the Omnipresent One.

The Source of all power, “The Almighty”, the Omnipotent One v.5.

No one precedes Him; supersedes Him; surpasses Him or supplants Him.

Study the doxologies in this book vs.5-6 (4:11; 5:13; 7:12).

The Instructing Christ vs.9-12

The Captive Seer v.9. His humility, sympathy, dignity and consistency. Suffering for his individual witness (John 16:33; Acts 14:22).

The Controlling Spirit vs.10-11. Physically John was suffering, spiritually John was satisfied. ‘In the Spirit’, seems to indicate a trancelike state of spiritual ecstasy. We live in two locations like John. He was in the isle, and he was in the Spirit. Four times in this book we read of John being ‘in the Spirit’. “He saw Christ in the midst of the churches as *the express image of God’s person* (1:10). In the midst of the throne as *the exposition of the Divine purpose* (4:2). In the midst of the angels as *the executor of Divine justice* (17:3). In the midst of the city of God as *the explanation of the mysteries of God*” (Robert McClurkin). John’s soul triumphed over his body, through occupation with Christ and elevation to Christ. He had a listening ear and the voice was that of his Lord. “Alpha and Omega”—Deity preceding all and presiding over all because of His priority and pre-eminence. “I am” indicates, BEING, but not BECOMING (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3).

The Inspecting Christ v.13

The Lamp of Testimony, v.3; The Lord of Glory vs.14-16. The Lampstand is the symbol of function, dependence; ‘seven’, diversity yet unity; gold, character of God. The Lord has a direct relationship to each church. It is that of a Priest and a Judge, the relationships of authority which He sustains to the local churches. ‘I heard’ (v.10); ‘I turned’ (v.12); ‘I saw’ (v.12); ‘I fell’ (v.17), that is worship.

The Inspiring Christ vs.14-16

The book gives a Personal Unveiling of Christ, an Official Unveiling—His Titles. And a Dispensational unveiling—to the churches and the nations. This description concerns His character, it tells us what He is like in His glorious Person—in:

His Dignity ‘Son of Man’. This title suggests He is Judge (John 6:27; Acts 17:31). Here is His loftiest honour and His lowliest humility.

His centrality “in the midst”. All penetrating—directing.

His purity “white as wool”. The maturity of His understanding and

wisdom (Isa. 11:2,3). *His Sovereignty* “a golden girdle”. Impressive Lordship and infinite love yet that love restrained.

His scrutiny “eyes as a flame of fire”. All-searching eye penetrates the uttermost secrets of every realm or sphere (Heb. 4:12).

The virility of His ministry “feet like fine brass”, the resoluteness of His firm step and perfect walk; irresistible strength and unhindered procedure.

His voice of authority (v.15). The romance of His voice is like music in its diversity and definiteness of aim; greater than Niagara Falls. He combines sovereign command and stirring counsel in His message of authority.

His Divine ability “right hand”. Invested with tremendous power, He has complete control over all forces, seen and unseen, which shape the destinies of men.

His assured victory (v.16b), the unconquerable One. His purposes will be achieved. With His sword He smites and by it He saves.

His abiding glory “face shining”. The unfolded glory of His resplendent face is surpassing in loveliness, best expressed by the full shed light of a glowing sun.

The Impressing Christ vs.17-20

What John did, v.17a. The vision leads the mind to revere, the heart to trust and the spirit to worship. The Lord spoke to him words of reassurance, v.17; and gave him another revelation (17-18) and laid upon him a great responsibility (19-20). The plan of the book (v.19) “Things seen” ch.1 “His glory”; “Things which are” chs.2-3, “His grace”; “Things hereafter”, chs.4-22 “His government”. Wonderful Saviour.

The Portrait of Christ **Revelation 1:14 to 20**

1. His purity and eternity v.14 “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow”.

The Ancient of Days.

The sign of His venerable wisdom.

“white as wool”—the maturity of His judgment

2. His scrutiny v.14 “and His eyes were as a flame of fire”.

Not only looking *upon* His church, but looking *through* His church: His discernment “I know” (repeated in the letters to the seven churches).

Eyes that *pierce* and *penetrate*. Nothing hidden from Him.

His eyes observe the *minute measureless mysterious*

3. **His stability** v.15 "And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace"

feet—symbol of activity and progress

brass—symbol of inflexible strength

burnished brass—symbol of absolute purity

4. **His majesty** v.15 "and His voice as the sound of many waters" *many* waters, *but* one voice.

a. *stirring counsel*

b. *sovereign command*

c. *sympathetic cheer*

5. **His sovereignty** v.16 "He had in His right hand seven stars"

a. *authority in the church* "in His right hand"

b. *subordination to Christ* "seven stars"

He is Head of the church, and all authority is vested in Him.

6. **His victory** v.16 "sharp two-edged sword"

sword: judgment

mouth: truth

The word of power that can: *quell* the fury of the storm.

quench the violence of fire.

quicken the dead.

His word discerns Heb. 4:12

7. **His transcendent glory** v.16. His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength.

The churches are lamps.

The ministers are stars.

The Christ is the sun.

He is the light of the world John 8:12.

He is the sun of righteousness to Israel Mal. 4:2.

He is the bright and morning star to the church Rev. 22:16.

Christ in the *splendour* of His official dress.

intensity of His love

infinity of His knowledge

righteousness of His judgment

authority of His word

sovereignty of His administration

infallibility of truth

transcendence of His glory

The sequel to this glimpse of Christ in His glory vs.17 to 20.v.17 John *fell**felt* His touch*feared*

Divine

support "And He laid His right hand upon me"*comfort* "fear not"*assurance* "I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"

Christ in His

eternity

first

finality

last

immutability

the living one

humility

was dead

victory

alive for evermore

sovereignty

has the keys of hell and of death.

Revelation 2:18 to 29**Thyatira**

Thyatira means 'continual sacrifice'.

Commendation v.18 'the church of Thyatira'**Presentation** v.18b 'the Son of God'**Commendation** v.19 'I know thy works...'**Condemnation** vs.20 and 21 'I have a few things against thee...'**Execution** vs.22 and 23a 'into great tribulation...'**Vindication** v.23b 'shall know that I am He which searcheth...'**Exhortation** vs.24 and 25 'I will put upon you none other burden'**Consolation** vs.26 to 28 'will I give power over the nations'*Thy works*v.19 **Active church***Thy love*v.19 **Affectionate church***Thy faith*v.19 **Attached church***Thy service*v.19 **Activated church***Thy endurance*v.19 **Allegiance in trial**

“The Local Assembly”

Its Formation, Features and Freshness

Introduction: Acts 2:1-4; 38-47; 1 Cor. 12:13.

The word “Church” is a translation of the greek word *Ekklesia* meaning “to call out from among”. Three times the word is translated “ASSEMBLY”.

(1) In (Acts 19:32; 39-41) it is a gathering of citizens called out to the Town Clerk.

(2) Used of the Israelites in (Acts 7:38). Called out of Egypt to GOD.

(3) Of the Christian Church, mentioned in the N.T. 111 times, consists of those called out of the world by the Gospel of Christ. All three are distinct from each other.

(A) Its Formation How it began

“The Holy Spirit in the Redeemed”

The day of Pentecost was the birthday of the Church (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13). The descent of the Spirit is heavenly in origin, divine in character, powerful in manifestation and wonderful in its effect. A new power was given to the disciples and a new community of saints formed, the first local Church (1 Cor. 12:13). These words in the Corinthian Epistle are crucially important. The Ephesian epistle gives the UNIVERSAL aspect, as prophesied in Matt. 16:18. The Corinthian epistle is the LOCAL aspect as portrayed in Matt. 18:17.

(B) Its Features What they believed

“The Society of the Redeemed” (vs.42).

The unity of the Spirit among the saints in a local church (vs.42-47). They believed in the preaching of the Gospel (vs.32-40); the practice of baptism (v.41a); the power of addition (vs.41b,47); the principle of progress (v.42a); the privilege of fellowship (v.42b); the pleasure of worship (v.42c); participation in prayer (v.42d). In v.42 we have the four great principles of fellowship and they correspond with four vessels of the Tabernacle. The Golden Lampstand is God’s emblematic representation of ministry—“apostles doctrine”; the Ark of the Covenant—“fellowship”; the Table of Shewbread—“breaking of bread”; the Golden Altar of Incense—“prayer” (Psa. 141:2).

A Steady Church—“continued steadfastly”. We should love the church and its holy service (1 Chron. 29:3). Continue in teaching for edification, in

fellowship for encouragement, in worship for enjoyment and in prayers for enrichment.

A Sound Church—"apostles', doctrine". Divine truth is light for the mind and food for the heart.

"D O C T R I N E":

D —Deity of Christ

O —Obedience

C —Claims and character of Christ

T —Triumphs of Christ

R —Resurrection of Christ

I —Intercession of Christ

N —Nearness of His return

E —Exaltation in glory

(Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11).

A Spiritual Church—"fellowship" is first individual then social. The Lord first attaches us to Himself, then to one another. We are FELLOW-members, partakers, heirs, sufferers, prisoners, soldiers and fellowhelpers to the truth (III John 8).

A Loyal Church—"breaking of bread" (1 Cor. 11:26). Its institution by the Lord (Luke 22:19-20). Its celebration by disciples (Acts 20:7). Its explanation in (1 Cor. 11:20-24).

A Reverent Church—"prayers". They should be short, sincere, simple, earnest, united and expectant. "Behold he prayeth" (Acts 9:11; 12:5b). Teach us to pray (Luke 11:1).

(C) **Its Freshness** How they behaved

"The Spirit of the Redeemed" (vs.43-47).

An Influential Church (v.43). They were holy and Christlike, and reverence fell on all around. Life was powerful and miracles were done by Apostles (ch.4:13).

A Sharing Church (vs.44,45). Common faith, communal fellowship and community of goods.

A Winsome Church (vs.46,47). Their witness was radiant—"gladness", grateful—"praising God", and attractive—"favour". Their blessing was Divine—"Lord added" and their growth constant—"added daily", their joy was full—souls "being saved".

The First Gentile Assembly (Acts 11:19-30; 3 John 9,10)

In Acts 9:31 we have Assembly Peace; in ch.11:26 Assembly Progress; in III John 9,10 Assembly Problems. Acts 11:19-30 is the record of one of the greatest events in history. Step by step the church extended its borders outward and principally northward to Antioch in northern Syria. We learn

how it began—its membership (19-21); how it was built—its fellowship (22-24); how it was blessed—by good leadership (25-27); and how it behaved—its stewardship (27-30).

1. Established by God through the Gospel vs.19-21

Evangelism by Jewish Christians played an important part in founding this Gentile church (v.20).

(a) *Preparation through persecution* (v.19). But preaching at first was limited to Jews, through ignorance. They thought of Christianity as a spiritual movement within Judaism.

(b) *Progress through preaching* (v.20). They adopted a new policy of preaching Christ as Lord to Gentiles in Antioch. Their message centred in the Lordship of Christ.

(c) *Power produced results* (v.21). The blessing of God in their testimony. The HAND of the Lord, TURNED unto the Lord, CLAVE unto the Lord (v.23) ADDED unto the Lord (v.24).

2. Encouraged by a Godly Man vs.22-24

The sympathy of the mother church (v.22). The suitability of the sent servant (v.22b). Evangelism must be followed by pastoral care and teaching. To witness the grace of God in progress cheered the heart of Barnabas. He unselfishly seeks their welfare and exhorts them to cleave to the Lord. Christianity consists in turning to the Lord and cleaving to the Lord. His character gave weight to his counsel (v.24). He was good at removing difficulties (v.22); helping believers (v.23); and winning souls (v.24c).

3. Edified by Sound Teaching vs.25,26

How wise and perfect are the movements of God. This partnership was God-appointed; it was long prepared; it was Spirit controlled. Barnabas the exhorter was led to take second place. Though diverse in nature and having gifts differing they were true yoke-fellows. Disciples were called Christians (divinely called) (Newberry). Christians are those who own Christ as Leader, His followers, lovers, worshippers. They teach His doctrine, manifest His spirit, carry out His will.

4. Were Endowed with Gift vs.22-28

Gift is raised up by God (v.22); required in Assemblies (v.25); ready to be used (v.26); regulated by the Spirit (v.28); reveals the will of God (vs.27,28); and recognised by the saints (v.29).

5. Exercised about Giving vs.29,30

The prophet's revelation (v.28) led to the church's obligation (v.29); and the apostles' co-operation (v.30). Intercourse between Jewish church and

Gentile church (v.27). Unselfish interest led to benevolence. They gave immediately, personally, whole-heartedly, lovingly, and thoughtfully (vs.29,30). We are exhorted to give (1 Cor. 16:1), purposeful (v.1); a priority (v.2); personal and proportionate. The churches of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1-9); gave sympathetically (v.2a); sacrificially (vs.2b,3a); and spontaneously (vs.3b,4). This Assembly in Antioch is exemplary:

- A —arose out of adversity (v.19)
- N —needed ministry from abroad (v.26b)
- T —teaching was accepted (v.26c)
- I —interested in others (v.29c)
- O —offered help to needy saints (v.29b)
- C —clave unto the Lord (v.23)
- H —hand of the Lord was with them (v.24)

Suggestions for Personal or Group Studies

If you want to live a happy Christian life and be helpful in your Assembly life you **MUST** meditate (Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2); ruminate (Psa. 45:1,2); masticate (Jer. 1:15,16); appreciate (Psa. 89:27,28; Song of Songs 5:9-16); hesitate (Eccl. 5:1,2); associate (Heb. 10:25); emulate (John 13:15); imitate (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 11:1); propagate (1 Thess. 1:8); and anticipate (Phil. 3:20,21).

SOME FEATURES OF A LOCAL ASSEMBLY

(a) In **First Corinthians**

Ch.1 No schisms tolerated.

Ch.2 Man's wisdom is folly, Divine wisdom necessary.

Ch.3 Carnality will be present and building will be tested.

Ch.4 Character is tested.

Ch.5 Discipline is exercised.

Ch.6 Lawsuits are condemned.

Ch.7 Holiness is expected.

Ch.8 Conscience is enlightened.

Ch.9 Love not liberty decides all issues.

Ch.10 Learn from the past (vs.1-15); live for profit of others (vs.16-33).

Ch.11 Headship and Lordship must be acknowledged (vs.1-16), worship is offered (vs.17-37).

Ch.12 Gifts to the Church, the rich endowment (vs.1-13), the real exercise (vs.14-31).

Ch.13 The ruling factor—LOVE.

Ch.14 Ministry should edify (vs.3,4), clarify (vs.9,15), glorify (v.28c), satisfy (vs.29,30), no rivalry (v.33).

Ch.15 Doctrine declared (vs.1-16), defended (vs.12-18), dependable (vs.29-56) and displayed in the life (v.58).

Ch.16 Social responsibility (vs.1-17), saintly conduct (vs.10-14), spiritual refreshment (vs.12,18).

(b) In **Ephesians**

The Body aspect, the new society (2:16). Universal Church.

Ch.1 *A Body*, never to be dismembered (1:23 also 4:4-15).

Ch.2 *A Building*, never to be demolished (2:20-22).

Ch.3 *A Book*, never to be destroyed, (3:10).

Ch.5 *A Bride* becoming a WIFE, never to be divorced (5:24-27).

Ch.6 *A Battalion*, never to be defeated (6:13-17).

(c) In **Philippians**

Matt. 18:20 and Phil. 1:1 are the clearest statements in the N.T. of a Local Assembly. In Phil. 1:1 its relationships, v.2 its resources, (vs.3-8) its responsibilities, (vs.9-11) its reproduction of Christ.

Ch.1 Evangelical in its outlook, "gospel" five times—be gospel minded (v.27).

Ch.2 Exemplary in its conduct—be humble minded; (v.5).

Ch.3 Enraptured with Christ (v.8)—be steadfast minded (v.13).

Ch.4 Enjoy your fellowship and be exercised about giving—be generous minded (vs.5,10,14-18). The practical aspect.

(d) In **First Timothy** like Corinthians the local aspect.

Ch.1 *Its Message*, sound (vs.1-11), saving (vs.12-17) and searching (vs.18-20). Where truth is defended.

Ch.2 *Its Members*, prayer (vs.1-3,8); believing (vs.4-7); submitting (vs.9-15). Where prayer is offered.

Ch.3 *Its Mature Leaders*, required (vs.1,2); qualified (vs.3-9); proved (vs.9-12), approved (v.13); behaving (vs.15,16). Where elders function.

Ch.4 *Its Ministers* declaring the truth (vs.1-6); displaying godliness (vs.7-12); developing character (vs.13-16). Where godliness is important.

Ch.5 *Its Ministry* gracious (vs.1-3); generous (vs.4-10); guiding (vs.11-16); cautious (vs.17-25). Where care is shown.

Ch.6 *Its Model Conduct* for slaves (v.1); masters (v.2); teachers (vs.3-10); the rich (vs.17-19); the leaders (vs.11-16,20,21). Where truth is obeyed.

(e) In **Second Timothy** Personal aspect.

Ch.1 *His Equipment*. (1) His spiritual resources (vs.1-7). Influences (vs.1-5), inspiration (vs.6,7). (2) His solemn responsibility (vs.8-18); in relation to the Gospel. Stand up for it (vs.8-12), suffer for it (vs.8,12), safeguard it (vs.13,14), stand together in it.

Ch.2 Examples of Encouragement. Of dedication and discipline (vs.1-13), diligence and discrimination (vs.14-26).

Ch.3 Engagement flee from the false (vs.1-9), follow those who are true (vs.10-12), feed on the Word of God (vs.14,15), fulfil your ministry (vs.16,17).

Ch.4 Your Enrichment Special values (vs.1-3), spiritual vigour (v.5), striking verdict (v.7), sublime vision (v.8), staunch volunteers (vs.11-21), secret of victory (v.22).

(f) In **The Third Epistle of John** Privileges to enjoy, perils to avoid.

- (1) An example of fatherliness to admire—John.
- (2) Of fellowship to accept—Gaius.
- (3) Of faithlessness to avoid—Diotrephes.
- (4) Of fidelity to appreciate and emulate—Demetrius.

(g) In *Revelation 2 and 3* The Spiritual, moral and prophetic history of the Church.

The Distinctive Marks of a Local New Testament Assembly

1. Restricted to Christian membership (Acts 2:41,42; 11:26; 20:7,28,29).
2. Gathered only in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1,2).
3. Acknowledging and submitting to the Lordship of Christ (1 Cor. 11), "LORD" 60 times in both epistles.
4. Presenced by the Lord in the midst (Matt. 18:20; John 20:19,26).
5. Governed only by the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:16; 14:27).
6. Guided by God-appointed Overseers (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Heb. 13:7,17,24).
7. Instructed by ministers raised up by God (1 Cor. 14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
8. Exercising the Priesthood of Believers (1 Peter 2:9; Heb. 13:15).
9. Interested in the spread of the Gospel (Acts 13:2-7; 14:26,27; 1 Thess. 1:6-8).

May we be attentive and understand (Neh. 8:3,8). Like Moses—obey (Exod. 40:16,19,21,23,25,27,29,32 and like Joshua—encouraged and committed (ch.1:6-9).

Meditation — a Lost Art

We are living in extremely busy days, and everybody and everything seem to be going at a very fast pace. We seem to be too busy, running here and there, with very little time to sit down and think on what progress we are making in divine things.

Yet various sects and religions emphasize the beneficial effects, physical and mental, of meditation. God commands us to meditate, and the men of God were enriched by it, Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2-3.

In a Crisis, Gen. 24:63

Abraham was greatly concerned to find a suitable bride for Isaac. He arranged with his servant to seek a wife for his son among his own kindred in Mesopotamia. Isaac possibly knew nothing of this mission, and would wonder about the secrecy, but he went out to meditate in the field at eventide. There are many lovely things in this story worthy of our meditation: the guidance of God to the well, v.11; the gifts for the bride, vs.22,53, (all evidences of riches and love); the response of Rebekah, v.58.

As Isaac meditated, the answer was on the way. When he lifted up his eyes he saw the camels coming, and on one of them rode the bride through whom the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham would be realized. What we do in a crisis is a revelation of our character. The answer to our problem can come through quiet meditation on God's Word and waiting in His presence.

In a Conflict, Josh. 1:8

Joshua began humbly as a servant and ended gloriously as a leader. He was assured of the enabling presence of God, v.5b. In the joy of it, he went forth conquering and to conquer, v.5a. He had divine resources and grave responsibility. "Be strong" refers to the strength of the wrists; we should "hold fast", Titus 1:9; Rev. 2:13; Heb. 4:14. "And of a good courage" refers to the strength of the ankles, meaning stand firm, Gal. 5:1. Now he was to meditate upon God's law day and night, and God promised him good success, v.8.

Note: the importance, "This book of the law"; instruction through meditation; influence—"observe and do"; and issue—prosperity and success. This word success is found nowhere else in the Bible.

Do you want success? Here is the way: knowledge of the will of God; obedience to the Word of God, v.8; and courage in the Name of God, vs.6-7,9,18. We must meditate, for we are definitely in a continual conflict against the powers of darkness, Eph. 6:11-12.

For Conduct, Psa. 1:2-3

These are very important verses on daily conduct. The godly man is a man of the Bible; he muses on the whole of divine revelation. He delights in the Word of God, Psa. 1:2; the saints of God, 16:3; and the will of God, 40:8. In Psalm 1:3 he is characterized by vitality (trees), security (planted), capacity (streams), fertility (fruit), propriety (seasonable), vividity (evergreen), and prosperity (see Jer. 17:7-8). As we meditate upon the Word of God our lives will be changed and brought into conformity to Christ by the help of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:18. The Word of God is a divine detergent to cleanse us, Psa. 119:9; a directive to control us, vs. 33-34,60; a delight to the heart, vs. 47-48; a deterrent from wrong, vs. 101,104. We become contaminated, but thinking continually upon the Word of God will cleanse, cheer and renew us daily.

For Consolation, Psa. 143:5

Here is a man in peril, and expressing his feelings of unworthiness before God. His plea for help is based on the faithfulness, righteousness and lovingkindness of God, vs. 1,8,11. His spirit is wrapt in gloom, v.4. We often travel this way and feel depressed, Luke 24:17. We should do as he did, and call memory in to fight despair and feed hope, v.5. He remembered the handiwork of God in creation and the blessings of redemption. God's past goodness will drive out worry which threatens to dominate the life. In present misery, contemplate past mercy. Does the soul thirst for God?, v.6. Meditation on the mercies of God will promote heartfelt thanks to God in these trying, difficult days. Meditation does bring consolation. Study the fourteen "thy's" in this Psalm.

For Cheer, Psa. 104:34

"Let my meditation be sweet unto Him", v.34 R.V. This should be true of all our meditation of the Scriptures. Here is celebration of the goodness of God, v.33; satisfaction and exultation through meditation, v.34; and the extermination of his enemies, v.35. As he recalls the providence of God in the created world, he sings praise to God out of a full heart. The word "sweet" is used of sacrifices that were acceptable to God. Does meditation promote heartfelt thanks to soar up to heaven? Do we cheer the heart of God and the saints by worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness? But is a hymn our only contribution? Are we robbing God of worship?

For Commitment, 1 Tim. 4:15-16

"Meditate" carries the idea of "be in them, give yourself totally to them". Timothy must be diligent in the exercise of his ministry, vs. 12-14. Here is a pattern for the church today. Christian service is Bible-centred. Teaching divine truth is very exacting; there must be absorption, leading to the control of things in our lives. If engaged in the ministry, there will be no progress

unless there is total dedication to the task. The mind is to be immersed in these pursuits, as the body in the air it breathes. Note that Paul placed "thyself" ahead of the "doctrine". Moral and spiritual rectitude give weight to the ministry. Timothy was to be a dedicated and singleminded man, watching how he lived, what he taught, and persevering to the end.

Dynamic ministry comes through prayer and daily meditation. Our esteemed brother Andrew Borland once said, "Paul was a specialist; 'this one thing I do', Phil. 3:13. We need men with this controlling motive today". That was in 1936; it is vitally necessary now.

The Consecration of the Life

Read: Exodus 29:15-46; 1 Chronicles 29:5; Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

The word consecration is not really a New Testament word and its nearest equivalent, 'consecrated', as used in Hebrews 7:28; 10:20, has an altogether different meaning from the Old Testament use of the word. In Hebrews 7:28 it means 'perfected', in ch.10:20, it means 'inaugurated' or 'newly slain' or 'newly made'. The consecration of the life is not only a theme of vital importance, but is an act of obedience to God which brings tremendous blessing into the heart and life of one utterly surrendered to God. What kind of Christian life do you live? Is it a life of self-pleasing, self-choosing, and self-indulgence? Or, one where self-will is crucified, self-pleasing is renounced and the life is absolutely yielded to God? We must face up to these things now. What will you decide upon? Daily to please yourself or please the Lord who died to save you.

The meaning of consecration

Read Romans 6:13; 12:1-2 in Weymouth's, and Way's translations, as well as the R. V. In the Old Testament the word most commonly used, means "to fill the hands". The ancient ritual and ceremony in Exodus 29 typified the claims of God upon the believer today. We require three words to describe consecration. These are: separation, dedication, obedient surrender. There must be complete separation from all other lords who have had control over us. See Romans 6:12-13. Note the two different tenses of the verb "to yield" in v.13. The first is the continuous present "neither be yielding". That was once our habit, but now we must not let that mortal part of us be king. In the next clause, "yield yourselves unto God", the tense is the Greek aorist, signifying a definite act of surrender to God. That act is dedication. Once for all, present yourselves to God, the deliberate choice based upon our position in Christ Jesus. When we dedicate our life utterly unto God, then He will consecrate the offering of that life to Himself.

At conversion you turned to God from sin, putting your trust in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. Consecration is the surrender of your life to Christ as Lord, He becomes your Sovereign. I once heard it summed up thus: "At conversion the Lord Jesus comes into the life as guest, in consecration He becomes the host." Consecration should be as definite an act of obedience as conversion. Most of us gladly confess the day of our conversion. Can we as readily recall the day of our consecration?

(a) *An act of surrender* (Romans 12:1). The verb “present” is in the aorist tense, signifying a crisis act, an act done now once for all. The type of Exodus 29 would confirm this. It is an act of enthroning Christ as Master and King in the heart (1 Peter 3:15). It means He shall have sovereign sway over every department of your life. It means you are prepared to accept the decision He makes, and obey the directions He gives. Peter illustrates this in his life (Luke 5:4-11). Involved in the presentation of our bodies is a renunciation of all right of control over them. We recognise that they are no longer our own (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

(b) *An attitude of obedience*. The act of consecration becomes a life of consecration. The crisis act, the surrender of the life, is only the beginning of the life of surrender. It need not be repeated, but it may be re-affirmed and this is necessary because of heart-backsliding. From the moment you yield yourself to God your obeisance has to become obedience. You go on to prove the will of God to be acceptable.

The measure and method of consecration

“That ye present”. This is a voluntary act, a priestly service becoming every true child of God. Weymouth translates it thus: “Present all your faculties to Him.” This is much larger than the body. God wants all our “faculties”. That involves the body, the heart, the mind, and the will. God desires your whole being to be placed entirely at His disposal. God wants YOU, then your time, your talents and your money. Are we withholding our dearly-bought bodies from the One who purchased them by His precious blood? We are bought and indwelt, the body belongs to the spirit, and both belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). I am not my own. I belong to the Lord. Realising my renewed state I desire to promote the glory of God in the body which He has given me.

(a) *The physical faculty*. ‘The body’ belongs to God. It is through the body the entire life reveals itself. It is to be the instrument for the indwelling Spirit of God to use as He wills for God’s glory. Has the Lord Jesus all your physical powers and faculties? Young men and women, is your body consecrated or desecrated? Is God using your body or are you abusing or misusing your body?

(b) *The mental faculty*. The fiercest of satanic assaults are made upon the mind. Purity of thought, desire, imagination and habits of life is the gateway to victory. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” How much time each day do you give to serious, methodical Bible study? Do you read literature that nurtures and strengthens your spiritual life? What do you feed your soul on day by day? What you read today is built into your life tomorrow. Make your Saviour Lord in the intellectual realm day by day.

(c) *The volitional faculty*. The word ‘mind’ includes will, and we need to be renewed by the renewing of our will. Your will must be surrendered to

your Lord. Henceforth it must be “not my will but Thine be done”. The negative side is “grow not conformed to this age”. This is the condition or the atmosphere in which we live and move. We must be non-conformists to the spirit of the world. The positive side is, “be ye transformed”. The same word is used of the Lord on the holy mount (Luke 9:28; Matthew 17:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). In Matthew 17 we have the Pattern, in 2 Corinthians 3:18 the Process, and in Romans 12:2 the Practice. Conformed to this age—the way of the world; transformed—the way of the Lord. God wants our will adjusted, renewed and energised to do His will. Worldliness and godliness are mutually antagonistic.

(d) *The emotional faculty*—your heart. Is Christ Lord in your heart? Are your affections set upon Him? Does He decide every doubtful friendship, rule every desire and impulse and guide you in the choice of a life partner? Many a promising young man has fallen here and been bewitched by a young lady whose interests were not spiritual. Many a godly sister has remained unmarried rather than marry out of the will of God. Have you presented the members of your body to the Lord—your hands, feet, eyes, ears and lips? To do so unreservedly is to be well-pleasing to Him. The consecration of the high priest (Exod. 29) would guide us in this priestly act of service. The blood was put upon the ear—the Godward faculty, suggesting attentive obedience. The blood on the foot—the earthward faculty, suggesting a holy walk. The blood was put upon the hand—the manward faculty, suggesting active service. All this indicated that cleansing is an essential element in consecration. Then the oil was applied, reminding us that in the power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit we are dedicated to the service of God.

The motive of consecration

The activating motive is not service for God, not what we can do or give, but what we experience and enjoy—“the compassions of God”. The motive is never found in us, it has its origin in the heart of God. Such mercies not only lead to a contemplative and adoring worship, they should also be the inspiring motive of a life of self-surrender and sacrificial service. Scan the first eight chapters of the Roman letter and think of the galaxy of undeserved mercies that confront us. What an assurance of pardon (4:7); abiding peace (5:1); almighty power (6:14); acceptable position (8:30). We enjoy abundant provision (8:32); and the alluring prospect of the day of glory (8:17,23). As we survey the wondrous cross and come to appreciate the mercies of God manifested there, the deeper and more absolute will our consecration be.

Note the tender and winsome entreaty of Paul’s words, “I beseech you”. How like his Master Paul was! Conscripts are not wanted in the ranks, compulsion is never exercised, no command is given; but Paul on bended knees would entreat on Christ’s behalf that we yield our lives to God. The appeal is made to those whom Christ is not ashamed to call brethren. He

appeals to our hearts for He wants our bodies. Consecration is the only reasonable and worthy response you can make to Him who died to be your Redeemer. Note that the appeal is not that we should die for Christ. It is something deeper, more fundamental than that. "A living sacrifice" in contrast to the dead blood-sacrifices of the Old Covenant. The yielded life is one of perpetual, unabating sacrifice, bringing into the life tranquility of mind and sublime joy day by day. God does not ask for slaughtered beasts in sacrifice, but sanctified bodies for spiritual service. The Lord Jesus is not asking something of you which He has not done Himself. His was a walk of constant surrender and He calls to us, "Follow Me". What is the character and object of consecration?—"holy, acceptable unto God". It is voluntary separation from the world with all its allurements, and being utterly devoted to the will of God. The Levitical victims brought to the altar were regarded as holy, so we as believers are holy and so well-pleasing unto God. This act of consecration is not merely done in the hope of personal gain or enjoyment, but prompted by a sincere desire to be well-pleasing unto God. What a priceless privilege is ours, to bring pleasure to the heart of God! His holy eye rests with complacency as He gazes upon a surrendered life. Dr. Way translates the next clause thus: "The necessity of this rite of consecration follows from all the argument". God does not make some unreasonable demand on us when He pleads for absolute surrender. He desires to use you for the furtherance of His cause in the Church and in the world. He will make of you a vessel "meet for the Master's use".

The marks of consecration

We have now entered the school of Christian morals which begins with this act of spiritual worship. The atmosphere of the sanctuary affects me Godward—proving His good will (vs.1-2); selfward—to think soberly (v.3); Churchward—avenues of service (vs.4-8); saintward—manifesting love (vs.9-13); and manward—responsibility of a kindly spirit (vs.14-21). Grace ever conduces to character and conduct. God has given to each one of us capacity and ability to serve Him. Faith produces right thinking—making me sober minded, and right acting—making me serviceable in the Church. Are you an idle, indifferent Christian who has not found your function in the Body of Christ? There is a place for you, and in the local company there are many situations vacant—a variety of interesting work that you can do for the Lord. What are the marks of a consecrated life? Eight features are mentioned in Romans 12. (1) Humility of mind (v.3). A right estimate of oneself will always be a humble estimate. (2) Unity in the body (vs.4-5). This is due to vital union in Christ for corporate unity involves mutual responsibility. Both the unity and the diversity are essential to the effectivity of the body. (3) Ability to work (vs.6-8), for public ministry (vs.6-8) and private work (v.13). (4) Diligence and concentration are needed for the accomplishing of any

good work in the Church. May we be faithful. (5) Fraternity in the family (vs.9-10); expressed in an affectionate interest (v.9a), an abhorrence of evil (v.9b), and an appreciation of another's gift. (6) Industry in evidence (vs.11-13). We should have a diligent spirit—not slothful, a fervent spirit, a happy, patient and prayerful spirit (v.12) and a generous and sympathetic spirit (v.13). (6) Sympathy for all (vs.14-16). Generosity instead of animosity should be evident in our dealings (v.14). We should not be ambitious, but humble and unaffected (vs.15-16). (7) Charity and honesty in demeanour and actions (vs.17-18). (8) Victory through goodness instead of revenge (vs.19-21). Oh, for such hall-marks in our daily life!

This excellent spirit begins as we appreciate the mercies of God and finds adequate expression in mercy shown by us to others.

“Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord” (1 Chronicles 29:5).