

EPHESIANS.

NOTES

OF THE

DAILY NOON BIBLE READINGS

IN THE

Epistle to the Ephesians,

DURING MARCH AND APRIL, 1833

BY

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A MEETING has been held for more than seven years, daily, for reading the Scriptures, at the noon hour, in 229 Temple Court, New York City. The following are notes from one month's teachings, there. Those who heard were desirous of having them in a permanent form, and so had them taken down stenographically and printed. The colloquial and conversational style in which they were given has been preserved by special desire, which was emphasized by the request that they be not altered, at all, but published as spoken. Some portions were cut out as being mere repetitions.

The "readings" are now given to a wider attention, with the prayer that He whose word it is may afford comfort and refreshing through these pages to His saints.

It is hoped that the noon meetings may be kept up till the Lord come.

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READINGS IN EPHESIANS.

CHAPTER I.

IN this book we are taken into the counsels of God, in Himself, before the ages ; all connected with Christ, whom He had in His mind, who was really in the Father's bosom ever—the Son of His love, according to Prov. viii. 22–31, where we find Him the Object of His special delight from eternity, while His own thoughts and His desire were toward the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.

Now we take up these precious thoughts of God that have included us ; taking us up, apart from anything in us but worthlessness ; for it was impossible for God to carry out these richest and most minute thoughts of His until the cross had demonstrated the true worthlessness and incorrigibility of man. There was nothing good in him, and he could not be corrected ; he was without strength ; indeed, that becomes the reason as well as the occasion and opportunity for God to work His works ; that there was no hope in him, no strength, really nothing. Of course it will bring out this. And all practical truth flowing out from this will be, not our doing something as springing from ourselves,—no such word as “you are saved *if* you do,” but that the doing is but the acting out of what He has made us, and in no wise

helps the salvation, simply manifests it. There is nothing that brings so rich an expression of doing as saved, according to the tone and elevation of our place as in the heavens, and belonging there; and therefore denying everything that belongs to the earth, and in principle putting it to death and negating it, all the way through, as this wondrous book. It is marvelous how a little book like this can contain so much. It grasps vastly more than the whole of the Old Testament together. It brings us into fellowship with God, according to things that were never made known to the Old Testament saints or writers or the angels that surround His throne. They were in His own counsels, waiting until He could come out and tell them all; when He should have Christ Jesus in the glory; the Son of God by title of what He had done down here, as well as the Son in Himself before He came down here. And none other could give it but the Apostle Paul, because none other had the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God in the glory. It is not simply as in the Father's bosom—the only begotten Son of God—He was that when He came into the world, and was so before the foundation of the world; that He was every step that he took along here through these scenes. But now He gets a new title as raised up into heaven and having accomplished everything. This Man that met the whole matter of guilt and sin and ruin God raised up into the glory.

And now it is but carrying out the beginning of this great structure of which we form a part; we are in it as He is in it; He is the Head and cap-stone and foundation, and everything! The model, plan, pattern; and we, part and parcel with Him!

So, you see, we come into the richest thing that God has to tell of His thoughts concerning His Son, and concerning us with Him. It is true, this is not

a book of worship ; that is Hebrews ; that is telling us, as partakers of the heavenly calling, we are to be occupied with Him. This is not telling us about our place in order to occupy us *with* our place, but to make us know the dignity and the character and full breadth and stature of such a position, and to make us walk in conformity with it. God is looking for character. If Christ was the character of God, as the word used in Hebrews, "The express image of His person," so are we the character of God's mind, the highest thought and the highest glory ; taken out to be the expression of His thought in all the ages to come.

Thus we come to this book, to follow it step by step. As Romans shows the righteousness of God, beginning with us as guilty sinners and proving us guilty, so this reveals the ineffable expression of His grace, "the riches of His grace," and the unfathomable mercy of God, meeting us without reference to conduct but simple condition, as we were left wounded and dead at the wayside, like the poor man who had gone from Jerusalem to Jericho, and left half dead and utterly lost ! That is the condition. Taking Romans ii. and Ephesians i.-iii. together, we find in the one case our guilt proved, no matter how we may step into the presence of God with our thoughts of our own goodness, letting us know what we are ; and this is telling us what we were, independently of conduct and by nature, thoroughly contrary to God. And therefore it is in this book that we get God brought out. Probably there is no portion of Scripture in which the name of God is more constantly used than Ephesians ; it is distinct and unique ; more of God than of Christ. God is seen back of all, when He is seen as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the two titles of God—God and Father ; God in regard to all

His counsels, and Father in regard to the full expansion and expression of His heart.

Can we read such a book? None otherwise than as filled with the Spirit, with no mind of our own. "We have received not the spirit which is of the world but the Spirit which is of God," that we might know these things. Could we bear this infinite weight of love that He tells out? None otherwise than by being strengthened by His Spirit, to live it out in our lives.

We all know that everything tends downward. Multitudes of men that are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus have no apprehension at all of the heavenly calling. They scarcely read this epistle, because they cannot make out anything of these things. How many that have read all this are living according to man to move forward, and what is moving forward but to move downward all the more. So we need to be lifted up and out of our thoughts into God's thoughts. So we will take it up slowly and carefully, resting upon Him to open it to us.

Like other epistles, it begins by stating the authority by which it is written. It is nothing to us if it is of Paul simply; if it is only Paul's meditations, or Paul's imagination, or Paul's reasoning, it is nothing at all. And therefore we have to learn how he got all this. What right has he to say it to us? We learn in the Epistle to the Romans that he was separated unto the good news of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. We find the resurrection is the statement of power to us all the time, the power which we are to apprehend continually; and in Ephesians we are to be occupied with that. That gospel is called again in Second Tim. i. 8, "The gos-

pel according to the power of God." This gospel gets very wonderful names. It is called in First Tim. the "gospel of the happy God." The calling is, in Philippians, the calling on high; in Hebrews, the heavenly calling; and here, the heavenly calling. The gospel is the gospel of the grace of God, and of the glory of God, and of the power and the wisdom of God. Thus we have everything in this good news. The wonderful thing is that we are the ones that have it. We talk about His passing by angels, but He passed by thousands and millions of sinners through all the ages, and Israel, as far as these things are concerned. Prophets and priests never heard such a word; and if we are content to act as prophets and priests should have acted, we are excessively low; if we are content to be the Jew that Christendom makes of itself to-day, we are excessively low in all conceptions of truth; if we will insist upon putting ourselves under the law, and have the slightest figment of ritualism, or make any system of men, we are excessively low in all conceptions of God, and of what He is doing. Man is a failure, and God has demonstrated it all, and God comes out and has filled everything; then calling our attention to it, that we might know what is the height and depth and breadth and length.

Now, if one comes to us to state these things, where did he get them? I say that it is necessary we should know where he got them. Paul is not saying now that he is a servant but an apostle of Jesus Christ, definitely sent. I shall listen to him, because he is sent with a special message; it is full-orbed truth; an apostle of Jesus Christ; back of that, "through the will of God."

God in everything that He has done has had to do everything about it. When He had it in His mind to take up Israel, He said, "I have seen the affliction

of my people," and He had to go down to where they were, and then He had to get Moses ready with many a pleading, and then to have Moses go into Egypt and plead with Israel to let God do it; and then He had to go to the enemy that held them, and insist upon it that he should let them go—by all the smittings of the nine judgments, and preparing them for the great final one—the destruction of the first-born and destruction of Pharaoh's hosts in the sea. God had to do it all Himself, and so He had to do it all in the matter of our salvation. Where then is this idea that we do our part and He does His part? Where is boasting? It is excluded by this simple law of grace. There is no deeper, more destructive lie that goes about now among men than the thought of their doing for salvation. Ephesians will nail that lie eternally. The whole of this gospel is by God's own mind, and His own hand, and then He picks out His apostle, and it is by His *will* only. Paul chose no such place; he chose no truth; he had nothing to choose, but he simply is sent, and God's will is behind it all.

Ver. 1. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." The word "Ephesus" does not make much difference. It is left out in many manuscripts. It would seem to be to the Laodiceans, from what we read in Colossians. The epistle to the Ephesians gives us the church, and what it is, and the Head also, although not occupied with the Head. It gives the truth concerning the church. Colossians is occupied definitely with the Head, and with making us walk worthy of the Head. So we have the Head in Colossians and the Body in Ephesians, the two forming the one Man of the future, the One that is to reign over all things—the Man of Psalm viii: "Thou hast put all things under

His feet;" the Man of Heb. ii. where it says, "For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, whereof we speak. But one hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the work of Thy hands; Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet." Then the whole of this wonderful Chap ii. of Hebrews tells us four different reasons why He became a man, and that it was necessary He should become a man to get us up there.

Now we see all these things mapped out. We see it first by the character of the epistle, the one who writes it, and then the fact that it is sent out broadcast. Some have supposed that it is a circular letter. We are quite sure it means all saints, whether it is addressed to a certain church or not. It may have been carried by Epaphroditus and Onesimus from the prison at Rome; Epaphroditus going from the prison, and carrying it with the Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to the Philippians; and then given as they went to these various assemblies at Ephesus and Philippi and Colossae. In that case, we should see why they should be together, and why there is such a wonderful agreement among all three of them; Ephesians and Colossians going together to form the church with its Head, and Philippians coming between to tell all the wondrous glad living with these two epistles to guide. Philippians is not a doctrinal epistle; it is simply a glad walk with Christ in the glory and before Him; reaching out and running up thitherward; emptying out everything of himself in the second chapter, starting out on the run in the third, and in the fourth knowing the peace of God and the God of peace, and the Lord's own

peace all the time. That is consonant with these two epistles ; the three go together. Then that sweet little epistle to Philemon, which is the gushing out of the heart, and the practical thing of how to treat a brother that had been a slave, and the power of the truth.

“The saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.” That is the standing—in Christ Jesus. It is not under Christ Jesus, as we have in Matthew ; the Kingdom, in which He is over and they under, and looking out fit subjects for that kingdom ; but it is saints, separated definitely for that purpose, to be with Him and in Him as to their standing ; as in First John, iv., we are as He is, exactly ; and as it is given in Hebrews ii., “Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself, in like manner, partook of the same that He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified might be all of one.” We were sanctified by Adam into infamy and crime and guilt. We were just like our head, Adam. We are now set apart by another One. For sanctify can just as well mean set apart to bad as to good, for the word simply means “set apart.” We were one nature with Adam, and are one nature here. Now we are of the same material as Christ is, “Who was the image of the invisible God and the first-born of an entire creation.” So we are the creation and He is the Head of it ; and He is the first-born, and we are a kind of first-fruits, too. We spring up from the grave and join the new Man, and are linked with Him eternally.

“The faithful in Christ Jesus.” This would be those that are simply having that as a fact, and faith receiving it ; it would be “full of faith.”

Ver. 2. “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Grace, we understand, is God’s distinctive favor. In Romans, v., “By whom we have access into this grace wherein

we stand." Now, as having access into that special favor from God, we are addressed on that ground. "Grace to you," and from Him, according to His full stature ; the full revelation of God ; "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is nothing higher that can be told of Him. Could God ever have done anything higher and richer, and fuller of meaning ? It is having His Son made of woman that He might bear our sins, and taking Him up from the grave. Could anything be higher that God could do than what He does with Him ? And by that act He confers upon Himself a new title that He shall be known by from that onward, as the God and Father of this One that He has raised up from the dead.

And then Christ's title : it is as here in the flesh, then raised up and made both Lord and Christ, answering every demand of God in placing Him here, and having all power and dominion as Lord over everything there, He speaks as Sovereign and Lord., Doubtless He is also Jehovah of the Old Testament as well, before He gets all this bestowed upon Him. He took the lowest death possible ; and then see His coronation ! We get into broad, infinite extremes when we come to talk about God and Christ. The superlatives here are plentiful. He goes to the lowest depths—deserving as a sinner, because He took our deserts—and now God takes Him up as utterly satisfied with it, and then crowns Him as Lord and Christ, involving the sovereignty of the universe itself and all that He meant as the God of Israel, as well. And He gave Him, as having to do with us, a new title, "the Son of God," as the Seed of David. Israel were saints ; they were separated in an earthly way, but we are saints of the highest, heavenly. "Grace and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Our God and Father,

because we are saints of God, and then from our Lord Jesus Christ as His own, members of His body.

Suppose, before we get through, there shall be some things that will look into our faces and rebuke sharply? Can we fail of being comforted, as well as being impressed, by such a word as this, "Grace and peace from our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"?

The character of this epistle is so rich, it has to be put in the richest way, and begins by an ascription of praise. It discloses the wealth and glory and joy of God in words and phrases whose simplicity is sublime. We do well to mark how the epistle starts. Take the Epistle to the Hebrews. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and by divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." There we have the entire range of all that He has to speak to us. Then we are occupied with the Son all the way through that book of Hebrews. Here we are occupied with our blessing, and hence it begins by ascribing to Him the praise. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." That takes in Christ as man down here, and God not ashamed to be called His God. Then He raises Him up from the dead and declares Him His Son. He was the Son while He was down here, and the only begotten; but for the work that He did He gets the title of the Son of God. God is His Father. Men may say of Jesus what they will—and they have done so—but God treats Him according to all that He has done. And we shall find, too, that it tells out God's heart in regard to the matter of salvation, that He thus gives Jesus the title of the Son of God because He laid down His life for sinners. Then He Himself takes the title of the

God and Father of this One that did it all. And thus God has gained His title of the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which would never have been known had not Christ died; and that death would never have been accomplished had not man been a sinner. So man's sin has brought out Christ and God, and filled the entire universe of bliss with its richest thoughts. And the God and Father has blessed us, according to the stature to which He has risen in this book. Go back to creation, in Gen. i., and see that when God had created everything, He called it all good. He is the Creator of that wondrous heaven and of the earth, and He calls it all good; and He is the Creator of man and beast and everything, and it is all good. But there He has no title of "God and Father." He has no title of "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," because there is no Lord Jesus Christ revealed. Doubtless He is God in the full-orbed character of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit at that very time. Because He says, "Let us make man." He never says, "Let us make grass, sun, earth, etc.," but when it came to man, He says, "Let us make man." But there is no blessing and glory ascribed to Him as blessing man in earthly places. But when He has come out to the final ground, and given the finishing stroke to all that He has created, that which is spoken of as His poem in Chap. ii.; and tells us all that which pertains to it, the depths of His wisdom and the riches of His grace and the working of His mighty power, when all these things in God are discussed in this book, then He takes titles in accordance with it. And in accordance with all that thought He has blessed us. Have we, in faith, reached up to that? How we have to stretch ourselves to do that! How impossible to do it, except by what we find in Chap. iii. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner

man." It is simply the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, by which we know and receive and act in these wonders of the heavens. But then, you see, He wants us to take it all. Such language as He gives here would have been impossible to name among angels ; impossible to have tried to tell it to the highest that he ever had on earth ; to the Noahs, to the Abrahams, to the Davids, to the Daniels—the wisest and most gifted and richest in His thoughts. They simply would have stood amazed at this, just as Solomon would have stood amazed at any one saying to him, when he had called the blessing of God upon that temple, if one had announced these few words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenlies in Christ." Do you not see how such a man would have been totally misunderstood ? Shall you and I go and put ourselves back on that level ? We have lost Christian standing if we do. All the present truth is gone and denied when we put ourselves on that ground. We cannot stand with Solomon. Our feet must be infinitely above his head, because we stand in heavenly places. When it is announced to us that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, we forsake all that is earthly and the earth itself. It is this that gives force and character to the word, "You are not of the world, I have chosen you out of the world." And that is because of the cross that has separated us forever by death from all that we were. We are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. We are risen ! And therefore that He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings is the announcement for us. It is "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

In Prov. viii. 18-31, Wisdom is speaking, and First Cor. i. 30 lets us know who this Wisdom was. "But

of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom from God, even righteousness and sanctification and redemption." And Christ is the one. "Riches and honor was with Him.".... "Yea, than fine gold.".... "My revenue than choice silver." Fine gold is that which passed through the fire to become refined, the fire of judgment. The fineness of gold always has reference to the gold tried with fire, and all its dross taken out of it, and it is just a picture of Christ's death and the cross. This then is better. If we were redeemed to earthly places, it would be like the beginning of the Acts. Israel brought on the earthly ground, which was proposed to them in Acts iii. That would be fine gold; but better than gold gets us clear up. "I lead in the way of righteousness; in the midst of the paths of judgment." The way of righteousness is right through the heart of Romans. The way of judgment is right through the whole matter of the cross. Romans is always the expression of the way of righteousness of God in dealing with us. It brings us out without condemnation, and His whole heart for us, and Himself for us. "That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance: and I will fill their treasures." I am sure he has filled us perfectly in these things. "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up for everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of depth; when He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep; when

He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass his commandment ; when He appointed the foundations of the earth ; then I was with Him, as one brought up with Him ; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." It is the thought of God commanding the light to shine on the fourth day, and the third day the earth to show itself, and the second day the firmament to be between the waters above and below, on the first day commanding simply light, and then all brought out so the whole thing is disclosed. Think of His going on day by day, given in Genesis i., and that He—Wisdom—was there daily. Every day, as He called out these, He was His delight. Think of all that had preceded in the thoughts of God in regard to this ; think of what it says in Psalm xlv. : " In the volume of the book," etc. Think that when it came down to the sacrifices and offerings of Israel, that He could say, " These are simply the symbols of the day, and by and by I am to come, delighting to do His will." Oh, it is delightful to go back into God's thoughts ! It belongs to us, simply because we are in Christ. We get our title to-day in the fact that we are sons of God. It is not yet manifested, but we are awaiting manifestation. Every one will have his perfect place ; its complete end. It has made us to have boldness in the day of judgment, because we are as He is. The heart must get a great deal of comfort in reading this verse : " Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him ; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Everything was to be brought out for Him, to magnify and manifest Him. Then His own special delight was in the habitable part of the earth, as it was thus brought out, and the land brought out ; and was near when on the third day He said, " Let the waters recede and the earth come forth." It was

the day that marked the resurrection—the third day, just as the spiritual earth comes forth from all the darkness and death through the death and resurrection of Christ. And so it says, “Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.” It does not say, “Rejoicing in the sea.” Habitable is the very part that is looked upon in so many places in the Scripture. It is the word used for the physical world. The other word used for world is simply “age.” This was where Christ was to be crucified, and where His feet would touch, and He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth. “My delights were with the sons of men.” In John xi. there are two things: dying for the nation Israel, and then to gather together all the children of God that were scattered abroad. God is going to have there an earthly people, and it is His delight. In the one He rejoices,—in the other He has His specific delight. We have the two things there. It is what pertains to us; that God was proposing in the ages to have us, and Christ was rejoicing in it all, and His heart leaping forward in fellowship to us.

Ver. 4. “According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy” (that means separated unto Him) “and without blame before Him in love.” That has to do with conduct in accordance with the separation. We are separated unto God; then because we are separated unto God we must be like Him, blameless, without blemish. Then we have that which characterizes the whole matter so richly—“In love!” You know the two things that are revealed concerning God; that He is Light—that involves our separation and blamelessness; and “God is love”—that involves the thought that we are separated in love. We have two titles of God all the way through Ephesians. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

We shall have, during the whole of Chap. i. and Chap. ii. too, Him as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will be His counsels. Out of the mind of God these things come. Then in Chap. iii. we shall have come in deeper still into all God's heart, and find Him the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so we find one of the most singular things in Scripture. There are only two phrases in Scripture that seem left unfinished. One is the word of man and the other of the Holy Spirit telling us about God. One is in Ex. xxxii. 32: "If Thou wilt forgive!" He had never heard the word forgive in his life, and therefore it was, "If Thou wilt forgive." Then God came out with a new revelation of Himself, in which forgiveness was a very prominent word; an entirely new revelation, because God had not taken Israel out of Egypt on the ground of forgiving anything at all. He said, "I have seen the affliction of my people.... And I am come down to deliver them." He gave His full name of Jehovah, which contained those seven things that He would do for them (Ex. vi. 6-8), and after He had given the law, they broke the law by bowing down to the golden calf. Then it was all over. Now it is forgiveness or death. And Moses, actually led by God Himself, says, "If Thou wilt forgive," and he could get no further. God responded to that by passing before him and proclaiming His name anew; not simply Jehovah, but Jehovah, merciful and gracious. The other place where the thing is left with a blank is in Chap. iii. of this book. It is, "That we might know what is the breadth and length and depth and height," it does not say of what. It is left indefinite. It is infinite. Now, it is according to this that we are to be trained. We are to go to school to this infinite love. We are to go to school under the two titles of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the depth

of His purposes, and the infinite range and scope of all that He will disclose, and then His fathomless heart! Ourselves to explore more and more; and to be the expansion of what God is, in our position. What an invitation it is to us to leave what man calls joy down here, and be occupied with Him! What testimony we have in regard to this. The testimony began the moment we were saved. We know our place in God and in Christ. How this corresponds with Hebrews i. God is now speaking *in the Son*. Now we are to know what the Son is and what is involved in this knowledge. The possibility of all these blessings is the scope of our life. *In Him*, in contrast with *under Him*.

Ver. 5. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." I use the word "son-place" instead of adoption, because that is precisely what the word means. Adoption means son-placing, but it tells you how you got there. It is very nice to be adopted, but I can every moment as an adopted child look into the face of my father and say, "I am not your own son." But I cannot look into the face of God and say that. I was a son of Adam as born of the human race, but I have been taken out of the race of Adam into His family; slain there—thank God!—crucified; slain as a felon—an object of shame and guilt and ruin before God—put to death. It is not adoption; it is son-placing. I am born in His house and in His arms. A born son! (John i. 12, 13.) Witness:—"As many as received Him, to them He gave the privilege of being sons of God: who are born not of the flesh but of God." Sometimes adopted children are let go after a while, but a born son never gets out of the blood, and out of the life. He may act badly, but he is a son. So you see the word adoption is hardly sweet enough

when we have such precious things here. We are predestinated to the son-place. Predestination and foreordination are the same word, of course. You will find that it is not, foreordained to be saved. It is not naming you by name to be saved. That is a poor idea of predestination. God has saved people without that. He did it in the Old Testament times. The millions that will be brought to God and believe in Him, and be His people actually, and never go out, in the millennial times, will be just as clearly His own as we are; and yet concerning these, and concerning those in the Old Testament times, there is not a word said about being predestinated. These were not predestinated to any condition, yet they are saved just as much as we are. Predestination has not to do with salvation. With what has it to do then? It has to do with the people that belong in this specific time when Christ is raised up in heaven and declared to be the Son. And that continues until the time He comes down. During the whole of the present period God has His Son up there, and He is making sons, and this is just the period of sons. He is speaking to sons now in His Son. He is talking son language and of son conduct, and son reflections of Himself in the heart. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. And we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." Now that is predestination. It is what the predestination of Scripture looks at. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." The Old Testament saints were not led by the Spirit of God. To be Christ's is to have the Holy Spirit in us; every believer has the Holy Spirit in him. Then these are sons. Predestination is to position as saved, not salvation itself. "Whom he foreknew he predestinated to be

conformed to the image of His Son." You cannot find a thing about the believer in the Scripture to which the word predestination attaches, that does not involve the place of the believer ; not the salvation, but the style of it.

Man rejected Christ down here, and sent Him away ; now while God has Him up there, He says, "Sit Thou on my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." *Until* is a little word, but it covers the entire eighteen hundred years in which He is making sons, having predestinated us to the son-place.

Ver. 6. "According to the good pleasure of His will." What a vivid contrast that whole matter is to what is called Christianity, and to what is called Christian preaching and teaching and praying and worship to-day. This is the way God is acting now. We know that there was a time that lasted fifteen hundred dreary years, in which God held back from acting according to His will, excepting on rare occasions. The people were under the law, wrong all the time and failing utterly of His kindness—because the law says, I will do thus and so, if you do thus ; and cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of law. God retreated and waited while man was doing. The sad thing is that we have that mingled with a great deal of teaching of to-day, and we were born in the midst of it. It is as though God would put a limit—"If you do so," etc. Now, this is not true. It is a denial of the truth that God has given. He is acting now independently of man in any way whatever. Everything of Christ has put man out of the way. He has been put to death as a felon, and now God can go right on and act. Never before in the history of man on the earth had God the distinctive opportunity and place to act ; but now, since Christ is raised from the dead, there is a

new creation. We have a figure of this in Gen. i. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void." Not that it was created so, it became so, an utter ruin, doubtless brought on by judgment. Well, what then? He must come into the scene, and so He does, and the first thing is that the Spirit moves upon the face of the waters, and the word of God comes forth. The Spirit and the Word, just as much as the Spirit and the Word to-day are acting. How simple it is, and what a wonderful creation it is in the end, and how He pronounces it all good! Man does not have to provide a thing; it is free—all open to his hand. The earth produces, and he eats from what it produces. Now it is so in this new creation. It is a scene of entire ruin, and when man can consent to let God reach all altitudes and breadths and lengths, and do all things according to His good pleasure,—that is the salvation of God in this day. I suppose the trouble is that men are not made to know that they are utterly lost. Romans starts upon the principle of ungodliness in the nature and unrighteousness in conduct, and says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against it all." There is no use of man saying, "I will try to do better." "There is none good; no, not one." Then in Chap. iii. "Now the righteousness of *God* is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." So we see that God was writing it down that He could act according to His grace, and in righteousness do it; have a righteous way in which he could save, after all. Then here in Ephesians, we start with man utterly dead, and it is Christ dead, too. God comes into the scene in which man is dead and Christ dead. You will find in this chapter that Christ is dead and taken up out of the grave. You will find in Chap. ii. that you were dead, and He has

taken you up too. That is according to the good pleasure of His will. Now He makes man partaker of His highest things, because it is according to His will. There is nothing contingent upon our conduct in it; not even after we are saved. I may falter and limp, and make the poorest kind of a walk, but I am a saved man! I am not talking about other things,—the enjoyment of it, or the question of rewards, but of the simple matter of salvation itself. I am not going to encourage anybody to walk in a limping, halting way, far be it! The higher truth you give to men, the more you bring them out of the limping. Where the truth is applied, it takes a man clearly out of the world, instead of leaving him here to work his way as best he can. He is dead to the world, and the world is dead to him by the crucifixion of Christ. Now, lifted out of it, he learns how to live by being occupied with Him who is the head and glory of that very place.

Here then, is what God is doing according to His own will. Do you not know that the hardest thing you ever found in the world was to let God have a will? I remember a dear brother telling me that he read a portion in Chap. ix. of Romans when he was a young man, in regard to, “What of God, willing to show wrath, and to make His power known,” etc. and he said, “I won’t have anything to do with that!”—as if that could stop God. But God was very gracious to him, and in the course of an hour he very humbly went and picked up the Bible he had thrown off from him, glad that God had a *will*, and that that will took him up as a lost sinner and saved him.

Now it is simply of His good pleasure. Satan has nothing but bad pleasure in his will. Christ came and said, “My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you.” The world must

always have an equivalent. It is the good pleasure of His will to take us up for nothing.

Then the object of it : " To the praise of the glory of His grace ! " It is to exploit His grace, to bring out the full character of it. Did God have an opportunity to show all that He was when He made angels ? When He made Adam ? When He restored the earth and in Noah started afresh ? He was bound, and could not show Himself, and nothing but bringing man to death would give Him an opportunity of showing just how much love there was in Him. Grace is love in the light ; it is love according to righteousness ; grace reigning through righteousness ; love showing itself with righteousness toward the lost guilty one. Then it is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Are we not lifted into a wondrous place then, when we are to be there to be just the effulgence of His grace, to show out all the riches of His grace ? In Romans we have our place to show the righteousness of God. In Ephesians we are placed, if possible, higher, to show out the exceeding richness of His grace through all the ages. That would make us not try to present a good character to men, or to care for reputation, but to let it be understood that we were the vilest of all, the guilty man of Romans iii., the lost man of Ephes. ii., dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to this world ; led of the devil, his dupes all the time. This is the boast we make. God has so presented the matter that we hasten to take the place of guilty sinners and lost men. I am not to turn around upon God and say, I am not a son now—I was picked up as a worthless thing,—lower than anything on earth—the lost sinner is,—and then placed in the highest, just that He might show what He is,—not what I am. His righteousness when you come to talk about guilt, and His grace when you talk

about condition of ruin ; all being to the praise of the glory of His grace !

Hence we are held up as the very brightest jewels through the millennial age and through the eternal age.

One other clause in Ver. 6—the old version says, “Made us accepted.” The new version says, “Which He freely bestowed on us.” It is that grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. The thought is that he has taken us into favor in the Beloved.

We see two reasons for what has come to us ; first, the will of God to show out Himself ; and second, the Beloved, in whom He has placed us. These are two grand pillars to bear this structure up. So we have this second reason, that He has taken us into favor in the Beloved. This He has to give,—that is what we are. In First John we have several things connected with our position. We are told that we are in the place where we are to have His joy and full fellowship with Him. In Chap. ii. that our sinning need not hinder ; if we confess our sins they are put away. In Chap. iii. that we are sons of God ; and in Chap. iv. that we are just like Christ. In Chap. v. that He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. We have the son-life, and He has written it that we might know we have eternal life, and then know all these rich things in the varied chapters. “Taken into favor in the Beloved” then, is the reality. We never need have a question as to how much He loves us ; He loves us as much as He loves His Son. Christ said, “That the world might *know* that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me !” What an immense word that little word of two letters, “as,” is. We are as He is ; we are hated by the world as He was hated. These are the things that are given us by Christ’s own statement apart

from us, as we listen while He is talking to the Father; telling what we are to God, and that He has done it. (John xvii.) To be as in Romans righteous before God, and in Ephesians risen and seated in heavenly places to be quickened together with Christ; not apart, but with; to be seated in heavenly places in Him, and being satisfied with Him: to be in Colossians complete in Him: to be in Thessalonians just waiting for Him, and counting on His coming to take us worthily up to our place. "Accepted in the Beloved," then, is a very sweet thought.

We are getting the germinal principles in these early verses. We go on now.

Ver. 7. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." That comes down to the method in which it is done practically. After all that has been said, one might say, That is all very beautiful, but how am I to get it? And so we pause at the end of Ver. 6 with just such a thought, How did you get it? Now He says in Ver. 7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins," and then He gives the standard of that, "according to the riches of His grace." That is a particularly clean forgiveness, is it not? Two things:—Redemption connected with our being bought, completely, out of the whole thing we were in. If I was bought as a slave, I belong to the man that bought me. Now if he has redeemed me, that is it. Then if I am bought by that man, he puts a new suit of clothes on me to have me fit for him. So God makes His own redemption, and this is the standard: "According to the riches of His grace," so Ver. 7 tells us the simplest thing,—the first word of the gospel,—that we learn in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; we get a life. That is the link for all the blessings in this chapter. It is that we believe

on Christ and get redemption and forgiveness of sins. It is the lowest thing that is in Ephes. in regard to what God has done ; but do you know that it is the highest thing of most Christians of to-day ? I heard a venerable minister say, "My great business is to get my soul converted, and to get safe to heaven." Every word was false. Not that that man meant to lie, but Satan did. Now then, that is God's business. You call on any Christian to-day, and if he is in a sweet frame of soul and has had some experiences, what will you get ? "I am glad to say that I am forgiven." That is only the beginning,—the first little word of the whole thing. The little children in First John know their Father ; they have got as far as that. Every believer has eternal life, and the same life that Christ has ; he has his sins forgiven him ; that is the simplest thing of all ; that is Romans,—though Romans goes further than that. Ephes. proposes to give us infinitely more than those, in that He tells us we have it. All the sweet things we get in First John come back to this :—"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life ;" and you have that for the starting point ; and this truth in Ver. 7 is the starting point for you. It is the door by which you enter into all this infinite matter that Ver. 3 begins with. "He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." So we proceed to the next thing. Notice the order here : He tells us first the large things that He has done, because it begins with the perfection of Him who has done it. Now we are linked with Him there. Look at the measure of that,—"According to the riches of His grace." We need not lie awake nights and wonder if we are forgiven. A person once said, "I pray every day for the forgiveness of sins," and I said, "How do you get

'along? Are they all forgiven?" "Well, I think they are." It takes a good while to find out how rich the riches of His grace is. What He does is always in accordance with Himself, and not according to the mind of men. The next verse begins an entirely different thing. Keep that same grace before you.

Ver. 8. "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." He has abounded unto us, and it could not be otherwise. Prudence is the word used there. Refer to Prov. viii. Speaking of Wisdom, Ver. 12 says, "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions." The witty inventions just means discovering the highest thoughts of God's own mind; the finest characteristics of the mind now found out,—all those things that God has written out for all the future, and all the things of the past, and all that Christ is in the present; and we have the entire scope of wisdom from God; and Christ is that Wisdom, and now He has been shown unto us in all these things. Probably the word *prudence* is best rendered by *intelligence*; that would be the thought that we could best apprehend. Therefore, it would be, "He hath abounded unto us in all intelligence and all wisdom;" all His wisdom and intelligence in regard to His mind. In Rev. iv. we find a company of people on twenty-four thrones around the great central throne. The thing that distinguishes these twenty-four elders is their consummate wisdom and knowledge. They seem to be placed up there to tell all about everything that is going on; perfectly at home amidst all that is going on; they bow before the throne of God and ascribe praise to Him in regard to all creation, and tell the reason why; they bow before Christ, telling the reason of their worship; and when John does not know who

can open those seals, they tell him it is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. They tell who they are who are arrayed in white robes (Chap. vii.), gathered out of every nation with reference to the millennial glory, and selected by God that they shall be there; they tell, in Chap. xi., as they all together bow before Him, all that is to come to pass clear down to the end. Now, there is nobody in the scope of all Scripture that would correspond to them but the people in these vv. 8, 9 and 10. It is a mystery to everybody else but the church. It was one of the things that Isaiah referred to when he said, "From the beginning of the world eye hath not seen," etc. Then Paul comes in and says, "But God *hath revealed them unto us.*" And we have in First John ii. 20: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Nobody can teach us if we get it from Him. Then in First Cor. viii. 1: "We have all knowledge;" and in First Cor. ii. 6: "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." That is perfection. Thus we have it carried out in so many places of the Scripture that we are peculiarly blessed in knowing; and as if to make it all the stronger, in the last epistles First John closes up by repeating, "We know, we know!" Not one of these things could be known by the human mind, or by instruction, or by observation, or by reasoning.

We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places; and in the same grace that did all this, He has abounded unto us in all wisdom and intelligence. Having made us ready to receive, then He makes known—what?

Ver. 9. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself." It is what He had in His own mind, in Christ. We may go back to what we were speaking of before, into the coun-

sels of God before the ages, as set forth in Prov. viii. and in the Psalms and in Hebrews i. We may go back into what is referred to when Christ says, "I came not to do mine own will,....I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." We may go back and see the plan of the ages and the mind of God, which is according to righteousness and holiness and truth, and then say, The door is opened through redemption into all that! There is not a door closed now. We are competent to take up the Epistle to the Hebrews, which opens heaven. Indeed, we are solicited, as partakers of the heavenly calling, to do that very thing. Could He talk that way to Noah or Abraham? They could have nothing lower than this if they were placed in the heavens as we are. Heaven is open all the time. How vivid the contrast to the wretched, low, mean Christianity of the present day! Get out of it as fast as you can.

The latter part of Ver. 9 is that which gives the character, elevation and depth of it. "Which He hath purposed in Himself." It is leading us back to God before there was anything created and the desire and purpose of God to have company; that He would have some to enter into His joy; to be in fellowship with His things and His thoughts. It is one of the most overwhelming and touching thoughts in regard to God, that He sought our company. That He came down to us as lost sinners, in the lowest place possible, to take us up into the highest place possible, to be His companions through eternity, passing angels, and passing various dispensations until He came at last to the lowest and the farthest off! He came to such, appealing for their society, to take in all His delights. Of course He had to make us altogether new in order to do this. This is what "after the counsel of His own will" means,—that which He purposed in Himself. Contrast this with the theo-

logical way of telling things,—that God did just for His own glory, this, that, and the other ; true, but cold. But come to the Scripture, and we find that the heart warms all the time toward the amazing love that came to bring us unto Him, and that He might have His delight in us; and as we have learned that it was the delight that He had in His own Son that He shares with us. So He has made known to us the things hidden from others. That is what the word “mystery” means ; a thing hidden, and now revealed, a secret. We can no longer talk about mysteries except as something now revealed to us. God’s thought is, there is a mystery which in the former ages was never revealed at all. Now He brings it out as clear and wide as the heavens. God is not satisfied to put us into the place ; He must give us the intelligence of that place, and the knowledge of that place, so as to form the walk of that place, and the life of that place. This is His will. One has to think of God, then, as having shut up within His own mind all these rich thoughts in counsel with His Son—Himself wisdom—and then seeking to have somebody to talk to. Then we can go back and see Him making Adam, but directly Adam fell, and there was no fellowship ; then, seeing what Adam’s descendants were down to the Flood,—beginning again with Noah, but Noah failed utterly ; then coming and taking up Abraham after all had sunk into idolatry ; then revealing Himself to him in a very large way, indeed, giving some of the largest thoughts, one may say, because He was the Almighty God and the Everlasting God, and then taking a name connected with Abraham—“I am the God of Abraham !”—thus coupling His name with him. But we never find anything of sons ; we never find anything of heavenly places ; we never find anything of making known to them the mystery

of His will. He was still keeping back those richer things. Then taking up Israel—a people in bondage and a people that knew very little of Him,—He made known to them His acts, and to their leader His ways, but they were ways on earth and connected only with the earth. But He was with them then, and will be with them again when they shall be blessed indeed, and the curse removed. But all this was nothing compared with what He had in His mind to reveal to sons, when He has raised up His Son into the heavens, and made Him the pattern according to His first thought. Now He reveals everything. “The son abides in the house forever” but the servant abides at his master’s will and not to know the master’s purposes. But the son is heir to all the things of the father.

This, then, is the way of it. God is telling us out things that were kept secret. And He has done it all according to His will. He has not called us in, proposing to make us partners, and said, How much will you do if I will tell you this? but He has told it out perfectly without consulting us. He has done this for Himself and according to Himself, putting us where we are and making us competent to receive, and our only contribution is our utter emptiness and ruin. (Gen. i. 2, 3.)

What is this purpose that He has told out? Ver. 10. “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him.” Here are times going on from the time of Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to Israel, and from Israel, all through its varied history under priests and kings and prophets, down to the Christ. Now these are varied times but there comes out a new people, and He points to the fullness of the times, the consum-

mation of all times, and He makes known to us that in that dispensation He is going to head up in this Son whom He has raised up from the dead all things in heaven and earth.

Ver. 11. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." We are his own heritage. Is not this wonderful? And we have also this thought,—the amazing difference between our position and these others that Christ will head up. He will head up all things in heaven and earth, by Him in whom we are already. We belong especially to Him. We share all His fortunes through the glory. We are part and parcel with Him. We get it directly as members of His body; where He moves through the bright universe of bliss we move with Him, because we are His body. His prayer for us (John xvii.) was, "I will that they be with me where I am." We must be there, with Him in heading up and ruling over all things,—“being predestinated for this very purpose, according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” I need not enlarge upon that.

Ver. 12. "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." We are the first, trusters in Christ. We have first to do with Him as coming up from the dead, the first ones that see Christ and the first that are linked with Him. We are first in His heart as the main object that He comes after, leaving all, and so we become the dearest object on the earth to Him. So it is that Christ had us as the one object, and securing us to take in all these things in common with Himself, and all these things in fellowship with the Father. All the deep counsels of God are ours. He has made known to us this, and says that these are distinctively to the

praise of His glory. We, who thus trusted or hoped. *Forehoped* is the word that would express it. So, while we have come in late, after Adam and his times, and Noah, and Abraham, and Israel, and all that, and come down here when all is put to death in the cross, the end of the ages is come, and He starts a new creation, composed of first-born ones. We, then, linked with Him, are just the ones that are held up as the jewel sparkling in the heavens. That is our place—the expression of His own glory. Does not this take us out of all this common idea of Christianity? We shall learn in Chap. iii. that this is Paul's gospel; and you can search through the Scripture until you get to Paul, and you will not find a syllable like it; and I am afraid you might light a thousand electric lamps and search through this city, and everywhere else, and find in all that is preached and written, except as the Lord has struck for Himself a light, very little of it preached. And yet it is the one gospel that God is giving out in this day. It is the one gospel that men are not giving out. Men are paying their thousands and tens of thousands to get anything else but Paul's gospel.

Now we have a thought added in Ver. 13. "In whom ye also, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Leave out the word "trusted." He is marking those that were the first trusters. "After you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Christ promised the Holy Spirit only to those who succeeded His day. The Old Testament saints had no Holy Spirit dwelling in them at all; the millennial saints will not have the Holy Spirit as we have. Here, then, are a people definitely taken up, having a specific standing in

Christ, and a specific hope of being caught up to be with Him, and of reigning with Him. Israel before were servants ; Israel, and the Gentiles that are to come, will be subjects under Christ in contrast with us. We then have all this, and it is to fasten it, and to fasten us in Him, linking us with Him as the members of His body, we are sealed in Him. The millennial saints are all of Israel that are saved with the Gentiles that no man can number. Rev. vii. tells of the twelve tribes of Israel, and then a multitude of Gentiles that no man can number. They will fill the millennial years, and they will all be subjects of the King. We will be reigning with the King. They will not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them ; the Holy Spirit is given to us because we belong where we are not ; we belong in heaven, but we are walking down here. Now to keep us in our place the Holy Spirit is given ; and that is what is meant by the “earnest ;” He is the earnest of our inheritance ; but Israel of old belonged to the Land, and they did not need the Holy Spirit, because God was literally there and dwelling with them. But we, dwelling here but belonging up there, to make that the place of our heart, must have the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is not only an earnest, but we are bound to Christ as members of His body by one Spirit—by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is a matter of testimony from God ; He says, “You are sealed by the Holy Spirit.” Sealing is setting apart ; but it is more than that here ; it is being fastened to Him. You might be taken apart—every member of your body.... You get an example of that in Ezekiel xxxvi. : “A heap of dry bones.” Now one might be just that ; then you might say, There is a body : these are the component parts of a man. But it would not be a body joined to the head. But we might have them all joined to

the head, and just go slumping along like an idiot, not knowing where to put our feet and hands. What is the matter with him ? He has not the spirit of a human being. Put the spirit of a man in him, and every muscle comes into place, and he uses them aright ; these members are baptized by one human spirit into one body ; it had its effect of making the man a unit. So the one Holy Spirit has brought every member into his place, and all to the Head. So that we are sealed in Him. The Spirit sets us apart for the future ; that is the purpose of sealing. We are marked off for Him,—members of His body, and we are to be manifested as such, and to be manifested as one at the coming of Christ, but the Holy Spirit makes us know it now as a fact, because He is the earnest of that inheritance, keeping us true to that, and making it true to us until we get there.

Ver. 14. “ Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” We are to inherit everything with Christ, and to reign with Him ; so we just hold it as a fact. What does that do with a man ? It makes him say, I have nothing to do with things here ; all my politics are in heaven ; I am not going to mingle this wretched earth with heaven ; I am not going to take up Satan’s place with the Lord Jesus’ place ; I cannot be of Christ and the devil ; I cannot be associated there and with the unbeliever here ; I am definitely and practically told not to do it. “ What fellowship hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? Or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever ? ” I am told it positively and in plain terms ; but in spite of it, hundreds and thousands are being told over and over again that they must go into politics and fix it up ; a false statement all the way through. Behind it all is the giant liar, Satan. Now, the reason that

we cannot have to do with these things is the fact that we are His people.

The possession has been purchased ; it will be redeemed when the Lord comes. He sold all that He had for the earth, for us, for the world, and He is going to have it all His own world in time. Now, until that we are sealed—joined to Christ—the Holy Spirit keeping it fresh in our hearts, and the reality will be known at the coming of the Lord ; until that time this is what the sealing is.

That is the first section of this chapter, and of the book. What have we had ? An expression of praise that we are raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ by the will of God, who purposed that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Having preordained us to the position of sons unto Himself by Jesus Christ,—the same character of sonship ; and then in whom He has taken us into favor in the Beloved ; He will let us know our place as in the Beloved, just as He is, and then in Him we have forgiveness of sins and redemption, who has abounded unto us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known all His secrets, telling us all about Christ. He has brought us into His presence and seated us around His feet, just to tell us about the Wonderful One that has been in His thoughts from eternity. His own Son ! What a wonderful thing it is to be a child of God in this age ! It is not to plod and work and worry along to try to get saved at last, and do our best, and somehow to bring something to God by which His love can be purchased and our salvation secured, but to enter into what Christ is now at the right hand of God. The moment we believe, we are there !

Now, if we have well looked into this in the few words we have had,—because, you know this is inexhaustable,—we will turn to the next section, and

begin with Ver. 15: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints....." There are three things that constitute Christian life and character. There are three objects before us. There is faith, having to do with the perfect work of Christ; there is hope—having to do with all that is to come, Christ coming to take us and we reigning with Him; there is love, having to do with the intermediate, and by the favor of God. Faith, love and hope; each of these has range for action. Hence, in First Thess. it says, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father." There were the three things all in action. In Ephes. he calls attention to two of them, but the other is not named. We are right in the midst of that which the hope takes hold of. The Holy Spirit is making it a reality to us, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ taking in all that He has done, and love going out toward all saints. It is brought, of course, as the thing right before us; we are spoken of as being in the midst of it, the Holy Spirit making it a present condition. But is it not very sweet to find "love unto all the saints?" He then proceeds to tell us what the saints are. We understand that the saints are ourselves and all of God's children in this age, and they are such by virtue of their being saved. Every believer is a son, separated unto God. The word "saint" has been lost, and those who have recovered it and talk about it are made fun of. That we should call each other saints is a jest with some; but it is a proper title. In proportion as the world has become worldly, it has lost the title of separate people, for that is what "saint" means,—simply cut off to Him; that is what "holy" means too, separate. "When I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all saints." How sweet that is!

In the next verse we find, that having learned all these things, he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers. What was there to pray for? He did not have to pray that they might be raised and seated in heavenly places, and for love one to another, and that they might be saints, but, on the ground of all that, he was praying for something else, and we will see that this prayer proceeds upon the facts of God, these things that are true of them.

Ver. 17. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Now the God of our Lord Jesus Christ takes us right out into all His counsels and thoughts and the deepest purposes of God. Here we have Him as the One to whom the prayer is made; He having purposed all these things in Christ, the prayer would be that we might get hold of all these purposes. He is also the Father of glory. The glory will be the manifestation of a great deal more than has ever been brought out; the glory will reveal Christ as the Head of the church, and the Head over all things; all things reconciled unto God, and in the end the new heavens and the new earth,—all under Christ and through Him. And then we have God brought out as the Father of glory, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the full revelation of heart as well as mind. Though God is Light, He is also Love, and He must have a full expansion and revelation of His heart and His love. So we have the Father of the glory, and that glory will be the expression of God's love. You see how widely He can shine then, because He is righteous, and has put down everything that is evil, and then God has free rein just to be all that He is in the fullness of His heart. This is why He is

called the Father of glory. It takes us into the past,—the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it takes us into the future—the glory that is to come. And now in accordance with that the prayer is : “That He may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” He has imparted to us all wisdom ; then what we need is the Spirit to take in the revelation and to receive the wisdom. And for this “the eyes of your heart being enlightened.” You see this grasps the same thought we had in regard to God as the Father of glory. The heart must take that in ; and so it is the eyes of the heart, rather than the understanding, being enlightened. What must we have, then, unfolded to us, and what must be the character of the Christ of which we are a part, that requires the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of God and the eyes of our heart to be enlightened ? It cannot be simply information such as gratifies curiosity ; it cannot be simply a history of His doings, or His purposes or results, it must be that which unfolds His nature and declares all the riches of His grace as toward us in Christ Jesus. God gives us nothing for mere intellectual enjoyment ; I am sure all that He gives is beyond intellect ; a human mind could not begin to take in these things ; because they are God’s own heart, Himself. It is a marvelous thing that we are the ones to take up all this. Now it is that we may know these three things : First, what is the hope of His calling ; His calling, we learn in Philippians, is on high, and we learn in First Tim. that it is a holy calling also ; we learn that it is according to His purposes and His mind, to the praise of His glory ; what He purposed in Himself. Now connected with that is the hope. “What is the hope of His calling,” then, involves what we have been saved for. Your children are not born just for the sake of being born,

but they are born for the sake of being human beings, and to take up human things. They are to grow and develop, and then consummate in their lives your hopes. What is the hope of the calling of that little infant? You can understand that; and now understand it in regard to ourselves. What is the hope of His calling? He calls us into the full range of His love. It underlies every epistle Paul wrote; it is the one thing on account of which He stirs them up in *Galatians* because they are sinking down to the Jewish standard by putting themselves under the law; it is that to which He calls them in 1 *Cor.*, when the tendency is to get into worldly matters, and to discuss them, and to use gifts rather as adornments, if not playthings. It is the thing in 2 *Cor.* to get them away from all associations here, political, social, and everything else; everything of this world; and, therefore, to be not unequally yoked with these things. It is this that we have in *Colossians*, placing it right before us; He keeps that before them all the time. "There is the land for which you were brought out of the world; now keep that before you."

Then what is the hope? "We are to be strengthened with all might according to the power of the glory, to all patience, with long-suffering and joyfulness." The present scene, instead of being one in which I am made very happy in circumstances, in which the church spreads itself and becomes the mistress of everything that is going on, is really the time and place of rejection, and the hope, under these circumstances, is to keep up the heart with God's patience and joyfulness. It is that which inspired the Apostle's own heart in 2 *Tim.*, when he had to tell of persecutions everywhere. And now he says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Indeed, there is no proper way

of getting hold of the gospel that Paul gives, without getting the definite hope of that gospel. Of course, it is not hoping to be saved, because we start with that. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ." We are told then, "in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins." The hope has nothing to do with being saved ; it is what you are saved for. I might go on and show that this is the expression of every epistle. 1 John takes it up in this way : "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God, and we are." "Therefore the world knows us not." That settles the whole thing at once ; our calling has at once made an enemy of the world ; the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest that we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

So that the hope is very definite ; it is being with the Lord Jesus in the highest glory, instead of taking up anything down here where Satan reigns, over the earth, with all things under His feet, and bowing to the enemy of Jesus. Cannot we let honors alone until we get there ? Cannot we let our ambition take hold of that, and have none for things here ?

The next thing that is prayed for is that we may know "the riches of His inheritance in the saints." It is not exactly that the saints are His riches, but rather He has the riches with them ; the riches will be brought out by having them ; it involves the fact that He will not do without his saints. Let us take the illustration from Israel ; we can understand how

Moses would plead with Israel when he was in Egypt and when they had gone through the Red Sea, that they should remember what is the hope of God's calling. Certainly they were called in a very unique way. They were the slaves of the Egyptians, but God called them out completely and separated them in the desert, and they were there forty years that He might dwell among them and make them understand what they were called out for. What would be the use of making them cross that desert if they did not know what they were called for? They must go and take the land; God had just allowed the others to be there as squatters. God never counted the wealth of all the kings in all the provinces of that land in any way, and yet there was plenty of wealth there; plenty of war instruments; plenty of land to till and cultivate; but God never counted it anything. No, He must get His saints there. They were *His earthly saints then*. That is the first time that God would write the history of that land, when they were connected with it in anticipation or possession. Does this give an illustration of the wealth of God in His saints? In like manner we are called to the heavens; and you know this links it so closely with that in John xiv.: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." He is the forerunner, in *Hebrews*; gone up into that place; and yet it is not occupied by us, for the enemy is there; "principalities and powers" are there to be expelled, and we are to occupy it; everything awaits us; we are just to go up and take possession with Christ of that which satisfies Him, to the place which He has prepared, and to occupy it according to the full breadth and length of it, according to His thoughts and mind and purposes. And He wants us to understand it now; not to refer all this to when we die or when we are

caught up ; we are to feel its force now. From the day that God called Israel out of Egypt, they were separated unto that land. That ought to have been cheering and charming them,—the thought of the Amorites driven out and their walls razed and their land taken up by themselves ; a new people ; a circumcised people ; a redeemed, an exalted, an anointed people ! It was their business to keep that before them all the time, and step more and more like conquerors all the way through until they got there ; not to wait until they got there, but to be filled with the idea of Jericho falling, and the cities being taken generally. It was their business to do that ; and do you not see that it was their business to walk by faith in reference to it ? Because God did not tell them all about it but allowed them to send spies that they might see that what He told them was true ; and they came back laden with the fruits of the place, to show them what it was ; but then as the very highest incentive that they ought to go there they were told about the walls and the giants, and if they had walked by faith, they would have said, “ We will go through all this. If He be with us all these things shall be conquered ! ”

The riches of that place were to be counted by God when He had His people in it. Now that is just what the riches of His inheritance in His saints means now. Why did we not hear of heaven in the Old Testament ? Because there were not any saints to occupy it. There was no occasion to exploit heaven in the Old Testament at all. God and angels were there, and they came down here to dwell ; but who dwelt there ? If they spoke about God dwelling there, it was at a distance. “ The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.” Now the whole matter is heaven, not earth, at all, at present. Do understand that there is not a particle of the earth to

be occupied now. We have no business to try to make it better ! We have nothing to do with rooting out anything ! What have we got to do with this world ? The whole scene is heaven. Well, but we are down here ; some say, "What about the wilderness ?" let us see. If Israel had been thinking about the wilderness, they never would have reached the land, and some of them did not,—they perished in the wilderness. Keep the thought on heaven, and think of the conquest now in heavenly places. Remember that heaven, as a final thing, is not found, in type, in *Joshua* and *Judges* ; not until Solomon is seated on his throne is there any final type of heaven to us. Remember that between Joshua's entrance and Solomon's throne is just the part that *Ephesians* covers. Here are men that in simplicity are holding, amidst the opprobrium that is heaped on them, the one fact that they are seated in heavenly places, and they are taunted every day in the week with, "What are you doing ?" They are doing, by that, more than all their critics, because that is the one thing to-day. Anybody that proposes to improve the world is out of the circle of God's thoughts. *Ephesians* lets us know that very definitely. That is the second thing in the prayer.

Beloved, let us remember that it is not many years that this truth of *Ephesians* has been recovered ; and let us therefore not be satisfied to be occupied with the things that our fathers had, even as godly men. Remember that we have had truth that was given in the beginning brought back to our ears and our hearts, and therefore we should be ashamed to be as our grandfathers were, and we should be ashamed to blush at taunts of "What are you doing ?" Our business is entirely with the glory, and if you want a key to it, take Hebrews iii. 1 : "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider

Him." That is where we see Him ; He is not here. Then we go into Chap. xii., and it says, "consider Him." And I consider Him as He was down here, the beginner and the ender of faith. But we first are called upon to consider Him up there ; here taking hold in our own hearts, being linked by the Holy Spirit to-day, it is the hope of His calling ; and then the riches of His inheritance in His saints, He and they occupying it all ; every place that the sole of our feet shall tread upon then to be ours. This is the only proper way to live.

The third thing that He asks for that we might know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." Power toward us, remember, in our behalf ; power shown in bringing us into this. The very beginning of this gospel, as Paul gives in Romans,—Christ is declared to be the Son of God with power. The gospel itself is called the gospel according to the power of God in 2 Tim. i. 8.

Do you see, therefore, that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power ? Here is a power beyond all other power. Surely it was power that stretched out the heavens, and filled them with their dust of stars ; surely it is power that keeps everything in its place, and makes everything move ; it was power that formed Adam ; it is power that sustains man ; it was power that brought back the world after the Flood ; it was power that took Israel out of Egypt. It is recalled to our minds in Romans ix : "What of God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction." And then He came and showed mercy to those that He fitted. Now there was power in all that. A fine illustration of power was that opening of the Red Sea, and having them get out on the

other side, and sing that wondrous song of Jehovah; and then it was power by which He brought back the remnant after He had driven them out of the land. But, really, He never shows the exceeding greatness of His power until He comes to the matchless thing He has done for us, and now He calls our attention to it, and asks that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. This power is that by which He raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. The power toward us is that He has raised us up also, and now our apprehension of that power is that we know resurrection standing, and it is as simple as anything you can state. Why do men pray for power, to get a name as servants? God has not called us to be servants. It is only playing with words to talk that way; there is no Scripture for it. I am quite aware that there was a word given: "You shall be endued with power from high," but what were they when it was there? Only Jews, and it came with the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Christ. Then power is shown in resurrection. It is not to have resurrection shown to us; He wants us to know it. The great thing is that we are to know just what He has done. "According to the working of the strength of His might." You see that has to double the word; "the strength of His might!"

Vers. 20, 21. "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." That is where the power is. It is not that you may get power, but that you may know that power that He exercised, to know what your standing is. He hath raised Him from the dead, and set Him far above principalities

and powers,—that is all of Satan's hosts in the heavenlies. "And every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." A reference to it is given in the end of Romans viii. We look back upon the wilderness and say, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." We look forward to all the Satanic hosts that we are to meet, and say, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is the true idea of power. Here He is praying to the Father of glory that we may know what is the working of the power of His might, by which He raised Him up and set Him there, far above all these principalities and powers. So we can say that we are persuaded that nothing can touch us; but you will find that when we come to Chap. vi. we must fight.

Vers. 22, 23. "And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Is not that a distinct place? Head over all, and Head to the Church. It is as if I were Governor of the state, and my head and body go together; my head is to the body, and I am head over the state. What a unique place we have, the church itself His body! The fullness of Him that filleth all in all! It is precisely the thought of the human body. My body, after all, is the fullness of the head, in this, that I could not do anything without it. Imagine a fish's body given to your head! A fish could not carry out what is projected by your head. You must have just the kind of body that was made for you; and this body is the fullness of the head. Now we are the fullness of that Head up

yonder in the glory. He fills every one Himself, who fills all, in all.

All along through this book we must keep these three things before us: what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the working of the mighty power. He says that is working toward us,—and therefore we get the next thought, “and you.” This is opening out to us what the truth is, and what Christian living is, because it tells us what our calling is and what our standing is. May God make it more and more to the heart and the walk !

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1. "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Such were some of you," the Holy Spirit says in First Cor. vi. after giving some ten descriptions of evil character, idolators, murderers, and thieves, etc. "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Here in Ephes. we are not looking at conduct so much as at condition, and we are seeing in this chapter the material out of which this body of Christ—His fullness—is formed. In the last chapter it said that He was raised up and seated in the heavenlies, far above principalities and powers and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come, and made the Head over all things to the church, and then this begins,—“Even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins”; leaving out the words in italics, I should read it in that way. As was said, Ephes. finds us in the place of death. Jesus is dead and raised up by the power of God and set in the glory; and we were dead, too, and then raised up with Him. First he is referring to the Gentile believers, for he says, “you” and “we”; the “you” refers to the Gentiles, and the “we” to the Jewish portion. You Gentiles were dead in trespasses and sins. God’s definition of death in regard to our body is the body without the spirit is dead. His definition of death in relation to Him, is man without God, given in the second part of this chapter: “having no hope and without God in the world.” It is then the same as my dead body without the spirit. In First Tim. v. a woman is

spoken of as being dead while she liveth, because she is acting apart from God's mind. Here it is dead, without God. How? In trespasses and sins. And we see that while dead, they were very active.

Ver. 2. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." That is simply as their fathers walked, as everybody walked, just as they are at it all around us. They are walking apart from God and all His thoughts, as Cain was when out of the presence of God, and he built for himself while out of the presence of God.

This, then, was the condition of this Gentile portion of the body of Christ; walking according to the course of the age. You know what that is; it is going on away from God; but it is more than that; led by Satan, the prince of the power of the air; and to make it clear, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." That refers to the Jews, for they were under the law, and disobeyed it. Now the same spirit led you wholly. He is still the prince of this world, having everything under him. We know that when the hope of the Jew was given, to have Christ as their Prince and King, and all that God purposed He should be and shall be;—they said, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" They really chose Satan in choosing him. It is strange that Barabbas means "son of the father." (The antithesis of all that Christ was and is)—a robber and a murderer. That is precisely the character of Satan, he is a murderer, a liar, and a robber. In Luke x. that man that fell among thieves is the sinner in Satan's hands.

Such, He says, you were. It is simply condition; it is nature, and the nature showing itself. In Romans it says that the wrath of God is revealed

from heaven against all ungodliness. We are shown in that first chapter that the unrighteous condition came from the ungodly nature. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up to act out the evil that was in them. Had they stayed with God, this would have been restrained. They were thus acting according to the course of this world, that, we are told (First John v.) lies in the wicked one and hates God and hates Christ and hates Christ's own. (John xvii.) The mind of the flesh that is spoken of in Romans viii. is enmity toward God ; it is acting out the hatred and enmity. And you were this.

Now he turns to the Jewish believer, "among whom we also had our conversation,"—acting of citizenship, if you will. It is the same word and refers to practical living. "Among whom we also had our living." These people were under the law. The law labeled all this conduct: murder, idolatry, thieving and lying. Therefore it speaks of conduct here as the acting out of the lusts. The law came as a school-master to restrain; never to make them better, but to hold them in. "Among whom we also had our living in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh"; but worse than that, the mind went with it. The very thing that is appealed to in regard to practical acting is the mind, as we have it in Col., "Set your mind on things above." It is always the practical matter of living godly. I am not told to be a new man; I am that, but to let my mind take hold of it. I am not told to be risen with Christ because I am, but I can be told to apprehend it. The whole mind was bought over to all this vile conduct. Now this has its type in Gen. i. 2: "And the earth was without form and void." A mere ruin. God did not make man that way any more than He made the earth that way. (Is. xlv. 18.) He never

made it to be empty and a ruin ; but He made it to be inhabited. So He made man for something else, and then finds him in this condition. And just as in creation, that had got down to this awful scene of ruin, so this is the place for God to come with the Spirit and the word. Here the Jews were shown to be children of wrath even as the Gentiles, but then the Gentiles were under the same spirit as ruled the Jews. Both, all were alike. So we have God in this chapter, coming in a fuller way, not simply acting, but God being *rich* in all His actions. In Chap. i. 7 it says, "We have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace." It is the rich God ; it is God according to all that is in Him. It is on this that He acts ; just what He is in Himself ; all brought out by man's sin, and all manifested by the cross and the resurrection of Christ. It is the opening of heaven through all this, and God perfectly told out. *All that we get in Ephes. is a grand superlative ; no minor things to talk about ; all the fullest and deepest and widest.* "But God, who is rich in mercy." After all, nothing could get beyond Him. Man in his ruin could not.

Ver. 4. "But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us." Mercy would not be spoken of in reference to angels that excel in strength. It is not spoken even of those that are raised and seated in heavenly places. The addresses to the church, as such, never have the word "mercy" in them. "Grace and peace to you ;" but when he comes down to the individual, like Timothy and Titus, he may say, "Grace, mercy, and peace ;" because there is need, in his individual weakness, for mercy. Such is the character of mercy, that it only looks at the wretched condition. The church, of course, cannot be looked at in this position, as needing mercy. But here, "God, who is rich in mercy."

We have, in Rom. iii. 25, Christ set forth as a mercy-seat. God has a righteous ground for taking us up, guilty ones, and placing us before Him as sons. It is on the ground of what Christ has done, meeting the whole matter. But in Ephes. it is not a question of righteousness ; it is simply mercy. It is not to show out His righteousness ; it is to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace. How about God dealing with us righteously when He finds us simply poor miserable lost things, and pronouncing us guilty ? In Ezekiel xvi., looking at the whole of Israel simply as a helpless thing, He says, "It was a time of love." Love shows itself toward wretchedness and ruin ; righteousness shows itself toward guilt. And that is God ; in both cases God is wondrously magnified. He is rich in mercy and He acts for His great love's sake wherewith He loved us. We get great love, a great salvation, a great act of power by which He raised up Christ from the dead, a great Saviour Himself, coming out and saying, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for me ; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure : then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God !" He plunges right into the whole thing, goes down into the lowest depths and takes up the lost. Everything about it is great. The great depth from which we were taken, and the great height to which we are placed. It is greatness all through to the glory, and all through the new heavens and the new earth. "For the great love wherewith He loved us !" You have no small thing. You cannot talk about love in this without putting an adjective before it. In Chap. i. we had the "power of His might ;" not simply power, and not simply might, but the power of His might. You and I have a reason for joyful confi-

dence in God. There was nothing grudging and nothing small in what was done. It is not sufficient to raise up Christ....God gives Him the highest name in the glory.

We have then, "For the great love wherewith He loved us," and (Ver. 5) "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved.)" He has to bring in that little parenthesis. It seems that it is brought in to assure us. We might say, O, that seems too much! Some have said the boldness seemed almost blasphemy. It is to meet that lack of confidence in us that He reminds us that it is grace, God's favor. He is going to show His favor. He has had something that has really brought out all the love in Him. Now the grace must be manifested; and let it come! Our highest obedience is to let God say what He will, and we follow it. There is nothing richer. It is just letting Him do that that He shall find empty vessels more and more ready to take it in. Is not that worship? We simply respond by repeating the lesson we have learned, in His ear. For He is bound to make us worshippers by everything that He does. If He had left one grain for us to do, we would never have been worshippers. It would yet be undone.

We have been reading in Chap. i. that He quickened Christ, and He takes us right along and says, "You are with Him!" Ver. 6. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." Raised us up together in the heavens in Him, not under, but in Him. It is marvelous. It is here to be meditated upon; the heart to take it in and enjoy it. The best treatment of God is to enjoy the things that He tells us and to be happy in them; for He is the happy God now in all that He does.

What, then, has He done? Seated us in the

heavens. It does not speak of being placed there, and then getting out of it ; that we can get out, or that He will put us out. Let us go back and get the fundamental word of Christ, given in John x., "I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish." The word is there that they shall never make themselves to perish ; neither shall any in the broad range of the universe pluck them out of His hand. And further : "My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all ; and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand." Here, then, He says "able to." It is a question of power. We have learned that power belongs to God. In Rom. viii. 38, we have, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Because principalities and powers are in question there ; the rulers of the darkness of this age. We shall have to fight them, as is spoken of in Chap. vi. here. So we have God's power brought into the case, and it is displayed in raising Him up. When we get into Col. we will find that Christ is the one subject. And here it is God's own power and wisdom all the time.

Well, then, seated us in the heavenly places for what purpose ? Ver. 7. "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." And this is to show Himself ! We have just given Him the scope that He wants, when we have made known the fact of our being lost sinners. If I go out to adopt a child, I might find various ones, of course ; but if you find that the child I have taken up was taken from the meanest place—the most unlikely place, probably from an enemy's house, and

from the utmost poverty and filth,—you would say, Well, I don't see anything in that child ; but he is showing himself and how loving and kind he is. It is just this, and we were mean and bad enough to be taken up, that God might show in the ages to come what He is. God had no other means of showing Himself than taking up such lost ones. He waited a good while before it was thoroughly demonstrated in us ;—from Adam clear down to Christ ! Then man was disclosed as bad enough to begin on, for He slew God's Son, and then besides the meanest of all outsiders taken together with these and lifted up together and quickened together with Christ, company for Him ; and raised up and seated together in Christ. Is not that an elevation ? Is not it the riches of His grace ? And they that are legal in their thoughts are wanting to rob God of that one treasure of His heart. Because He has taken us up to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace. In John xvii. Christ prayed that we might be there in the glory and manifested as one. “That the world may know that Thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst me.” Beloved, we shall be like Him there, because we are as He is, here. We are seated in the heavenly places to show all this wealth of His love ; the exceeding riches of His grace through all the ages. There is the millennial age and the everlasting age—the new heavens and new earth—and we are to be linked with Him. Whether we are with Christ or not, there is one thing told us, that we are the habitation of God. We learn in the end of this chapter that we grow into an holy temple ; just now a tabernacle, like the tabernacle in the wilderness, that grew into the temple when Solomon's hand changed it. Thus we are growing into an holy temple for Him to dwell in. We have Christ and the Lamb during the Millen-

nium, and God always. What a marvelous thought this is for us, brethren! That God has taken us up to show Himself! Shall not He do it? Do your hearts refuse to let Him tell out His grace? It is not to tell how much we are. The full, high thought is that He has taken us to be with Him during the millennium, and through the eternal ages, to show His kindness toward us.

You remember that the great lie of Satan was that God was not kind. "He has not let you eat that fruit, because He knows that you would be better off." Christ answers everything that the devil has against God. He answers all the unbelief and the malignity. Now He is answering that first fling against Him, that He is not kind, for we shall be the revelation of His kindness through eternity.

Ver. 8. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." The former mention of this was parenthetical, as we saw. It was as if to reinforce the heart in regard to such a large statement: that we are quickened together with Christ, and raised up together in Him. The faith shrinks from such a thought, as though I say, It cannot be! So He says, "By grace ye are saved." Do not refuse it, because, saving you by grace, He can do anything. But now it comes as a direct statement. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith." Here we are taken into Romans. There we have the righteousness of God witnessed by the law and the prophets, now manifested unto all, and upon all who believe, for there is no difference, being justified freely by His grace, "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." There is the foundation of it all, "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." It is all done freely, because it is grace. Then we have an argument on that specially in Galatians; that Christ is no more

Christ if there is anything placed upon you to do. If there is anything placed upon you in the word, then it is law, and there is no more grace about it; or else law would not be law. And so the argument then is that it is all grace. To have it attended or supplemented by anything of your doings, would simply destroy the whole idea of grace.

“Saved by grace.” “Saved,” here, is absolutely delivered. It is infinitely more than forgiveness of sins. We have not been talking about sin and forgiveness but of our condition as Gentiles under the dominion of Satan, acting out our nature; and the Jew, in spite of the law, becoming a child of wrath, even as these others. It is grace or nothing, is it not? But you see it is looking at us in the condition of ruin in which we are found, and therefore He says, “It is simply grace.” And not only that, but He lets us know that it is altogether a gift; and everything here by which we grasp it is a gift, the open mouth and the open ear and the open eye, all gift. “It is the gift of God.” My eye is as much a gift as the scenery around me. The sun and the glory of the earth that I can behold and the faces of my friends,—they are all gifts; the object of the vision and the power of vision. So are the taking in of the message from God and the heart responding to it. How varied the work of Christ! And then how varied the ruin into which He came! As in Rom. iii., “Where is boasting, then?” There where we are being righteously dealt with, He says, “Where is boasting?” It is excluded. By what law, of works? No, by faith. Faith simply takes what Another has done.

Here it is the same way. Ver. 9. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” How well the Holy Spirit knows us! If we had an atom of anything that we did, we would rest on that. Alas! multi-

tudes are depending on their works. This is what man would do and boast of it. "Not of works" knocks all that to shivers! Man does boast—there is no question about it. "I fast twice in the week! I give tithes of all that I possess!" There was one of God's Jewish people, who had fifteen hundred years of God's teaching back of him, and yet the man says, "I have done this!" Another man comes and stands before God, and beats his empty breast, and says, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" and he is justified rather than the other.

Ver. 10. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We have been told of our being taken up for a specific object. Here we learn that we are His workmanship. A beautiful word is here used. The word "poem" translates it. The word is used twice in Scripture. Once in regard to God's old creation (Rom. i 20) and the other in regard to this, the new and distinct creation. We find that a creation has all these elements within itself to be expanded. It stands unique; God's masterpiece! See how He has done it. He put forth His mighty power to do it; He has brought in the riches of His grace to do it. By-and-by we will find that He has put all His wisdom in it. And He holds this up, the highest thing in the universe! And we are that! He is not speaking to us individually. In Chap. i. He says He is the Head of the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. We are the ones. He has raised us up.

"Walk about Zion and tell the towers thereof, and mark well her bulwarks"—was the word in regard to another piece of God's work down here on the earth; and now by reason of the glory that excelleth, that is nothing. Here He holds up His own specific

work. As I might go into one of the factories of Europe, where for the last year the best brains and thought have been gathered to make articles to be exhibited in the World's Fair, and there will be the masterpieces of ten thousand shops,—and I say, “Do you always make that?” “No, but we can do that. We have spent more time on that, and plans have been proposed in regard to that, that would not enter into everything.” “You mean, then, that this is a sample, a masterpiece?” “Yes.”

That is just what God tells us in this chapter. The church,—the body of Christ, the fullness of Christ Himself,—must be like Christ; perfect in every particular, as the whole—a unit—glorious indeed. And we learn directly that He has not only constructed, but He has continually to instruct, that He may present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Beloved, we are not taking an ideal place. It is as real as the form you wear. It is as real as God's own existence. It is as real as that Man that He has raised up to the glory. “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again,” we have it all. We are linked with that One. And where are any of our doings in this matter? We are *His* workmanship.

Now, the perfection of this masterpiece is that it is not simply for show. Suppose they were to make a show ship, and show steam-engines, and show pianos. The ship would not move, and the engine would not move, and you could not play on the piano, and what are they worth? The very idea of having things about the house is that while they are beautiful, they are also to be of use. Thus use is the thing that it is made for. And so God crowns this with glory, and all that is highest and richest and sweetest. He has shown His own infinite thought through it.

That, then, is what the church is. Created in Christ Jesus. Created, a distinct creation, as absolutely standing by itself as the first creation was, when God made the heavens and the earth. This, then, is for a special object; "unto good works, which He had before ordained." In the ages before, God alone, with the Son before Him, purposed that in Him He would have a company with Him, as the object of His own delight, and He would have something that should show out Himself. We do not know in the ages that are to come what will be. We do not know, but we are at the dawn of the universe, ourselves. We do not know all these things in the infinite space above us, what they are; whether they are just forming or not. We do not know but that we ourselves are but the beginning. It is the first work that His whole heart and mind and strength were put into; and it comes forth from the womb of the morning. He will never make anything like it again. And you and I, picked up from the dunghill, are the ones! It crushes and breaks one down to the very ground to think of such love. When will we respond to it? We could not respond to one syllable of it except by the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, let Him have it all and none of our thinking and acting in it. "Not of works;" the mite that we would contribute we would boast of all our life. So it says, "not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are His workmanship."

Shall we go to religious systems to learn what the works are to be? Shall we get a number of men together to plan out what we are to do? Or shall we wait on Him, and take it all from Him, and have no ear but for Him? "Unto good works!" Yes. When people say, "What are you doing?" I say that we are doing most by turning our backs upon all that man is undertaking, and acting according to

Second Tim. ii. 21, 22. In contrast with what this tells us, everything that is going on by man has been blasted by the breath of Satan, call it by whatever high-sounding title they like.

Here at the end, just before the Lord comes, He revives this truth for us. Let us take it up then. The good works were that those He had in His mind before the foundation of the world are to be carried out up in the glory. Take the character of a bride, which is given in Chap. v. Take the body, that is spoken of here. Tell me if the prospective bride of a man is called out to work all the time until she is joined to him? He has chosen her for himself; and until she comes to him, he has nothing for her to do. The thing she is chosen for is to be with him. Remember that the full effulgence of our light, the real glory of the church, are to come out directly; seen with the Lord! But we are to walk in them. Now we walk with our head and heart and mind in heaven. In Col. iii. it is, "Set your mind on things above." In Heb., which just opens heaven, and tells us about Him seated at the right hand of the Father, it is, "Consider Him!" So the mind is to be on Him. And everything in all these books is to get the heart more and more engaged with Him. Now, walk thus; and with the Holy Spirit telling us, and Christ up there as the object, how safe our walk must be! even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. It is nothing but death and darkness here. Though we walk through the night, we are children of the light. It is the glory before us! See your calling then! We are created for something after all. It is not individualized, but as gathered together in one and made one.

Now we have closed the first part of this chapter. This has had to do with our individual calling as lost sinners. That is the moral condition,

Now the second part, beginning with Ver. 11—another section altogether—is looking at our dispensational condition, and it has not to do with moral or spiritual matters so much. It is what you were, anyhow. In speaking to Gentiles alone, it would necessarily be dispensational.

Vers. 11, 12. “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” At that time you were apart from Christ, separated from Christ. When you know that all things in heaven and earth were prepared to be in His hands and associated with Him; that everything is named because of Him, and made by Him and for Him,—what was it to be apart from Christ! We were there, dispensationally. I go through the Old Testament, and I find a people called out, and Christ illuminates every page in regard to that people. Everything telling of Him, as though He were with Him all the time. I find that as they got further away from God, there was more and more of Christ told out before them. Prophets were raised up on purpose to tell about Him. Christ all the time before them! The Gentiles were outside, and no Christ was spoken to them. They were apart from Christ. Why? Because they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from all those covenants. That tells the story. Then you can see the meaning of this, “Having no hope!” When did God ever go out to the Gentiles to offer them anything? When did He present promises before them? When did He set up anything that should tell His own heart toward them? He

gathered a people and separated them in the wilderness, and put them in the land, that they might be a blessing after a while, and until He could get them ready, what hope was there for the Gentiles? And they came down to the day of Christ's death and resurrection, and the Gentiles had never had a particle of blessing from the Jew, because they could do nothing but curse. What was our hope? None. If there could have been any mind illuminated in regard to those things, they would have said, "Well, there is no chance for us. These that are His own people—look what their condition is! The very name of their God they do not know! What hope is there for us?" And then, what? Without God! All this time God had not made Himself known among the Gentiles. It begins away back in the descendants of Noah. "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood and they served other gods." Now, calling Abraham out was not making this any better. The nations were still without God! And "in the world!"—Satan the head of it and the world,—as it is said in the beginning,—under the prince of the power of the air. Can you think of anything more wretched? Nothing, save to have it perpetuated throughout eternity. No wonder He said, "You walked according to the course of this world. That is all you had, and that is all you were!" And thus, in order to enhance our delight in what God has done, He tells us what we were. There are many things said about the poor sinner, but they never reach down to the depth of this verse. It does not mean me, individually, but it means the whole race of us. All the Gentiles, as such, have nothing to look for there. Israel had it, and they would not let anybody else have it. So we were then absolutely outside of the range of God's action. He turns His back, so to speak, and says to

Israel, "You only have I known of the inhabitants of the earth." If they were not His, and we shut out from God, and having no God—what is it? You cannot name that. "Lost" hardly tells it. Then see how beautifully that word comes in in Gal., "Now that you are known of God!" He has now gone out and gotten us; He knows us!

Ver. 13. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." God gives special emphasis to the present period, the present truth, and the present gospel,—the now. That is so often brought forth in Paul's epistles. Rom. iii. 21: "Now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is manifested." Rom. viii. 1: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation." The "now" is this time, when Christ is up in heaven, waiting till His enemies be made His footstool, and is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. God is gathering out a people and linking them with Christ as His own body. It is a very special time. In speaking of either the presence or the absence of this truth, we speak of it as church truth. We speak of a man "not seeing the church," or the truth of the present dispensation. A man that does not see what God is doing now, cannot read the Scriptures intelligently. He is apt to mix the Old and New Testament people, and say that the church began with Adam. He does not see what God so clearly brings out in this chapter, when He says, "Ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh;" nor what is given in 1 Cor. x. 32—the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God. Not to see the "now," therefore, is to fail to apprehend all truth. It is surely a very different thing for Christ to be up in heaven, and gathering a people to Him, to share with Him all that He has in heaven, from being a King on the earth, reigning over a people and hav-

ing subjects—no matter how loyal and obedient they may be. This is the distinctive thing, and how richly it comes in here. “You were far off and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” the people with whom God was dwelling, and for whom He was mapping out all the earth. You were without Christ, because Christ was promised to them. God made no promise or covenant with you. You were without God in the world.

What a wondrous breaking in like light at noon-day this is! But now, not under Christ Jesus but “in Christ Jesus.” We get no such thought as that for Old Testament saints. It is only for us in this period. In Christ Jesus! That very verse marks what is distinctive and peculiar in Romans in regard to our standing. In Chap. iv. it looks at forgiveness of sins; when we get further along in Chaps. v., vi., vii., and viii., it is in Christ Jesus. It is having died with Christ; being in Him, as passing through the grave into resurrection. It is being in Him before God, and having no other name or nature or standing.

You must see that the Gentile could have no standing whatever except by a new way. The Old Testament would allow him nothing of inheritance. It might allow him blessing after Israel is restored to their place, and they are placed there to bless all the nations. For a Gentile to get into all that He speaks of in the beginning of this book,—seated in heavenly places and blessed with all spiritual blessings, which is the theme and text of the whole book—he must be, not *under* Christ as in the millennium, but *in* Christ Jesus, and lifted above and outside of everything here. There will be millions of Gentiles under Christ but not in Christ. Thus in Christ Jesus we are brought nigh. “Ye, who were sometime far off,”—there is no telling how much

that means. The verse preceding told us that we were without hope, strangers from the covenants of promise, aliens from Israel, wherein all the promises were contained; and without God:....and now, that we were far off. The distance that the Gentile was, as such, from God is simply immeasurable, because they were separated and totally apart from God. But we are brought nigh by the blood of Christ; not by our prayers or our promises of service. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." So it is nothing of these. Not by pledge of anything that we would do, but by the blood of Christ. How the Holy Spirit fulfills His work in taking of the things of Christ! The blood of Christ brings us nigh. Now, in Rom. v. we are justified by the blood. In Col. i. we have forgiveness of sins through the blood. In Heb. x. we enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ.

All this is dispensational. There is nothing that depends on individual faithfulness in all this; Israel were God's people and belonged in that land, without reference to individual conduct or apprehension of it. They were there. The mistake of much that is called Christian living is, that they dwell on experience and make relationship to God depend upon it. We are dispensationally in heavenly places. We are dispensationally brought into the holiest, because we are in Christ Jesus. And we are dear to God and loved as Christ is. These things ought to be thought of more, and told out more, to rid people of the thought of their own experience making anything. The word of God forms character; the grace that is shown to us so ineffably forms experience; makes all the living, too; not that the living makes the position.

Ver. 14. "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of

partition between us." Now He is the whole of our peace with God and peace with one another. That is, the Gentile and the Jew, for He says, "He hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Here is the dispensational thought carried out still; making both these parties one. Take the kingdom character, when Christ reigns on the earth. The Jew will be blessed richly, and the Gentile will be blessed, but they will not be one. He will give one language to Israel, but it does not say it will be so with the nations. They will have one King, but He does not speak of unity. It will be one kingdom but it is not a unit. Here He has made both one. Now you can make a union, but it counts for nothing with God. My body is not a union. It is a unit, one spirit guiding every motion. So He has made both Jew and Gentile one. And this is how it is done. He has lifted us both up out of our former place; the believing Jew out of his place and the believing Gentile out of his, and brought them together into one. Both were in condemnation, lost and guilty. And now they are in Christ Jesus. We find ourselves (Gentiles) having as much title to Christ as the Jew, that had all his literature filled with Christ in promise, and all his ceremonial setting forth Christ. We are as much in Christ as He is, and yet we have come in at the eleventh hour. That is precisely what that beautiful parable teaches us. They that wrought all day got no more than those that wrought one hour. It is grace that is thus set forth. God had promised them Christ, and He puts them into Christ, and Christ died according to promise. He made no promise to us, but we get as rich a blessing as they.

Vers. 15, 16, 17, 18. "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in Himself of

twain one new man, so making peace ; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby : And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." Now we are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Surely, the Jew formerly never had that. He never had access unto the Father. Access is in Christ Jesus and through the Spirit, the Spirit setting forth before us all that Christ is, and all that we are in Christ, and dwelling in us to make actual to us all that Christ has done. That is the Spirit's place in regard to apprehending ; to make everything true and real that Christ has done ; to reproduce Christ in us. Our abiding-place, therefore, is in the holiest.

Ver. 19. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." It still refers to the Gentiles. We can take this little portion, and put it against all the prophecies for the Jew, and say, "It is richer still and better than all they had !" We do not have to go back into those prophecies and say they all belong to us. It is a mistake to say that. They are all earthly. God has stocked His word with promises for them, and yet He has told us more in this one little section, and in that one word "in" than all the prophecies contained. It is higher and richer. It is the great thing, then, and it came out after prophets had done their work and died. It came out after Christ had come to fulfill the promises to the fathers as the minister to the circumcision. It came out after man had lifted up unholy hands and smitten God's Son. It came out of the gushing heart of God. The prophets were incapable

of holding it, and had no pen that could tell out all this. God has brought it out, like the sun at mid-day, without any preparation. It is a new revelation, a thing hidden, and now revealed as brightly as anything can be revealed. It is ours! We are no longer strangers and foreigners. Never to be called heathen again! Nothing of that. We are as near as they are, and both as near as Christ is to God. Nothing can be richer and sweeter than that.

Besides this, we learn that He has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances. Not simply dispensationally that we are here, but there is nothing that can stand between us and God, by circumcision, or priestly or religious code, or sacrifices or ceremonials. They are all gone. We have nothing to do with them. There is nothing intermediate to get us to God. And he came with the fullness of the revelation, so that we could at once—the moment we believe, without any intermediate steps—be placed there. The handwriting of offences between us and the Jews is all taken away. We get the same thing in Col. The blood of Christ has done everything! It brings us in, and it blots out all that is written against us—that anybody might refer to—when it blotted our sins out and blotted us out, too, thank God! For that is what the death of Christ did. It blotted us out and made a new creation in Christ Jesus. Now we must be where God places us. It is as wrong for you and me to leave our standing, and act as though we were Jews, as it was for angels to leave their holy habitation. They are bound in chains, reserved unto the judgment of the great day. We have no right to leave the place God has placed us in. He has fixed us as He has fixed the stars, in our heavenly position. Perfect openness of approach! Access by one Spirit unto the

Father ! And we dare not leave all the boldness and confidence of such a standing and blessing.

Now to correspond with the foreigners it says we are citizens—fellow-citizens. But where am I a citizen ? In heaven. I have not become a Jew. Where can it be but where Phil. iii. 20, tells us, in heaven. To correspond with the word strangers, we are members of the same household. That is nearer and dearer. O what precious names we get ! We are called “Beloved of God !” We are called “Sons of God !” We are called dear children and saints of the heavenlies. We are worshippers directly, close up to the face of God. All these things apply to us. It is not simply that none of them applied to us when we were Gentiles, but none of them applied to the Jew. We are both lifted up into another household, and Christ Himself is the Head. It is hard to say these things in any other way than in the simplest words that can be said, but what massive meanings there are ! It is sad that few apprehend what the many have been called to. Every believer on the earth to-day is just where this chapter says we are. But how becoming it is for us to take hold of these things because they are departed from so much. Many have practically fallen from their high estate. They have come down to make the world better,—as if we could ever do a particle of good when we are out of our place. No father would allow his son to do anything in the position of disobedience. If you had placed your son in the house, and should go away, and come back to find him in the wood-pile at work, it would count for nothing because you had told him to stay in the house. There is nothing in it ; not being in their place makes it of no value to God. They say they are serving the Master. We have not the word Master in the scripture ; it is teacher. We have no task-

master holding a rod over us. We are brought into the place of nearness to God, and the work to which we are appointed is another work altogether from what men are choosing. "Before the foundation of the world chosen unto good works which He Himself has appointed." The practical part of this book will tell us. If I were talking with men that were unfamiliar with these things, and were reading along to a company of believers that were just saved, and were telling them about this position, I would say, "Wait until you get to the end of this book." But the uneasy mind hinders all the time. Men will read Ephes. and go and act the Jew. God never gives any word or credit for any doing that is outside of our place.

I have left out some passages. "And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh." That is, the peace was preached to us. It had to be proclaimed. In the end of Luke you will find the gospel for the present period. It is that repentance and the remission of sins should be preached among all nations. It is a distinctive commission for this time. Of course, it goes further, for in preaching Christ, we preach not only remission of sins, but a new man. And remember that we have Christ here as the peace, then making peace, and then going and preaching peace, and it extends to all those that are far off, and these that are nigh. Then comes the word about our access.

And being told that we are fellow-citizens with the saints, we are also told this (Vers. 20-22): "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; In whom the building, fitly framed to-

gether, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; In whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Now we are builded together. Here is another thought than simply one body. In being redeemed we are joined in one body by the Holy Spirit. This is what forms the one body, as in First Cor. xii.: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." That is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When a man is saved, he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into that body. He need not pray for this baptism ; it is done.

- Here, however, is the thought of a house—a building—and so we are builded. This looks at the external matter. The building is to be inhabited by somebody, but we are not the inhabitants. In First Cor. iii., it speaks about our being stones. "But if any man build on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." Now, it is the church which is God's building. Upon what is this built? Upon the foundation, Christ Jesus, the corner-stone. We learn it by the apostles and prophets. Now they giving out this, as Paul says in First Cor. iii.: "As a wise master-builder I laid a foundation." He was a wise master-builder, and had the thing in charge. The church is not built on anything but that. The house may have those that are not living members of the body. The workmen can bring into this wood, hay and stubble, but God never does.

We are builded together, then. For what purpose? For a habitation of God by the Spirit. Then it was purposed that the Holy Spirit should inhabit this house. Then it says that, in whom, fitly framed together, we are growing. It is to grow. It grows. It is rather the future thought. "Grows into a holy temple." At present it is after the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is a wilderness journey, and we hold the ark of God, and the various

vessels that speak of Christ. We just carry Christ through the wilderness. By-and-by there will be a temple displacing the tabernacle, and that will be in the glory. We are the body, of course. We shall be the bride then. Looked at externally, we are the house—the tabernacle. It will be the temple then. “Unto an holy temple.” God still living in it.

What varied glories we have had as we have gone along through this Chap. ii., but is not this the crowning one, to be the perpetual residence of God? We are told that we were picked up but yesterday out of the farthest place, and are now brought nigh, and made to be the very dwelling-place of God Himself. How wondrous it is! Through the millennium and through the ages to come!

We have now outlined these chapters. Here and there a little word about it. How feeble it all is! The chapter itself is richer than all that can be told about it. May God make it rich to our hearts!

CHAPTER III.

WE find from this chapter that there are certain secrets in the Father's bosom that He never let out in preceding ages.

We had closed up in the former portion of this epistle—the first two chapters--what was to be said in regard to what the church is, its calling, its purpose, its pursuit; what it is for all the ages, and what it is now; looked at in itself, as related to Christ, forming the body of which He is the Head; and then looked at as a house of God, growing into a holy temple, to be a dwelling-place for God through all the ages, the millennial age and the eternal age. A marvelous distinction, a wonderful elevation, a magnificent reality and prospect; simply unnamable by any of our thoughts.

It would seem natural to begin the practical exhortations, after having given the full statement of the truth, but there is something else to tell. These things are not only true, but they are true according to the plan that was hidden in the bosom of God, Himself, and in His mind. Such rich things could not be told until He had a fit audience. Angels were not a fit audience because they were servants. Israel were not a fit audience because they were simply subjects to a king. Gentiles, of course, could not be, because they had nothing of the mind of God, and when Christ came they knew Him not. Who could listen? Who could receive, and to whom could be told this infinite secret? To none but the saints in Christ, raised and seated in heavenly places, just as He is; partakers of the heavenly calling and outside of everything here.

This secret borrows no thought from anything that has ever been told out by Himself in regard to the earth, and in regard to the people of the earth. And, of course, it borrows no thought from anything that man has, but tells from His own heart that which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Psalm xlix. tells of such things. Moses tells out that there are such things. "The secret things belong to God, and things that are revealed to you and to your children." We are told that He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. But there He stopped. That wonderful doxology in Romans xi. reaches the full scope of all this wisdom and these acts, but they never reach into this distinct secret. That is kept hidden.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God prepared for them that love Him." When that is quoted in First Cor. ii., our apostle, Paul, says, "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit." We have certainly, in looking over these chapters, learned something very animating, something great, of God's own mind and heart and purpose from before the foundation of the world. We have been called into a place that is wonderful indeed, but now we are to have this added to it. He tells us beside the revelation, "Now understand, this revelation is definitely for you and for nobody else." It was never told to other ages. Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel—none of the men of the Old Testament times—learned it. The angels that were around His throne had no hint of it. John the Baptist and the Twelve in New Testament times never had the disclosure of such things. We go back and see what Christ said to the Twelve: "You have been with me in all my trial. You shall be with me in the glory, and sit on twelve thrones." He did not open a particle to them beyond that. He

says to them in John xv.: "You shall testify of me, because you have been with me from the beginning." There is a supplementary word to that in Acts i. Peter asks which of those that had been with Him through His ministry here should be chosen to take the place of Judas. The Lord Himself appointed Matthias, because they cast the lot before Him. So he who was not kept by Christ in His own hand, was superseded by another one, whom He Himself chose. Then the Twelve were complete. They had no such revelation as Paul gave, which is the thing that we look at in this chapter. He began where they left off. It is not to tell us what the truth is, but to emphasize it. It is peculiar to us and to our time. It is a gospel that was hidden. "But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory : which none of the rulers of this world knew ; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We are told that it is beyond thought, the deep things of God. Understand it, the Holy Spirit must dwell in us. "But we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." Your intellect could not grasp it, and it cannot be gathered from the Old Testament. It was not there to be gathered from it. It could not be proved out of the prophecies. There was not anything that involved it, because it was not there.

You see, then, it is a parenthetical chapter in that respect. Chap. iv. begins in the same way that this does, so we could leave this out. But, beloved, the truth that is given is not simply for information ; it is not only to instruct the mind, but it is to fill the heart. It is to get us associated with the Person of Christ. It is to make us delight in Him, make us at home in Him, to glory in Him, and just to have Him

everything to us. The peculiarity of the truth that we have is just that, to enrich the mind and heart and conscience, and to engage the faith; the heart taken up with Him! This chapter is peculiarly so. It is the very heart of the epistle.

Ver. 1. "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;" as though he were going on beseeching them on the ground of what is done. You know all exhortations in Scripture are founded upon what is done and settled. And so here. It is sufficient in itself to found exhortations upon. And therefore he says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord;" adding "for you Gentiles." Here is a special thing, as though somehow he had been brought into the place in connection with the Gentiles, that have never had anything before. The Jew for fifteen hundred years had something. God had sent priests and kings and prophets, pleading with them in every form, and doing everything for them, and set His worship among them, and giving them all blessings. If they had been faithful and fruitful, what a wonderful world it would have been!

But now he says, "I, the prisoner of the Lord." When did he become the prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles? When he began to make his plea in Jerusalem, and told how the Lord had met him in the way, and how the light had shone about him, brighter than the noonday, and that the voice came from Him *that was above*, and said, "I will send you to the Gentiles." At that word "Gentiles" the whole company was in an uproar. They said, "Away with such a man!" "He is not fit to live!" There is something peculiar about this. Israel were to be blessed on purpose to give to the Gentiles; and it will be yet. But here the moment came which was their chance. They ought to have sprung to the front with that very thought. It would have been

repentance just to have taken up that, because the Gentiles would be blessed by Israel. But that was just the moment when it turned the other way.

Hence, you see, he was a prisoner for the sake of the Gentiles. You and I ought to feel that. What we get comes out of the prison-house. For that cause he was sent there.

Ver. 2. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward." It took in the Jew too. But the Gentile might step forward and say, "It is especially for me, because the Jews have had their chance." O, brethren, you know the reason! You know Chap. ii. told us the whole reason when it said, "You were dead in trespasses and sins." It was the time alone when God could come out and do this great thing, when man had sunk so low. His part was that he had sunk down to the lowest possible place, and God must go down and bring him out of this. This was the room and scope for God, the occasion for all that He did.

Vers. 3, 4. "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." If Peter could say in Acts ii., "We were witnesses of these things, and heard from His own lips;" we can see how Paul could say, "I have seen the Lord, too, and this is the thing that I have heard. It is made known by revelation." Do you not see why in Chap. i. he prayed that we might have the spirit of revelation, to take it all in? Of course you learn in Chap. i. how your preparation was, that when you heard the word of your salvation you received the Holy Spirit, making the heart hold it now as a reality, to be entered upon directly.

Then a little parenthesis here. Ver. 5: "Which

in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." That tells us the whole thing. It would be folly for us to hunt the church in the Old Testament. Moses nowhere could tell of it, because he learned about the earth. Prophets came in to take up what Moses had told, and after Israel had failed utterly, to say, "It shall still come ;" but never up in heaven. It is a mistake to quote the prophecies with reference to the prosperity of the church, for they have not a particle of church in them. How do we know? Because it says it was not made known in other ages. It is a unique thing, and standing out alone. The thing that is formed is just held up above everything ; God's own poem. We are His workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which were appointed before there was ever a man on the earth ; before there was an earth to have a man on it ; before the foundation of the ages. So God had this in His thought, and you see when it comes out—after the cross. The cross is the end of man and of all dispensations. All attempts to correct man failed, and this is the end of the whole thing. Hence, from the cross, man is under condemnation ; not on probation at all. God is doing nothing to try if man will be good. Then is the time, when man is under the curse, for God to come in with His Christ, and in us to show the exceeding riches of His grace.

If Israel is the light of the world, we are going to be the light of all the ages and all the highest places—the very heavens ; the testimony of God's mind, richer than the scope of the prophecies and Moses added together.

Now it was not made known to other ages and generations. Moses could say, "It is not in me ;" Isaiah could say, "It is not in me ;" Daniel closed

up his book and went and searched. "The prophets searched diligently." Daniel was told to shut it up ; but now everything is open ; the open heavens and the open heart of God, and everything revealed. The result is according to what we had in Chap. i. 8, 9 : "He has made known to us the mystery." That is what Paul means by saying what he said before in few words.

Now everything that we have thus far had in this epistle needs this ; needs it as that which shall hold them all together ; as that which shall really bring them up into prominence of meaning ; that which shall commend them to our attention.

Ver. 6. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." This verse, then, tells us what it is. Let us look at these things carefully. Co-heirs,—it is a little more than fellow-heirs. It is equal. You cannot find that in the Old Testament. All that is said about the Gentiles being blessed is with reference to Israel getting their place. The Syrophenician woman accepted the place of a dog, and she was right. The Gentiles are not equal heirs with Israel in any of the promises of the prophecies. We had it in the second chapter. "You were strangers from the covenants of promise." He did not say to Gentiles, "If you do so and so." He did not call back anything that He had promised in Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. His word in Rom. xi. is that Israel is beloved for the fathers' sakes. And coming down to David, we learn nothing about our being beloved for the fathers' sake. The Gentiles have no standing in the case. They shall come in as tributary to Israel, when they shall be established in their land, to be the centre of everything, and giving out the word of God. The Gentiles will receive it from them. It is a secondary place, and none can find

anything better in any of the prophecies, though you search diligently.

“Co-heirs” is the first thing. Second, “Co-members of His body.” Suppose I say that Israel and the Gentiles are to be heirs of the blessing. It would not be heirs, either. Heirship involves previous relationship. Israel were related, and these should be co-recipients of blessing, but here it tells us something infinitely beyond that—“members of the same body.” We saw that in the preceding chapter; the middle wall of partition being broken down; all made one in Christ Jesus.

Then, it is heavenly, of course, because they are not both one on the earth, and never will be. It is members of the same body; having equal place and equal rights and equal position. Tell me what you find in the Old Testament that gives the Jew any blessing now? Nobody can find any blessing for the Jew to-day, as such. They have not a word of blessing in their synagogues to-day. The synagogue is of no account, anyway. The Jew is only blessed when he is in his land. The synagogue now is a mere meeting by their own will. The Jew has no standing to-day. He is kept, but he has no standing. If the purpose of God was limited to Israel and the Jew, he has ceased altogether for the present. There have been eighteen hundred years in which the Jew, as such, has not been touched. There are hundreds of blessings promised in the prophets, but they are unfulfilled. The pledge is there, because Christ died and rose. The sufferings of Christ are to be followed by the glories. The sufferings being literal, the glories must be literal.

You have no thought, in the Old Testament, of the Jew being of the same body, but here we get it. We are told what that body is in the end of Chap. i. He has raised Christ and seated Him above principal-

ties and powers, and made Him to be Head over all things. Israel will come into their land and Christ will be over them, and over the other Gentiles, but He is Head to the church. The church through all has its definite place.

The third thing is, "partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." *In Christ, not under Christ.* What is our place? "Partakers of His promise in Christ." You see the elevation of tone and the character and the exceeding sweetness of it all. Surely this fastens upon us what we have had in the former chapters, told in a few words there, and enlarged on here. The church of the living God belongs in the heavens. It is composed of Jew and Gentile, made new, that have been dead and risen, and that Christ is the Head, and they are to be with Him in the glory, and associated with Him in everything, and never under Him as subjects. They come with Him and reign over subjects, but they are in Him. This verse contains all this, and it was never told before, but given to Paul by revelation.

Ver. 7. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power." We might go back and get the history of that in Acts ix. Saul, exceedingly mad against those that were believing in Christ, had taken out a commission from the high priest to go and do what he could to stop the whole matter of preaching Jesus risen. And just before he entered into Damascus he saw that light up in heaven and Christ up there, but he did not know Him, and he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" and was answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest!" Would you have understood that? Would he? No. It was a most remarkable phrase. How could he persecute Him up in heaven? The Holy Spirit is given to him. You know Ananias visits him, and

now what? The Holy Spirit is the only One by whom we understand anything. To Saul is given that one statement, "You are persecuting me!" The Holy Spirit makes this clear to him that he is hurting Christ by hurting any of His that are down here. What is it but the germ of the one body? So Christ says, "You hurt me." It is membership of His body. If you were to tread on my toe or pinch my finger, I should say, "You hurt *me*!"

Moreover, He was up there, and Paul got the fact of His being up there. That is the place. Then he learned what He at once said in Ver. 20 of that chapter, that Jesus is the Son of God, and you know from Matt. xvi. this is the rock on which the church is to be built. It is church truth, then, with Paul. It is heavenly places and not earthly, and the Son of God up there is everything; and we are His members.

Then we have the third thing—"partakers of His promise in Christ." All the Old Testament promises were *under* Christ; this goes beyond, for it is *in* Christ. Do you see what that power was? It was an immense thing for Paul to be stricken down in his religiousness; to have been smitten to the ground, and to become as a dead man, and then to rise a new man, with other thoughts. That was the working of the mighty power. I know not any other occasions wherein the Lord may have told him, but certainly he got that here. It was wonderful grace, was it not? Instead of actually killing him, He had him rise, a new man. It was *all* grace, all light, all peace, up there, and this poor heart, full of hate, is met and conquered forever. He may well say, "By the effectual working of His power!" "By the grace of God I am what I am." And what a wonderful thing he received by it, a revelation with these three statements, co-heirship, co-membership

of Christ, and co-partakers of promises in Christ, of Jews and Gentiles.

Ver. 8. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Of course Paul felt the fact that he had been called, as he said, "as one born out of due time," as not worthy to be named among those that he had been persecuting. He gives it all in 2 Timothy. in that form ; because he had persecuted the church of God.

And then the wondrous weight of truth must necessarily humble a man, and this would account for this expression, "less than the least of all saints," because here is something that no saint's heart can hold unhelped. He was taken up in the midst of his hatred to Christ, and at once shown the Lord Jesus in the glory. It was even beyond what Stephen saw. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, but Paul saw him in another title. Not the One that would come down and reign over Israel, but now seated with Him in the glory. All titles are now made good to Him of Lord and Christ and the Son of God, and hence it is that Paul began his ministry with that utterance of "Jesus is the Son of God."

You remember in Isaiah vi. how the prophet beholding the glory and the seraphim there, crying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Jehovah of hosts, was himself humbled, and made to think of himself as a man of unclean lips. It was the glory that just reduced him to nothingness. And it is thus always. Instead of being lifted up with pride, one is all broken to see the immensity of the revelation that is given of Christ Jesus as the Son of God. I am quite sure that we could enter into fellowship with Paul, as we have gone along here, in the abundance

of the revelation. And we are not to hold back from it. I have no fellowship with those that speak about having such an overpowering sensation that they say to the Lord, "Withdraw thine hand!" The Holy Spirit strengthens for all these things.

When an infant comes into the race of man I could say of him that the possibilities of all the highest things on earth are his. He may be one of the finest in philosophy and art and science, and write the best books, but he is a babe. They belong to him, if he can reach them. They belong to him on the earth into which he has come. And so, no matter how feeble we are, we are introduced into Christ—born of God. We are simply in our native element when we are listening to these very highest and richest and most precious things of God.

One of the quietest books in the world is the Scripture. But somehow, in Ephes. it has to add on, has to double adjectives, while simple statements are the ordinary forms of Scripture. But this abundance of revelation does make the Scripture come to our understanding by telling us large things. So the epistles are filled with this exceeding greatness of the glory. To this less than the least of all saints was this wonderful dispensation given; a special one; not in common with the Twelve, any more than with the prophets of the Old Testament. It was given to him alone. And so much the more was he bound to tell everybody. It was the one truth that was to go out into all the world. By-and-by, when this people that are formed by this truth that Paul received, are caught up, and God comes back to make His name as the God of Israel, there will be a gospel of the kingdom that will go abroad everywhere, as a testimony in all the world. But there is now a gospel that is an "all the world" gospel, distinctively. (Col. i. 21.) It is the delight of all this,

that it is not for a few, though, unfortunately, it gathers but few. But this has to go everywhere, and the reason of it is that God is perfectly satisfied with what Christ has done. The whole question of sin and guilt and ruin is met perfectly in Him. His Son is to be presented, and that must be told. He is making a feast for His Son, and He must tell everybody.

This, then, is the gospel of Paul—the Person of the Son of God, all the work that He has done and all the glory that He has won. That is to be told out. And we who have to do with Him are to learn it all, everything !

Now he tells us that this is the unsearchable riches of Christ. That would be quite the word, after telling us that these things were not made known to other ages and generations. All that he is telling out never was upon the lip of prophet of the Old Testament, nor even in the heart and mind of the Twelve. There never had been an utterance given of this new wondrous truth of the heavenly places, and Christ in the glory. It is unsearchable, then. You need not search the teachings of Peter and James and John and the Twelve, in the beginning of Acts. You need not search through Isaiah, for that is all of earthly glory. And so all the Old Testament—search it as you will,—will yield up nothing of this heavenly truth. Man by searching cannot find out God. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” And yet God comes and reveals Himself, and we are brought face to face with God, and brought right to Him and in His presence, and enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus, and worship before God Himself, and know Him !

But if searching will do nothing, what will ? The Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him ; just being open, to let Him tell us what He will. And

Paul received it that he might tell it. And it is now the universal gospel. I sorrow that it has been lost, but God in grace revives it, or else we would not talk about it to-day.

Here again we must notice the distinction between the gospel of the Twelve and the gospel of Paul. John xv. tells us definitely. "You shall testify of me, because you have been with me from the beginning." In pursuance of that, Matthias is the one that takes the place of Judas, because he had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, until the day that He was taken up. Then the prophecy of Joel was to be fulfilled, and the Spirit of God to be poured out upon them, and then they began to tell Israel, "He will come to reign over you." But they did not utter a word that Paul gives, in all that they said. Now Paul comes where they leave off, as they come where John the Baptist leaves off, and John the Baptist comes where the prophets left off; each telling their gospel; their good news. The prophets exceeding the priests in telling the good news that they had. John comes and says, "It is ready to come now!" and that is a new gospel. And after Christ has come, and been slain, the Twelve say, "But He will come back, and you will have an earthly kingdom yet!" Now this would all be true, but now I see that we come into a higher place altogether. And so Paul says, "I will tell you about Him up yonder." The Twelve simply have what was in the prophets, and the accomplishment of it that day. That is the thing that corresponds to what we have in Col. i. 23, where Paul speaks of the gospel of which he is the minister. "If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which is preached in all the world, which you have received, whereof I am made a minister." And then, after he

has told that, a second thing is given in Ver. 25. He completed the word of God and filled up that which was behind in the afflictions of Christ in his own body, for Christ's body, which is the church, "whereof I am made a minister."

Paul must be like Moses. Moses goes to Egypt and calls out Israel, and after he gets them out he must form them. He must give them laws, and divide them into their tribes. He must arrange their marching order, and just how they shall build the tabernacle. That is more than calling them out. He must accompany them.

And so Paul must do two things : he must give the gospel of the calling on high—which is the gospel of the power of God,—which is the gospel of the glory. He must do that, and then he that believes gets all the assurances that are given in that gospel. He knows he is saved. The assurance of the hope—he knows what he is saved for. The assurance of the understanding of this mystery of being seated in heavenly places. All three things are spoken of by him. Now he must give the administration, "to make all know what is the administration of that mystery." Like Moses arranging everything according to God's mind, Paul himself arranged the church, as well as formed it by preaching. It corresponds exactly to what is spoken of in Col. i. 23-25. He is the minister of the gospel, and then the minister of the church, which is formed by that gospel.

So you will understand the meaning of Ver. 9. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." That is, all that are saved, because there is not a syllable of what Paul gives that can be understood by an unsaved man. "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, because they are

spiritually discerned ;” that is by the Holy Spirit which is in us. Not that we have received a fine clear intellect, but we have received the Holy Spirit that we may know. These things are discerned by the Holy Spirit in us and not by our simple intelligence. So it is not to make all men see, but to make all the saints see what is the administration of the mystery.

“Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” We find from this verse the reason why it is unsearchable. It was hid in God. If it had been hidden in the Scriptures, we could go back and search and find it. But it was hidden in God up to the time of Paul. Now it is no longer hidden. And then it is spiritually discerned.

You see what the fellowship or administration refers to, then, the practical carrying out of the truth of what the church is, and what it shall be and do. According to the mind of God, then, the thing was hidden in God, who created all things in Jesus Christ.

Ver. 10. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” We see the reason of this word “manifold”—that there are a great many things connected with this creation. Various dispensations came, each with its own specified truth. For instance: from Adam to Noah it is simply man ; man without government ; man left alone. Of course it is ruin. He starts ruined as soon as he sins, and he goes on as man without any law among men, and is left just as the beasts of the field are left, and the result is that they become corrupt and violent. Then from Noah down to Abraham man has government. This is a new element in connection with creation. But man ever falls and gets away from God. If he is going to

govern himself, he hunts up other gods and becomes an idolater. That is what government in man's hands will lead to always. It will lead away from God, and that is what the dispensation begun with Noah comes to.

Then Abraham is called out apart from all that, and God revealed Himself to him, not as connected with the heavenly thing, but revealing Himself still, and saying "This land." It is with reference to the land. He is to be a stranger to it, that he may first get acquainted with God. Man must get back to God before he can take up the earth at all. Therefore it is four hundred years before man is allowed to take possession of the earth at all. God knows Abraham, and He now passes Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through a school to get them acquainted with Himself, and then He takes up Israel, and puts them through forty years of schooling to get them acquainted with Him. They are particularly shut up with Him, that they may all the time be occupied with God before they can ever take up earth again. Then He brings them through all the various methods of school and into the land, and says, "Now occupy it, and drive out everything else."

The creation combined a great many other matters. Man simply being put on the earth and dwelling, and man in government. He has learned subjection. Subjection is the first lesson in government. So with the church; we are in subjection, and await the time to govern. The old creation has its varied elements there. Step by step all these things come, and thus we see that God was just mapping out for man according to the ages. And now Israel having failed utterly, God leaves the church here for a testimony to the heavens, not the earth, of His many-sided wisdom. Why should He show the earth? They are Jews and Gentiles from whom He takes

out the church, and they could not understand and they are left.

Ver. 11. "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Eternal purpose" is the "plan of the ages." All those ages He was having this one purpose before Him, and what was it? To display in the ages to come His kindness towards us, and to display now, by lifting us above the earth, His wisdom. The church then is to display the manifold wisdom of God, according to His mind. Not this terribly apostate thing, that for fifteen hundred years has not had a thought of God's mind in it! It makes the enemies of God to blaspheme. Not that of which Christ says, "I will spew you out of my mouth!" But the church as set forth in the Scripture is to display His manifold wisdom, and it will if it is subject to the word in regard to it. There is a wisdom that He had in His Christ, and there was the wisdom that He had in the first creation. There is a wisdom that comes out in each one of them. In Israel He is showing out man in service. "Israel is my servant!" and that is another element. First, man simply runs loose, and then man in government, and then man as a servant.

He shows His wisdom in gathering up the elements. The church will stand as a unique thing, as clear as a diamond, and it contains the thoughts of God, that were given from the beginning all the way through, and the church, as such, was hidden in God. But now He is bringing it out according to the purpose of the ages. That is what His purpose is. Israel was intensely bad all the way through their history, but there came a time when the original plan given to Moses, after hundreds of years, is brought to the eyes of Josiah, a little child on the throne. Now he, seeing all that was given hundreds of years before, and seeing the condition then,

breaks down before God and takes his place according to Moses, so that he had a standing with God. And for a little while they had things according to the purpose of God ; but it could not be carried out, because all Israel were not there. And, then, it could not be done. Now the church is called out for a special purpose, to show the wisdom of God. It is not to show it to the world. The trouble is that the church is turned up-side-down. It has become a part and parcel with the world, and showing itself to the world. It gets to be a thing talked of. In countries like England and Germany and Italy ecclesiastical affairs have to be represented in their parliaments. In this country it is not quite like that, but it is brought into prominence as much as burglaries and murders, etc. It is a matter of daily history. Now the church is really, in principle, invisible. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God : and such we are. For this cause the world *knoweth us not*, because it knew Him not." It is not to make a display to the world now, but making a display to principalities and powers in heavenly places. The testimony of the church is heavenward. In Chap. ii. we had that the testimony of the church for the future ages is to be earthward. Now in direct contrast to that, to show the manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the plan that He had in His mind all the way through. At last He gets the people, but at last, having them, they fail more than any other have failed. They had the highest place, but fell from it.

God's plan through the ages was to exalt Christ. He put us into Christ, to make known through us his manifold wisdom during the present interval. All this in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have

boldness (both Jew and Gentile) and access in Him by the Spirit unto the Father, and now here it is again.

Ver. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." "The faith of Him" means the principle of faith, the ground of faith; the objective matter of faith and not subjective. He is speaking of the dispensational character, and it is on the principle of faith. Whenever we see "the faith of Christ" or "the faith of the Son of God," we may know that is what it means. It is not a question of our faith but of the fact of faith. Why does he bring in the access, then, when it was all settled at the end of Chap. ii.? He has been giving us the dispensational facts that in other ages this was not known, but in the present age it was revealed through him unto the apostles and prophets, and then the purposes of God all the way through with reference to the present and now, and linking it with us, not as simply dispensational, but making it come home to our hearts. At the end of Chap. i. and the first part of Chap. ii. it is looked at in a spiritual way, and here it comes back to this, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." It is to save us from what would be simply theological. It is a poor way to look at it, through theology simply. God never gives it really that way, and if for a moment we turn aside to look at things that way, He always brings us back by making us see how it relates to us in our own hearts. We get that as soon as we get the Person of Christ. Having said this, therefore, the next is simply to appeal to them in regard to his tribulation.

Ver. 13. "Wherefore I desire that you faint not at my tribulation for you, which is your glory." This was definite when we spoke of it before; that

the tribulation he was suffering was because he would go to the Gentiles ; because he was the apostle to the Gentiles, and because he did go to them to tell them all the truth. And this tribulation he was suffering from the Jews, who would have killed him at sight. Nothing in Scripture shows the obduracy of man more than that ; that the very people that were appointed to give blessing to the Gentiles were exceeding mad against the one who would do it. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and went in accordance with it.

Now we come to the close of this wonderful revelation of Chap. iii., which comes in as a parenthesis, to enlarge our thoughts and deepen our joy in the whole matter. And so rich was it that it seemed good to the Holy Spirit to have it clinched and fastened to us by praying with reference to the fullness of it.

There is no richer utterance than prayer or praise. There is an encouragement to tell all out, because we are in the presence of God. In prayer we tell the best things, and so the Holy Spirit adds to this, as though it were insufficient to tell us the character of truth in this chapter, and it must be closed up by this wonderful prayer, as Chap. i. was in its statements.

Here, the prayer is to the Father. In Chap. i. it was to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are forecast into the glory here. We have come into the deeper heart of God. What we have now is not simply counsels but the counsels of His own heart, and therefore—

Ver. 14. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Of course we must have heart in this, not simply things that are for our spiritual intelligence. Here we can understand why it was said "That the eyes of your heart

may be enlightened." And so in Romans it says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." So everything in Scripture is far removed from cold statement, by presenting the Person that takes hold upon the heart. Here it is not a creed but a real life, a living Person, and we, living persons. So, while Christ was the Word, I am to be also the expression of the word. Each of us to be but the word of God in everything; the practical utterance of God. "No man hath seen God at any time." Now we are down here instead of Him, and we live Him, by walk and thought and utterance and by every expression of the new man. It is the revelation of God. God should be seen in us as He was seen in His own Son, for we, too, are sons.

This, then, becomes unutterably precious: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ver. 15.) of whom every family in heaven and earth is named." In Heb. xii. we have the families of the heavenly. We are told that we are partakers of the heavenly calling, but we are also told of others that belong in the heavens. We have come into this company. We have come to Mount Zion, to the new Jerusalem, to the city of the living God, the God of resurrection. It is the same word that Peter gave when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We have come into the scene of the living God. What company do we have then? "To an innumerable company of angels—the general assembly. And then the church of the firstborn ones." That is ourselves, the second family. Then, to separate these from the saints of the Old Testament, God's name is introduced—"To God, the Judge of all;" showing that all these saints had passed the judgment. God is named not as the merciful One but as the Judge of all. This fixes everything all the more securely, that He has judged

it. Then, "To the spirits of just men made perfect." This is looking at the whole of the heavenly family. These are the Old Testament believers, of which there is a little sample roll in Chap. xi. When they died, they died without knowing, which was imperfection; but their perfection came when Christ rose. They will be there, with bodies like ours, when the Lord comes.

Then, "To Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." What a blessed word that is! The blood of Abel crying from the ground against man, and the blood of Christ speaking peace for us. Thus the heavenly families are named all inclusively, and exclusively of everything else.

Then we come to the earth; and the earthly families when the restoration takes place will be under the Father. There will be a revelation of the Father. Christ began it when he spoke in Matt. and gave that wonderful statement in Chaps. v.—vii. He brought before them the Father; not Father as we know Him, but He was telling of the Father. He says, "Your Father in heaven." Farther away off, of course, but still Father.

And so we have, "Of whom every family in heaven and earth is named." Now the families of the earth merely Israel and the Gentiles, and these will be through the millennium and there will be these differences then. We have this scene given in Rev. xxi. 9, xxii. 4. It is God and the Lamb. Giving Christ, as you may see, separate, just as he has been separated down here dispensationally. But at the end of all He gives up the kingdom to the Father, and God is all. But during the millennium the distinctions are still held that God has made in relation to His person. In the eternal age there does not seem to be the manifestation of the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit. But God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) is all.

So we see what it means by saying, "Of whom every family on earth is named." Now we will have it directly in the next chapter, when speaking of the unity, "One Father, by whom and through whom and in whom we all are." Let us pause a little on this matter. It is very precious to think of it. In Thess. i. 1, the first epistle written by this apostle of the church to the church, he says, "The church which is in God our Father." Not the church which is in God simply, but God revealed as our Father, with a Father's heart. Leave out the idea of Father and you have only God in purpose and mind, and revelation of the mind; but where is the heart? Where is relationship? Where is living in and leaning on Him, and being in His bosom? And so the church had to wait for its manifestation until God was revealed as God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In creation there was no such revelation. In Noah's day there was no such revelation. In establishing Israel there was no such relationship brought out. When John the Baptist came to restore Israel, there was no such relationship brought out. Christ mentions the Father with reference to the future. And all this revelation of God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as our God and Father, waits the final revelation—the revelation of the church. So it is the church which is in God our Father. And so in the full revelation of Christ—getting all his title of "Christ" and "Lord," and therefore Christ Jesus our Lord! The church *in*, away back in the beginning, but still all there,—in God our Father and in Jesus Christ our Lord,—everyone in Him, and according to Prov. viii., the object of His delight. The Man Jesus with His title made true to Him of Lord and Christ, had to wait

until He was risen. It had to wait until He was up in the glory, and until the Apostle could say, "He is the Son of God, who was made of the seed of David." Then we have the church. It is church time, it is Son time, it is making sons, it is Son speech.

So all these things are dispensational. There were no sons in the Old Testament times. There was no Holy Spirit dwelling in them. There was no forming into one body, the church and the risen Christ, the first-begotten from the dead. Now these are the things that we range in freely, and we must not act out of them. If we run outside of these bounds, where will we go? Into that Judaism, which was once right, but is now all wrong for us. We should use care in regard to speech about God, and in addressing Him and saying, Lord, when we mean God and Father. "Lord" in the Old Testament is Jehovah. We could not get a blessing there now. Those who live after the church is taken away, the Jewish remnant, will get a blessing under the title of Him as Jehovah. But we cannot get a blessing there now any more than that woman that came to Jesus and said "Son of David," and was turned away. But when she called Him Lord, taking the place of a dog, it was all right. "Be it unto thee *as thou wilt.*"

Paul was set to tell of Christ Jesus as Son of God, and his gospel was to declare the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, his bowing the knee to the Father is introducing our hearts into the widest scope of the present period.

According to the titles of persons you speak to are the things you speak about. An earthly people, speaking to God as Jehovah, will ask for earthly things as the highest, because they belong to the earth. But when we call Him our God and Father, there is nothing wider or deeper than that. That is

what we have gained by Christ going into the grave, and being raised and seated in heaven ; and so let us call Him such. "I ascend to my Father and your Father." So we see how the Holy Spirit, here, can bring out that prayer.

Ver. 16. "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." In Chap. i. we found everything that is spoken of in regard to the present interval of Christ's being in heavenly places, and our being there, is to the praise of His glory and the glory of His grace. We are associated with that and nothing else. And we have no less treasure to draw from than the riches of His glory. How people do trifle with their privilege in prayer ! They pray for little things, when they could take the heavens ! How they will say, Pray for me in this thing and that, instead of making their prayer with regard to Ephes. iii. It is like what we have in Phil. iv. The writer here, then the prisoner of the Lord, when a few little things were sent unto him, to minister unto him, says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." There is no other standard for blessing us. With my children at home, that is the highest standard of all blessing, that they are with me. The son abides *in the house* forever. I may be kind to my servants and to my friends, but my children are as myself. They are entitled to everything I have.

Now God has His sons up there, and we take hold upon everything. "According to the riches of His glory." All that is coming ! All the display of God—for that is what glory is—the display of character. Not according to some revelation of God simply, that He has to supplement afterwards ; but the full expansion of what God is in Himself.

"That He would grant you according to the riches

of His glory ;” and there must be something very wonderful, if we must be strengthened to take hold of it. “To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” The Holy Spirit within us is competent to take in everything. This is the marvelous thought, that you and I have God dwelling in us, to measure the measureless in heaven ; that we are at home with and in Him ; that the more simple we are, the more the Holy Spirit is free to act, and the more we need not be astonished at anything. Take them with the peace and tranquility that God has in giving them. We are to be strengthened with might in the inner man, in order to take in these things, and to live in them.

Ver. 17. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.” It is not simply that we are believing in Christ, but that Christ may dwell. It is not Christ our hope up yonder, nor Christ on the cross, but Christ Himself dwelling in us. What a wonderful thing ! The Holy Spirit making Christ present in us ; the whole action of our life ! How wonderfully that is brought out in John. How we are associated with Him there ; having the same death and the same burial, the same resurrection and the same favor, and the same intercourse all the while ! “That my joy may be in you. As my Father loved me, I love you ; continue in my love.” In First John we are as He is. We are sons of God, and this is the style of life that God has to say, “That Christ may dwell in you ;” your faith apprehending that.

Do not get the thought that we get things, and that things become true of us by faith. Not at all ! The moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, everything is true of us that will ever be true, but we are receiving more and more every day, and

faith is the open mouth to take it in. "Faith comes by hearing," and so we, as children of God, have everything and know everything, and are associated with everything that God and Christ have, and are brought into practical fellowship by every day's truth that we receive, taking in these things more and more. He is in us and we are in Him, before God. Christ is in us down here for walk, and to make the life ; which must be a Christ-life all the way through. It is occupation with Him that will make it. We are the same as He is ; that is our right and title. We say there is nobody in heaven or earth that can put us out of our position, because the new birth meant that. This is what it is for Him to dwell in your heart by faith. It is *dwell*, too ! In John xv. it is "Abide in Him." That is the practical thing. You are there, but stay there, practically. We get the meaning in this way : we are in Christ. Suppose we go back and act in Adam or Moses. We are not in Adam or Moses. They are set aside completely in Christ. Now you stay in Christ, practically. "Now, little children, abide in Him." The enemy is here, to say to the professing christian who does not know his place in heaven, and is acting wholly on the earth, and taking for his christian walk the ten commandments, which are an offense and an insult to God. It is a denial of the cross and resurrection for a man to put himself under the ten commandments. Then, of course, it is just as bad an insult for him to act in his own lusts in any form. It cannot please God. Nothing will please God except a walk in the Man in whom we are.

"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love." That is His love. Apprehending love more richly. You see now why we have to have the Holy Spirit to strengthen us for this ; that we may be rooted

and grounded in love. In Peter it says, "Grow in grace." We have to be planted there before we can grow. Many that are absolutely before God, planted in grace, are trying to grow up in the law. That is what makes such trouble in their minds. And so it is, "Be rooted and grounded in love," that we may be able to apprehend with all saints.

Ver. 18. "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height." In Chap. vi. we are told to pray for all saints; and in Chap. i., "When I heard of your love unto all saints." You see how all saints are before the mind of the Holy Spirit here, because the book is about the saints, our position and our standing and our hope, the hope of the calling of God. Our relation and apprehension *with* all the saints. This is the object of all teaching among the saints, to get them to apprehend what is already true. It is not to tell people that are saints how to be saved, nor to tell them that they may risk their salvation, or be tripped up on it, but to tell them the things that apply to them; who they are and what they are; all that God has purposed in regard to them, and all that is to come. The Holy Spirit is to take of the things of Christ and show them. And then He is to show us things to come. O what a wondrous thing it would be if all the saints were getting it! Of course in this day there is but a little remnant that are getting any of the truth at all. Would that it were otherwise. It is intensely sad, but we have to consent to it that this is the fact. It would be very terrible to think that there were no more saints than those that are receiving this light on Ephes., Thess., and Col. They are saints as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they know these things or not.

The thing to apprehend is what is the depth and

length and breadth and height, and I believe the sentence is not finished. There are two unfinished sentences in Scripture, the one where Moses in Ex. xxxiii. said to God, "If Thou wilt forgive," and then stopped, not knowing whether He would or not. He had never heard such a word as "forgive." The law had not one word about forgiveness in it. 'How could he, therefore, do other than halt?

The other is this passage,—“To know what is the depth and length and breadth and height—” you have come to an infinite thing. It is not the depth and breadth of God’s love, but simply that we have come into the full expansion of everything that God gives out, and that you may know what is the breadth and length and depth,—(Ver. 19), “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” In Chap. i. the prayer was to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might have the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him, to *know*. There were three fundamental things there to know. It was taking in God’s counsels. That was knowledge. “What is the hope of His calling and the riches of His inheritance in His saints and the working of His mighty power.” And the prayer is that we might know these things. But now, after He has given us the disclosure of God’s heart, and all the love that is in Christ, as set forth in that one Person, the heart must have its expansion and overflow. It is simply exulting and triumphing and worshipping. This is what He would have, “To know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.” It is more than knowing. And not only that, but “to be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

Beloved, there is no way of talking about these things except to state them. Only to give them solemnity and due weight as we read them. Now we

have come to the limitless. In the age of Moses and the prophets there were limitations. "Eye hath not seen or ear hath not heard,"—so there was a limitation then. In regard to prophecy, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. But how little they knew about it! They had to ask, "What does this mean?" And it was revealed that these things were not for them, but for a future age. Then they stopped. They were limited. We are told that angels desired to look into these things, but there was a limitation for them. We are made to know very distinctly what a difference there was between Israel and the angels. He made known His acts to Moses, and that was beyond what He told angels. Then God broke out afresh among Israel before Christ came, giving John. He was sent to bear witness of the Light, but he had to stop, for he had a limitation. He says, "I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize said, He is the Son of God. He must increase, but I decrease." We fall heir to all the things in Christ. John retires and leaves all these for us.

Then the Twelve take up what they know, and they tell of all He did and said, from the day He began His ministry to the day of His ascension; but there is a limitation.

But now Paul comes, and the heavens are opened, and Christ in the highest place that God puts Him, on the throne of the Majesty of heaven, and with an infinite scope of things, and the key to every thought of God and the whole Scripture. We are in an unlimited field. It is not for speculation nor to gratify curiosity nor to spur up the mind to be more and more active in these things, but it takes the heart. We are intensely interested in the Man. It is not a literary pursuit, something that cultivates, but the

interest of the heart with the Heart up yonder. To be filled unto that fullness. To be filled as He becomes the fullness. We learn in Col. that He Himself is the fullness, and all the fullness was dwelling in Him. Then we have, "You are filled up in Him!" I always wanted to preach on that, "You are complete in Him!" But I never have done it yet. It is such a large thing. You are filled up completely, and all this fullness is in Him. "That ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God." God has not shown His fullness by creating the stars and filling the heavens and having the millions of things that are here; he has done it by showing out this new Man in the heavens. He has really concentrated all His heart and all His will for all the future, through the millennium and through eternity, in that one Person! And He does not ask me simply to stand by and look, but to come in and partake and partake and partake of that! And that corresponds with what we have about gazing upon Him, and being changed practically into His image. And, "We shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him." It is quite true that we are now as He is, even in this world.

Cannot you see what an appeal it is to our hearts to be filled unto all the fullness of God? His fullness is Christ, and our own fullness is Christ, His own glad, rich, and free invitation. We shall never be usurpers in taking these things. We shall never be rushing in where we do not belong. For they are ours, as they are His!

Ver. 20. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Here we have to stretch ourselves to take in what is said. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think!" Then led up and held to it by the Holy

Spirit working in us as newly created and risen sons.

Then the appeal, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly!" How little prayer seems alongside of this. And how little prayer is in the way it is generally expressed. And when I have reached out to the furthest and up to the highest of all that I can apprehend of what Christ is for me, and what God purposes in regard to me in Christ, He says, "There is a range beyond all that, that you have not reached up to yet." And when, with the Holy Spirit to do this asking, with groanings that I could not utter;—now, after I reach the limit of all possibility in prayer in asking all these things,—*"To Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above it all!"* I am cast upon God for eternity. I think, in view of it, we may say, as Psalm lxxii. ends, "The prayers of David are ended!" Do you know why? It was not the end of his Psalms. He had given the Psalm that tells about Christ in His glory, and he had come to the limit—the end of all prayers. It just tells the whole story.

Now, when we have gotten to the end of all this to know our place and privilege and resource and the fullness of God in Him, and have spoken to Him in regard to all this, then we are cast upon the infinite God and the Christ in His heart, to bestow of it beyond all we ask or think. I do not want to belittle it by talking about it!

"Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." Now let us take up that that we had in Chap. i. again. "When we were dead, He quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us by

Christ Jesus." Now, this ascription is farther along than that, for it says, "Unto the ages of ages;" never ceasing. That involves the millennial and the heavenly age; what is called the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the millennial age it is righteousness reigning, but in the eternal age it is righteousness dwelling. It is all very well to have a righteous King, but here they will live where it dwells.

Now He comes further along here, as though He would bring out the whole. He says, "Be glory by the church, through the ages of ages." Well, it is our place, brethren, and that is where we are. Amen. And every heart may well respond to that.

Now we are ready, then, having been told this to get our hearts engaged, and to touch us in the most vital way with the revelation that is for the heart, after having given us that to supplement the former two things that were told about the church as the body and the church as the house, to come in that freshness and fullness of apprehension of what Christ is in Himself to the application of all this. You see a reason why we should have turned aside, as Moses did, to see this great sight in Chap. iii.; that we should take up what has been said in Chaps. i. and ii., and see its glories as it comes to the soul within us, refreshing and filling. When he has done that, not content with saying it back there at the end of Chap. ii., he adds what is given in Chap. iv. 1.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Do we see the power in this application? But what is the beseeching? Why, that we take up this thing, and walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. We will have to be led along in detail in that. We cannot take it in at one viewing. We can look abroad in all the heavens at night, but we shall be more profoundly affected if we go to some powerful telescope, and see millions of stars there, and calculate distances. Then, how profoundly we shall be affected with what God has done. So it is well to say, "Walk worthy of the Lord;" but the same Holy Spirit that says that must say, "thus, and thus, and thus;" and tell us one thing after another. He gently leads, after all. He will lead us along in detail. But, first of all, He will begin with the very highest thought. It is a very high one to say, "Walk worthy of this calling." But He must give us certain simple principles; and what would you say would be the first one? Has there been anything said through the whole of this chapter, and in Chap. i., where we are told that we are raised and seated in heavenly places, and that God purposed all that before the foundation of the world;—has there been anything said to make us lifted up in our own estimation? The flesh would take it up and hold itself superior; and therefore, the proper word is, now, for the recompense—"all lowliness!"

Ver. 2. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." It

is self-emptiness. As they are God's thoughts entirely, I must have none of my own thoughts. I must have none of the lifting up of man's thoughts. We are strengthened, but the wonderful matter is that it is Christ's life and not our own. It is because we are Christ's that we get all. And so, "with all lowliness." It is the first thought, and it would seem to be the only one that could have been given here.

And then, "meekness." That is quietly waiting, is it not? That is making nothing of self. It is not having my way in this. It is taking it up with perfect simplicity of spirit. Inasmuch as He is talking about the saints, you see them recognized here at once. "With all long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." It is peculiar that He should have given that verse before the others. But Christ was meek and lowly in heart.

Second, toward man. "Forbearing one another in love." Now we have these two attributes as we begin to walk in the truth that is told us in the former portion of the epistle. We shall have need of both of these. We shall need to recur to them continually. There must be all lowliness and meekness. We are to esteem others rather than ourselves. We are to forbear and bear with more and more tenderness.

The latter part of Ver. 2 recognizes the fact of our being among the saints. We are not looked at simply as alone. *The whole epistle is with reference to all the saints; that is, all believers, and everything that was told about them shows that we are one in Christ—Jew and Gentile.* We were quickened together with Christ and raised up together, and no matter how it is denied on the earth, we are one, for God says so. It is just as I know I am saved because God says so, and as I know the Lord is coming for He says so. It is an immense advantage to us that

we take things from the word just because God says it. Then we have something to settle it eternally. It is not because we feel it : because we might feel a great many false things ; but because we have the word of God for it.

Here, then, these three primary truths ought to be well settled by and for every one of us. I recur to the work that Christ did, and therefore I know that I am eternally saved. He cannot go back and die over again, and therefore I cannot go back into my old condition. Then for the present He is up in heaven, and God tells me all about Him up there, and the Holy Spirit is sent down to gather us into one body. We know it, then, because God tells us. We know it as He says it. Then, of course, we have other truth with regard to Him, up there. Not only is He the Head of the church, but High Priest representing us there constantly, and we representing Him here constantly, as sons of God. And then when we sin He is Advocate for us. These cover the time that He is up in heaven. Then, in the future, Christ is coming in the glory and we are coming with Him ; therefore, we must needs be caught up to meet Him. Then we come back with Him, to reign in the glory. And it is so placed before us that we are as sure of it as that we are saved. The heart must take it up as an immediate thing, always.

Then "the hope of His calling" that we had in Chap. i. is that we are to come and reign with Christ. Then we have learned that by the church He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us. There is the testimony, and the time and place of testimony, in all the ages to come. Then we learn that for the present period, *now* unto angels and principalities and powers in the heavenly places we are to manifest the manifold wisdom of

God ; that they might learn the wisdom of God by our practically demonstrating it.

These are the things that are positively told us, and we are to rest upon them all the time. You will see from this that we are not to show ourselves on the earth, but *now*, during the present interval, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. Men have read what they call the Sermon on the Mount—a portion that pertains particularly to the Jews—and they have said that the church is the light of the world, but it is not so. That was the people that were to be on the earth, and they had no other scene. And because that was given up, and they rejected Him even after He was crucified and risen, now He has a heavenly people. Because Noah's descendants failed utterly in all that had to do with showing out God on the earth and maintaining His worship here, so that they lost God altogether and turned to idols ; therefore God called out from the midst of that idolatry Abraham, and he simply had to walk with God. His tent and his altar were a continual testimony that he was a stranger, and that his heart was elsewhere. The Church is too busy in the true place of testimony to be occupied in testifying to the earth. We must get that clear, because here we read about gifts. They are for the edifying of the body, the building of the church. It is false to say that the church must convert the world. We do not find a word about our converting the world. The prophets are full of it, but we have gone through Chap. iii., and have seen what the church is, that it was not a subject of the prophets, was not made known to other ages and generations. It was a secret that was kept hidden, but it is now revealed. And then that we should be members of His body, connected with the heavens, just as Abraham was called out from everything, to be separate

from everything that was going on. He had nothing to do with converting the Amorites. Did not he fill his place? He did when he stayed there, but when he went down into Egypt he failed. So, just as soon as we go down into the world, we are as he was in Egypt. Abraham lied when he did it, and so will we when we do it. Take heed that we are not occupied and associated with that which is apostate to the truth now.

Ver. 3. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The first word is "endeavor"; but there is no such word as endeavor in the Scripture. It would do, I suppose, for a legal church to interpret it and say "endeavor"; but it will not do for God's word. It means, "Do it!" The same word that is given in Second Peter i., "Giving all diligence" to perform practically what you are called for. "Endeavor" means with us to try: not to succeed. This means giving all diligence, and actually putting your whole heart and mind to do it. There is no such word as "try" in Scripture. God never told a man to try to believe. He never told a man to try to do anything that He told him to do. He says, "Do it!" "Try" is of the devil. All the "Try, try, try again" is of the devil. Do it! God tells us infinite truths. Now take them. The moment you doubt, it means, "I will try to believe you, but I do not know as you are telling the truth!" He says the work is finished, but you say, "I will try to believe it." It is only making God a liar. When He says that Christ is the Head of the church, and I say that I will try to believe it, I am trying to help Him out by making other heads and rulers. That is simply impeaching God. A great deal of the piety of the day is making God a liar. The moment one believes, he is a son of God as much as he will ever be.

Here we have learned all these things in these three chapters ; indeed, in the first and second, as the third only emphasizes all that. Now if we have learned these things, what next ? Do them ! What is the first thing we learned ? Raised and seated in heavenly places, and then that we are one in Christ Jesus. Then, keep that unity, the unity of the Spirit, the unity that the Holy Spirit has to do with. "In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed." We were sealed in Christ. All the believers from the resurrection down, form the body of Christ. The believers of the Old Testament are not in the Body, of course. This being the case, we are to keep that unity. Can we not keep it ? Practically, we can deny it. The unity of the Spirit, then, is the unity that the Spirit has set forth in this word, and the unity that the Holy Spirit forms. Sealed in Him, each one is attached to Christ, in His body ; just as the arm is attached to one's body. Everything within me has its connection with my head. So we are all as necessary to Christ as He is to us, just as my finger is as necessary to complete my body as my head is. So the Holy Spirit is the One that, gathering us to Christ, is to move everything. We must keep the unity in the uniting bond of peace. That does not mean that every one is to go his own way. There is no independence about it, as there is no independence in the members of my body. The independence is in my spirit. There is not a muscle that dares have any movement of its own ; the head must control everything. That is the thing to start out with. We do not control in the church. God has not called us into His counsels and said, "You make certain creeds," etc. He has not asked our counsel. The Head proposes to do the whole thing.

So that is what we are to keep. The keeping of to-day may be more difficult than in Paul's day.

There was then very little of the divisions of to-day, very little of the worldliness. Giving diligence to keep His word, we may have to stem the tide, and we may have to stand almost alone. Never mind; diligently keep. Will anything less than that satisfy the Lord Jesus Christ? Will our plans and methods and systems satisfy Him? The thing that He has not told us to do will not receive a reward. We must do exactly what He says. Then we must go back to see what the principle is. Seven things constitute the unity of the Spirit.

Vers. 4-6. "One body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." Now these are the seven units that constitute that unity. Seven is God's number of perfection throughout the Scripture. Then the perfect number of unity contains all these things.

We begin then with the one Body. I need not enlarge upon that, because we have spoken of it. Here is the unity of the Catholic church, and there is the unity of the Methodist church, and every one of these is a unity. We have more than one unity, have we not? Did He say, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Protestant church"? Every man of God in this world is in the church, and sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit, and we are all members one of another. Every one that is a saved man,—I am a member of him, and a member with him. Not the various bodies, but the one body. There is no warrant in the Scripture for the various bodies. As soon as such a thing was manifested in Corinth, the Holy Spirit had to say to them, "I know all about this. Is Christ divided? You are members of Christ, members of one body." He did not say, "Endeavor to keep your Paul system, and your

Peter system, and your Apollos system"; but rebuked them and called them carnal. Now that First Cor. is before us, we have something by which we can judge for this day. We might never have known had it not begun already back there. The Holy Spirit has taken occasion to correct all this, by which we can see.

Then, second, one Spirit. Not a thousand spirits but one. Not one to live in and lead each denomination, and then each individual to be led by a separate spirit. We do not get that from the word. The Holy Spirit has written what He has for us in the Scriptures. There is no such thing as getting independent revelations from the Holy Spirit; He has completed the word of God.

Now the unity of the Spirit has the Spirit solely as guide. How am I going to guide my children? By my word. I shall write it if I am away, and I shall talk to them if I am present. The Holy Spirit is competent to tell out what He wants, and He has done it. And Paul says it is complete. We turn to Col. i. 25, and we find that he completed the word of God.

So, then, we have this,—one Body, one Spirit; only one. Being sure that God lives, and that Christ died and rose again, and that the Holy Spirit is present if you are led by the word and I am led by the word, we will go together perfectly. I know there are degrees of understanding, as there are degrees of faithfulness in walk. But if we both take the same word, and are alike subject to it, we will both get the same thing and can mind the same thing. If we all have the same word, we will all have the same thing from that word. The Holy Spirit is not the word, but He has given the word. So, heeding the word is heeding what the Holy Spirit says. It is not what you make out of it, but what it says.

You will find it exceedingly instructive to bring others back to it. There never would have been a question about verbal inspiration if men had paid heed to what was written. When Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy word was with me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart;" it was the words, not the general scope of it. You get the general scope of it, too. There is not a book in Scripture that more clearly confirms, and actually makes a fact, the perfect inspiration of the Scriptures than the book of Revelation, because it takes up every subject from the beginning. Every book empties into the book of Revelation, just as every book starts from Genesis. John, in Revelation, does not utter a word of himself, but simply what is told and shown him by Christ. Is not that verbal inspiration? Then we find that all the subjects that are taken up in Scripture are taken up as no book of man could take them up, and none other subjects are taken up than those given in the preceding books.

And so we find that the Holy Spirit gives out the word that we are practically to act as one. There is little dependence upon the Holy Spirit to-day, but a constant appeal to man's will. Men get together and say, We will form a church; we must have a pastor. Fifty will vote for A., and forty for B. Is that of the Holy Spirit? Well, they say that fifty is more than forty, and A. is elected. So it is in regard to everything else. Before we get through with this chapter, we shall find that God gave gifts. Is there the unity of Spirit in such things? Is man's will keeping the unity of the Spirit?

What will it involve? A great deal for every one of us. That we be broken, and that we take the first word He tells us, that of meekness. It is because we have gotten something for ourselves that

we have put forth our will ; and now if we are broken in accordance with the first word of this chapter, we are ready to let God tell us, "I give gifts." Then we will find how He sends them forth Himself, and He will take charge of them. As soon as we provide, it is not God's church at all, but man's.

What is the next thing? "One hope;" the hope of His calling. What is the hope of the church to-day? To spread over the world and convert it. Not one syllable of it true, according to the word of God. We are told that the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is an earnest of our inheritance until we are there; until the redemption of the purchased possession. That will be our real time of display. What is a woman that is betrothed to a man to be married to him? As betrothed, she is no more the same woman; she is a woman still, but not the same. She is lifted out into a peculiar prominence. But until the marriage day, what is she? As pledged to him, she is to be faithful to him; waiting for him. That is the whole of the church's position. Then comes the time of the marriage and the display and the house-keeping. She is called apart from all other women now for him, but the time will come directly, and that for which she is called apart will be consummated. It is not our display now. It is display after a while. Now by keeping the word as the church, we display to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. God has taken us out to be an example; if we are subject to Him, we shall be this. The hope of our calling, then, is by-and-by to be displayed. It may be in a very little while.

If we are all right on the one body and the one Spirit, and have not the one hope, we have failed. If we are all right on the one baptism and one Lord, and leave out the others, we fail. You must keep them all! Seven things that we have given to keep,

and they, all, one. Practically keep and act in them all. The Lord may come before to-morrow. Let us get them clearly and really.

Ver. 5. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." This has to do very especially with confession. "One Lord." It is not simply one Christ; it is Lordship. This takes away the idea of the authority of man, whether it be one or a multitude. Apprehended properly, it would keep us from bowing to man, or allowing any choice by man, or headship of man in any form. With that standing right before us, it would seem strange if we did not know the poor human heart; how far the church has wandered from God, and come to allow just the opposite of this, for in the professing church there are lords many and rulers many, by election of man. One Lord is the distinctive honor which Christ has had given to Him. He is made both Lord and Christ, and so is the one Lord. All the gifts are in His hands, and He has them all to bestow, and He has the whole governing of the Assembly in every way.

Then, "one faith." Now that faith brings us out of our old condition as sinners, guilty and lost, through the death and resurrection of Christ into a place in Him, so that we are no longer what we were. There is nothing short of that as to faith. Paul refers to it in Second Tim. iv., "I have kept the faith." It is the peculiar position into which we are brought. The truth in regard to it of Christ's death and resurrection and our death and resurrection in Him. It is not simply confessing that there is one God, that Christendom has come to now, but it is absolutely the faith and belief on the Lord Jesus Christ that takes us out of everything we were; out of ourselves, out of the world, and presenting us there before Him, a new creation altogether.

Next, "one baptism." And this is the expression

of that faith externally. As many as believed were baptized. It has to do with the external matter of leaving the world. I, as a Jew, left my Judaism, and you, as a Gentile, left your Gentilism. Now to be buried into death, and then raised, as Col. gives us, by which we are risen, and have come out practically from the old standing that we had, as men, in any form. Rom. vi. gives it. We are baptized into His death, wherein we are risen again in newness of life. It is not a sealing. It has not any saving quality in it. The faith saves; but the baptism is the confession of it. It confesses the whole thing of death and burial and resurrection. The link with Christ is confessed thus. We had to die to get to Him.

Ver. 6. "One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." Then we have this precious fact, held by one God and Father. That is our God and Father. This is to be kept, then, the fact that God is our Father, and it has become so through all this; through the one Lord and the work that He has done, and by my confession I am brought into that place that God is my Father as He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is over all! "Of whom every family in heaven and earth is named;" thus He is over all. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in heaven and earth is named."

He is through all and in all. That is fellowship. Christ said in John xiv., "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." It is really having Him in us, and as Father.

Now these things are the unity of the Spirit, and lacking any one of them, we fail. O how many are lacking! How Christendom of to-day has denied every one! They have turned aside from them, and

have taken all that is Jewish in direct contrast to all that is given ; this church truth, and the practical holding of all that God has given in this heavenly calling and standing and hope. He, then, that denies one of them or fails in one of them, is not keeping the unity of the Spirit.

This is the definite and unique thing that the Holy Spirit is now setting forth. The Holy Spirit was not down here dwelling in the people in Israel's day. But we get a totally distinct character of things by the Holy Spirit dwelling here as the result of Christ's death and resurrection ; and these seven things constitute them all, and this is the reason why it is called the unity of the Spirit.

Right in faith and wrong in baptism will not do. And right in baptism and wrong in the unity of the body will not do. But how can we talk about it ? There is nothing like it on the earth. While He says give all diligence to keep this, we find that it is the one thing that has not been kept.

Having said what the unity of the Spirit is, the next is to speak of gifts to the body. To my body there is given every gift that is needed to nourish it. I have hands to provide food and put it to my mouth ; I have feet to carry me where I need to go, and eyes to see, and ears to hear. And so I have every gift to sustain my body. And so the body of Christ has gifts.

Ver. 7. " But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." That is, He has given grace to exercise that gift.

You remember in 1 Cor. xiii., the gifts are the distinctive result of love, the expansion of love ; so much so, that He says that if I have not love it does not matter what I have. there is nothing at all in it ; I have nothing ; people have received nothing. How emphatic that is in that chapter ! It takes the whole

of that section, Chap. xiii., to bring it out. Then the gift cannot be for show or emolument ; it must always be the expression of Christ's own love to His own. So it says, "To each is given grace according to the measure of the gift." One gift may need it more than another, and one may be seen to be the expression of love more than another. Certainly it must be Christ's love that goes out to save the lost sinners through the evangelist. It must be love that will exercise a pastoral care. It must be love that opens the word to the saints. All these gifts, you see, are simply love. "To every one is given grace."

And then, quoting from Psalm lxviii., looking to the glory of Christ, Ver. 8 : "Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men." Here it is quoted with special reference to the gifts connected with the church. "Thou hast led captivity captive or led a multitude of captives." Here, I apprehend, is what we have in regard to the Old Testament saints, delivered from their captivity in hades, and going up to be with Christ. A multitude of captives they were.

Next, there is a little parenthesis. Vers. 9, 10. "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." If He ascended, He must have been here ; and further there was going down into hades. Psalm xvi : "For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." Then He is looked at at the right hand ; "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." And He is not satisfied when He gets up there to be there simply for His own enjoyment,

There are pleasures for evermore, it is true ; the fullness of joy is there ; but He is there for our sakes. He is there to be crowned because He has done this work, and then having these gifts to bestow upon His body. Is it not a wonderful thing ! And why are men acting as though He were not bestowing gifts ? They are electing and choosing men as though He did not do it, when He had to ascend up on high and to be crowned with the reward of His work, in order to do it. When I look at all these associations, where they ordain and license, etc., I say, "How did they get a right to bestow gifts ? Did they ascend on high ?"

We find in Rev. v. that He is the only One that takes that roll and opens those seals ; the only One in all the universe ; the One that has shed His blood to purchase the whole. He is the only One that has a right to say who they shall be. No man can add to it, any more than He can add to the word of God. And they cannot do it without having to answer for it. It is impeaching His authority and His right to bestow all gifts. These things are not written in a trifling way at all. They carry their force with them all the time.

"He ascended on high." First though, He must go down. And no man that has not been down there for sins and is not sitting at the right hand of God for sins, has any right to do this.

And what are the gifts ? Ver. 11. "And He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers." The gifts spoken of here are those that go on to the end. See the difference between what we have in this chapter and in 1 Cor. xii. 28. You remember in 1 Cor. i. 7, they "came behind in no gift." They all had gifts. The church had that in the beginning.

It is a blessed thing, in the midst of the apostasy

so wide that we are in, that Christ is seen addressing the remnant, and saying, "To him that overcometh." It is a blessed thing when we know that many gifts have departed, to find that certain gifts will go on to the end. How blessed that is! How blessed in the history of Israel, when the priest had no power in his place, and when the king had turned aside and they were gone into idolatry, and when the Shechinah had left and gone into the heavens,—how blessed it was for poor Israel then to say, "We are not deserted of God." Among their assets were prophets. What were prophets? People to be the mouth of God. And so to-day we are blessed that we can get God's word. God will preserve to the end the gifts that will give His word, pure and simple. Therefore, He says that He gave some apostles, and we have them yet in all their simplicity, just as God gave them. He had them write down truth that He gave them for us, unmixed with philosophy, standing pure and clear, by the Holy Spirit, and we have it yet. Christ could say to the Jews in His day that they had Moses though he was dead long ago; and so to-day we can say that we have Paul. We have the whole revelation that was made known to him. Paul is as fresh to-day as if he had just come into this room, and said he had just received the revelation. All that is contained in Cor. and Eph. and Col. and Gal. We have them all. We are thoroughly furnished in regard to church truth and church conduct. We have an epistle written on purpose to show us how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God, the church of God. (First Tim.) We have one in the age of apostasy to tell us exactly what our resource is. (Second Tim.) We have one in a day like this, when legality is almost universal, the Epistle to the Galatians, by this same Paul. If we want to know what

church truth is, we get it from this epistle, Ephesians. If we want to know our relation to the Head, that we may hold fast the Head, we have Colossians. If we want to know how to act under all this truth, so as to walk as the heavenly persons and not as earthly ones, we have Philippians. If we want to know how to act in the simplicity of the same, we have the Epistle to Philemon. If we want to know, in the day of the most terrible ritualism, that is increasing more and more all the time and turning everything over to Judaism, we have the Epistle to the Hebrews, that warns us on all sides and shows Him up in the glory. If we want to have Christ Himself, through whom all gifts came, we have to take all these epistles together, and He is brought out rounded and full of grace, more and more for the heart and conscience and faith of each one. Then if we want to know, in the midst of this denial of the faith, in regard to salvation, what it is in itself, we go to the Epistle to the Romans, which tells the whole thing ; beginning with us in our sins and exposing us as guilty, and then bringing in the righteousness of God to meet all ; and so we are brought into life in Him, and there is no condemnation before God ; we are sons of God and heirs of God, that His grace and His righteousness have been shown for us ; grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life. Why, we are perfectly equipped, for he gave apostles ; and we have them yet. It is foolish to talk about successors to the apostles. It is a crime against the church, and it is only of Satan. We have apostles ; we do not want any successors.

Paul tells us in Col. i. 25 that it was given to him to complete the word. Then if we want to know all about the coming of the Lord and the judgments of Christ Himself, for He will judge in His own house, the church, and will judge Israel and take care of

His little remnant, and judge the professing church in its apostasy. We have to listen to John in the Book of Revelation, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

If we want to know what fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, we listen to the same voice of John in his first epistle. If we need to have all this pressed upon us with reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we read his second and third epistles. If we want to learn all about our being pilgrims and strangers, and learn that the trial of our faith is more precious than gold, we turn and listen to Peter, who was the man to talk to the remnant and to the pilgrims and the strangers, and appealing to us to walk in all separation, because God is separate, and making us know that we are a holy and a royal priesthood.

And we have prophets of the New Testament. Everyone that gives out the word is a prophet, giving it for exhortation and comfort, and to profit everyone with it. They are linked with the apostles. Take Paul and Barnabas, sent of the Holy Spirit, and then Silas came, and that would be like a prophet, giving out God's utterances all the time; not necessarily opening scripture as teachers, but giving out the mind of God as received from Him; the mouth of God to us. We have the word to judge him by if he does not speak according to it. He may stand in the pulpit, but if he is not giving the word of God he is a false prophet. A prophet simply speaks for another. To prophesy is to speak for another, not to speak one's own words. Now, then, if I give you my opinion, I am not a prophet. If I give you God's mind, I am prophesying. That is what this gift means. The prophet is named with the apostles, but here it is spoken of as though it might be another gift, and it is. Then, He gave some evangelists,

messengers of good tidings. Well, the good tidings were contained in what the apostles gave. We find in 2 Timothy i. 11 that Paul said he was all three; he had all gifts. He speaks of that in 1 Cor. xiv.

First of all, the apostle gets the original truth from God, and we have it. And the evangelist takes out the message by word of mouth,—the simple good news that Christ died and rose again,—and he goes out to the sinner. That is the evangelist's work; it has to do with sinners. He is to bring the precious news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and that it is all done. Then he has a little more to tell. The good news contain what the hope of our calling is, and he must tell what he is saved to, and that is the membership of Christ. The evangelist has not finished when he gets a man to believe on Christ, but he must tell him what he is when he does believe, and that the Lord is coming.

Now we come to the next, ^fpastors and teachers. The pastor and teacher is one. Every teacher is necessarily a pastor; he cannot help it. It is in the gift. If he teaches, he is opening out the word, and probably he will have to minister also as a pastor. That has to do with the individual care of the soul. It is not visiting and taking tea, but it is the actual spiritual nourishing of the individual. He has to open the Scripture to this one personally, in the matter of trial and difficulty, and he has much to do with the word beside simply opening it and explaining it.

Ver. 12. Now what are all these gifts for? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Edifying is building up. We are built up by the word, and not by sympathy or intellectualism; we are built up by the word only.

"For the perfecting of the saints" is the first thing.

They must first have the word, and then they must have the teacher to go on unfolding it. "For the work of the ministry." There is the general ministry. Then, "For the edifying of the body." The other has an individual bearing, but here it is to gather and build up. Now the evangelist is the one that builds up the body. He adds to the body, for every soul that is saved is a member of the body. Then there is the building up in the truth that the teacher does. They all work together. What is it given for? That we shall not be tossed about by every wind of teaching, by the sleight of men, giving what they think.

Ver. 13. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The gifts that are spoken of in Ver. 11 must necessarily go on to the end, for this verse says it; that these gifts are until all is over and we are caught up. Now that perfect man, and stature of the fullness of Christ, is the complete body, joined to the Head, and that cannot be until the last one is saved during the present period, and thus we have pledged the gifts by which the word will come to us. We may have no gifts of miracles, but we will have gifts that will keep the word before us. Can anything be more delightful? We shall always have the word of God, just as the righteous ones among the Jews could say, "We have the prophets given to us. The mouth of Jehovah speaks to us." And so to-day; clear up to the end, no matter what comes. All the epistles, saving Rom. and Thess. and Eph., that contain primary truth, are telling of apostasy deepening, and as we go on further down to the end, we are told that this will be; that the whole thing will be a profession of godliness, yet going on in pure worldliness. Now while

that is so, we can have this as the only comfort. We shall have the word until the body is complete, the perfect Man,—the man in Christ Jesus ; and that could not be if there was one left out. I apprehend we are nearing the end, when the last one will be brought in ; and I think that God is stirring the hearts to preach the gospel afresh, that He may bring in very rapidly. While there are many evidences that the end is close by and the time to be caught up, we shall have the truth for the evangelist and the teacher, because we have the truth that was given to the apostles and the prophets.

Ver. 14. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Driven about like children. "The figure seems to be like a vessel on the water, and driven about by every wind, and tossed about rudderless. The waters would be the nations among whom we were cast,—that we are not dependent upon what this one says or that one says, nor are we to be turned aside by any blast of infidelity or untruth, but simply held to the truth, and not to be driven about by winds of doctrine and false teaching. And we are to have it so that we can speak it.

Ver. 15. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." It is spoken to us in love. That is the ground of all. We can ourselves speak it among ourselves. What a sweet and tender word that is ! Here we are cast alone where Satan is reigning, and yet we can be carried along until the Lord comes because those gifts are yet extant.

May we never allow any of these things that are going on to-day, but always go back to the apostles. That is the great thing. Let everything be weighed

and measured by the word. Then we can be sure that we will be carried through. "May grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." That is the figure of the body again, growing up; every part of the body growing naturally; and the word is to form the body of Christ, so that every part shall grow proportionately; all being brought under the power of the same truth. How thoroughly opposed this is to what is often said, that you can get anything out of the Bible. Yes, if you do not read it you can. But if we are formed by the apostles, and are taking the word as God gave it, we will get the same thing, and grow up in the same proportion, and as we get it we shall certainly grow up together.

And then, growing up into Him; part and parcel of that body of which He is the Head. When a child grows too large in the head for his body, there is very great danger. When his body outgrows his head, he will probably be a fool in another direction. But when body and head grow together proportionately, that is the perfect child; and so here is the perfect Man, we growing up into Him. It is marvelous that here, right down to the very end, we can have it all, as perfectly as in the days of the apostles.

Ver. 16. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." You get the thought that every part has to do a work. It is not the great gifts. Every muscle and bone and blood-vessel in my body has to do its distinctive work, and all acting together. Of course they are supplied by the food and the air, etc., that every part may grow, and thus we learn, not only that there are

great gifts of apostles and evangelists and teachers, but that every one of us is a gift to the whole body. To do without one little portion would be to have an impaired body. It is true my eyelid is not as useful as my arms may be. I could even have it cut off and yet walk about and work. The arm seems to be a great thing, but the eyelid is exceedingly necessary to me. Every little joint is needed to make the perfect body ; and so every child of God is needed, and is there for the purpose as much as the other gifts are. It is very sweet to think that Christ cannot get along without us. It is a blessed fact that He cannot get along in the glory until joined to us. He cannot begin the glory until we are there. Thus the working of every part, every joint of supply, "maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." What a crowning word that is in regard to the growing up of the body of Christ. Not unto a union but unity and growing in love.

For the gifts are the outflow of love. The result of all truth will be to knit us together. Not to profess simply that we are one body, but absolutely knit together ; every one having fellowship with every other one ; knit together in love.

Now that closes the first application of the truth in Ephes., and we turn aside to look at the moral application. These have to do with the practical life in regard to the body of Christ. The same truth has its moral power, and so Ver. 17 begins a new section altogether.

Ver. 17. "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." You see it is linked, after all, with the other ; not to be tossed to and fro, and taking any wind of doctrine, and now not walking after their own thoughts in the vanity of their own minds.

Ver. 18. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Having the understanding darkened is the condition now of the heathen, from whom we were taken. "Because of the blindness of their heart;" lets us know very distinctly that everything starts from the heart. It is with the heart that man believeth unto salvation, and it is the heart that gets alienated from God; it is the inclination, you understand. Next, the intellect follows. Getting away from God, the mind takes up all that is away from Him, and the understanding gets darkened,—the origin of all this that men speak about,—"I cannot understand; I cannot believe this; my mind seems incapable to take all that; my mind must have better arguments than that." That is all folly. Their minds are not so big, but their hearts have been alienated. Let the boastful infidel be put in danger of death, and he will send for somebody to talk to him about the future and Christ and salvation. Let him really face death on board a sinking vessel, and he will begin to pray like other folks. The mind is not the great difficulty; the understanding is not the primary cause, but the heart alienated from God. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ clears up the intellect. Man is prejudiced against God. If I am prejudiced against a man, I cannot believe anything good about him. This is the state of the heart.

Ver. 19. "Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." "Being past feeling." They have no response to Him, it seems. Is not this the word of God? No man's word would ever have defined the departure of man from God as this does. It is kindred to what we have in *Romans*. In *Romans* it says that God gave them up. They

left God altogether, and then He gave them up to all unclean passions. Here it says they have got thus by having become past feeling.

The exhortation is to us, you see. Now we are not to walk as we used to walk. Why?

Ver. 20. "But ye have not so learned Christ." O, it is a wonderful thing how Christ comes in as the key to everything! Take that Epistle to the Colossians, and in Chap. ii. it will tell you of the various things that are corrupting the gospel, and it will show this fact, that man does not want Christ. The key is Christ. We do not require great learning, then, to take these things. It is in Christ, and that tells it. So here it does not require the ten commandments put around me to say, "Thou shalt not do this." It is enough to say, "We have not so learned Christ."

How perfect this is! It is for the simple believer on the Lord Jesus Christ,—the man that can know he is saved. That tells everything. We do not want anything that the world offers; we have Christ. We will not listen to this learning; it is not Christ. You will be affected often where discussions come up with the absence of Christ. It was so in a late trial. Nobody seemed to mention Him. The announcement in regard to the great meetings in Chicago, the parliament of religions, gives no mention of Christ in any one day. It is a parcel of religions—Christianity among them—but there is no Christ. Nobody is to talk about God's Christ. Would not that be enough to keep everyone that knows Christ away? It may be of interest to man, but it is not Christ. I pick up that bill and I read it and say, "There is nothing for me; there is no Christ there." "Ye have not so learned Christ." Christ never makes us act out all these lusts. He never leads us about into all these foolish things.

Ver. 21. "If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." Now that is looking at Christ up in heaven. It gives the title of Him as the risen One—Christ. "I have heard Him from heaven." As we have it in that sweet hymn, "I have heard Him and observed Him. What have I to do with idols?" (Hos. xiv. 8.) If we listen to the teachings of Jesus on the earth, we would get righteous, Jewish teaching for the earth; but if we see Him up yonder, we have that which takes us right out.

Then He says, "As the truth is in Jesus." Why does He change the word there? Because He is looking here at that man crucified on the earth. And that tells the whole thing with reference to what we are. Everything is crucified. Our-selves and our lusts are gone through death. The old religious man is gone. Everything is gone! Death has settled it all! That is as the truth in Jesus.

Then we might put in the word "namely," showing what the truth is in Jesus. Ver. 22. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Practically I am to put off, because the cross has put it off. There is no compromising that truth. He lets you know that the old man is corrupt. He is not a little bad, with some elements of good in him, but he is corrupt. We have much need to have that impressed on us in a day like this, when there is a constant appeal to cultivate man and to grow to be better. We are told sometimes that we fail to recognize the native goodness of man. The word says that he is corrupt,—“According to the deceitful lusts.” And those very lusts come into nine-tenths of the religion that is going on. Men are gratifying their own thoughts and desires in

many of the things they are doing. The truth in Jesus is another thing.

Witness Titus iii. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared ;" that is, philanthropy—"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is here mercy and pity. God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us,—“Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” He had to renew and then wash besides. That is God’s philanthropy, and nobody has any philanthropy that falls below that. It is making a new man by the abundant mercy that is shown in Christ Jesus.

So we have to put off all that. Then, the other side, “to be renewed.” Ver. 23. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” But we are renewed by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. But He says we must be renewed. How? “In the spirit of your mind.” I have not been renewed in the spirit of my mind by the act of Christ. I am made a new man, but the spirit of my mind is the practical thing. I must take it up and enter upon it. I must walk more and more in that renewal, let my intelligence take hold of it. That is what the renewal of the mind is.

This is very much marked in the Epistle to the Philippians, where the mind is the great thing that He talks about ; never about our being saved, for sin is not mentioned in Philippians, but the mind is to take hold. It is that being raised and seated in heavenly places and linked with Christ up there ; the mind is to take hold of it. It is not that we are not crucified or that we are to be crucified, but “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

It is not that we are to be put into conditions of peace, but the mind is to get the peace of God and the heart is to have it. It is all practical. And that is what it means here,—“to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

Ver. 24. “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” We give up the old conduct and now take up new conduct. “Holiness of the truth.” There are two things. Righteousness has to do with conduct toward men and holiness toward God. The new man is created with reference to that, and he is never satisfied, therefore, with anything less than perfect righteousness in conduct and perfect holiness toward God ; separation from everything evil, and a thorough righteousness in all our walk in connection with men and God too. This, then, is the general principle.

The next verse begins with particulars. Ver. 25. “Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor : for we are members one of another.” “Putting away lying ;” that is putting off. “Speaking the truth ;” that is putting on. This is the negating of all that I was, for we were all liars. Everything is false that man has, and everything in the end is going to be false in the world. Unsaved men are all to be led along until they believe a lie and the liar. It is the evil one down here.

Well, then, we were thus, and He says, “Putting away lying.” A lie is but a covering, something that man can run under. He pretends to be something that he is not. All that must be given up. What next? “Speaking the truth ;” “every man speaking truth with his neighbor.” That is because we are members of the body. How would it do for one member of my body to be false to the rest? It would be palsy ; if it was all over it would be paralysis.

What kind of a life would that be for my body? So He says, "Speak every man truth with his neighbor." The word "neighbor" includes all that join us. Hence the reason, "we are members one of another."

Ver. 26. "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This is another principle. One of those things that men and women speak most about is temper. God never put anything into us that was not of use. We are to be righteously indignant against evil. We should sin if we were not angry sometimes at evil. Not to rise up against all the iniquity that is going on would not be like Christ. Be not afraid of that kind of anger at all. If you are, you may sin. We are not placed here to be just moving along through the community without giving rebuke or feeling resentment towards that which is evil. It is a time for resentment. We ought to resent the infamous infidelity that is growing everywhere. But He says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We cannot hold it very long. We can stand against a thing, but the indignation must be overpast in a very little while. Why? It will begin to be anger against men; it will be resentment that comes from me toward another person; just what I might have done as an unsaved man. It defiles to hold it, but it is a righteous thing to have, for we are told to abhor that which is evil, as well as to cleave to that which is good.

Ver. 27. "Neither give place to the devil." Now in Romans we are told to give place to wrath. That refers to anything personal. There would be a place where I should sin, and there would be danger all the time. In Romans it means evil against ourselves. It says to give place to God's wrath,—He will repay. But where it is against Christ Jesus,

being a member of Christ, I must stand against it. It says, "Do not give place to the devil in that way." That keeps me from resisting and resenting evil. When it is a personal affront, give place; but when it is an affront to Christ, never allow the devil a hair's breadth.

Ver. 28. "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." We see the thoroughness with which God takes care of the matter of conduct. Many have objected, sometimes, to the character of the truth, and say it is high truth, but we must understand that we are a high people, and so nothing but high truth pertains to us. Just as well might an Israelite that had gone away from God object to the truth belonging to the land and say, "That is Land truth. Why do we not have wilderness truth?" The facts were all true for them from the moment that God proposed to take them out of Egypt, to the time when all their enemies were conquered; and it was "Land truth." And all through we have the truth of the heavens. God has no wilderness truth to give us. We are called with a holy calling; with a calling on high. And therefore we are not to say that we want truth that is down here, for the truth belonging to our place is the truth for us here. If we had truth apart from heavenly truth it would keep us down here. The truth can never be a particle too high for us. It is a mistake to talk that way. The wilderness that God gave to Israel was the first two years, and the other thirty-eight years were their own fault, for it was their place to go to the land directly. The real truth for the wilderness is what we would find in Numbers xiv. And Caleb held that, and it made him a stranger. And he got there, too. And then the truth after he had gone

into the Land was, "If Jehovah be with me." That was the whole thing.

So here. But look, then, at the wonderful superiority of that to what it would be to be under the law. But a good many are disposed to be under the law, which is, of course, contrary to all truth. It is a denial of our ground altogether to place ourselves under the law. Now, instead of being under the law for not stealing—for the law would curse you, for you all stole—here we have, "Let the common stealer"—the word is the regular stealer, the one accustomed to it—"steal no more." We were all that; we were stealers and liars and everything else. But we have become new men, and there is no stealing here. "Ye have not so learned Christ." But, on the contrary, act according to your character, and what is that? The new man acting in grace all the time, and to labor for the sake of giving to others. Then, instead of taking out of your pocket, I turn around to give to everybody; and in order to do it, to labor and earn it. What a difference! It is just the distance between the two conditions of what I was in Adam and what I am in Christ Jesus; another man altogether!

Ver. 29. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Corrupt communication used to be plentiful with the old man in Adam; but now instead of all this it says, "but that which is good to the use of edifying;" just the opposite. "That it may minister grace to the hearers." We are to be almoners of grace all the time. How shall they know the grace of God if we are not showing it out? Minister grace, then, to all.

Ver. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Now we see precisely how to be kept in the enjoyment of the life that is given us, and all the things that are said in this book as to our place. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. As surely as we grieve the Holy Spirit His communications and communion with us will cease. It will not put us out of Christ to grieve the Holy Spirit. It will not make it untrue that we are saved and heirs of God, but it will keep us from the enjoyment of every particle of it. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, then. He gives us to understand that it could not take us out of our place, for He says, "Whereby ye are sealed." There is no such thing as grieving the Holy Spirit away. If God were man, He would have been grieved away long ago, of course. But God is not man, and He is infinite in grace. He wants us as dear children to enjoy Himself, and we are children forever. It would be denying everything connected with our calling and our standing and our place in Christ and in the heavens, to say, Grieve away the Holy Spirit. But you can see how grieving may be done. Suppose we do not heed what He tells us and our sins are unconfessed. Suppose I insist upon being under the law. Nothing can grieve Him more deeply than that. So in Gal. He says, "You have fallen away from grace." Not fallen from salvation, but as to their standing—that they are standing in grace. So this is clear enough,—“Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” That is, until the Lord comes and redeems everything that is His, which He has long ago bought.

Ver. 31. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice." We are only particularizing what was given in a general form from Ver. 21 to Ver. 24. "All bitterness;" we are never to entertain the slightest bitterness toward anyone. We are

not to carry about with us the remembrance of evil that is done to us. Resent as much as you please what is done against the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are never to resent any evil done to ourselves. "*All bitterness and all wrath and anger and clamor and railing.*" This is personal, you see. In Ver. 26 we were to be angry, but that had to do with standing for the truth and against evil ; but now it is with reference to self. The fact is, self is put out of the case, and therefore none of the interests of self are allowed. It is a wonderfully short and incisive word that is given us in John, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." In Col. we have, "You have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." That is an infinite distance, too. We go as the Israelites went out of Egypt, leaving everything. They left their leaven there. You are to bring nothing that will leaven or will spoil anything. Not anything of the old is allowed.

Ver. 32. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." This is the opposite. Put off the wrath ; put on this ; and this is the measure of it : "Even as God in Christ hath forgiven you." Well, we learn in Ver. 7 of Chap. i. how much that was : "In whom we have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace." What a standard ! And you and I are to act in the same way.

Q. This is different, then, from Matt. vi. 12 ?

A. Yes ; that is forgiveness *as* we forgive ; thus that prayer is against us. That is waiting for the Lord to come down and deliver them, oppressed on all sides by the enemy, who insists that they shall worship him, and then it is with enemies all about them. It is a wonderful prayer : "Forgive us as we forgive !" But for us that are *in* Christ, and have

Christ's own life, that are brought into fellowship with the Father and with His Son in regard to everything, and that know all things, and by the Holy Spirit are really to-day in heaven, forgiveness ought to be the easiest thing in the world. But then our being forgiven is placed first. "As you have been forgiven." Everyone can see that what is called the Lord's Prayer would not do for us at all. The man of Ephesians and Hebrews and Colossians could not pray that prayer. A man in Christ cannot pray it, because he prays in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, if I am practically denying the things that are done, in the death and resurrection of Christ, I am grieving the Spirit. If I put myself under law or ritualism, I am doing the same thing. Of course it is ignoring the whole matter of the Holy Spirit. May we be kept from it.

CHAPTER V.

WE have had a wonderful model shown us in the last verse of the preceding chapter. "Forgiving one another as God has forgiven you." That is a very remarkable fact, that we are called upon to be imitators of God. It is not simply to follow Christ as He was down here, which of course would be infinite in its character, but it is taking us right up to God Himself, and says, Be just like Him. Here He broadens it out.

Vers. 1, 2. "Be ye, therefore, imitators of God as dear children; And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." "Walk in love." That is precisely the way God walks. We learn that God is light, and that God is love. Now He has done everything in the light perfectly,—brought out the sin and iniquity and thoroughly judged it in the cross; and so He walks along in love toward those who were sinners, acting toward them in infinite love all the time. And so He comes to us and says, You be the same. All your walk is to be in love. God has settled the whole account of sin—forever. Therefore, I may take up the matter of love, which never fails. Tongues may fail; prophecies may fail; faith may fail; but love goes on forever. So, having the question of righteousness settled, how grandly we can walk! But then we have, as we must always have, the one Model held before us—Christ. So it says, "As Christ also hath loved us." That is the way to love. Then we have it in practical expression,— "And hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Here, then, is the perfect definition of love, as set forth in the holocaust offering, called the burnt offering, in Leviticus i., and as the meat offering in Chap. ii. It is Christ fulfilling everything that God would have from man toward Himself and toward man. Now that offering is held before us, not simply as that in which we are accepted, but in which we are to offer up ourselves. We are to be continually walking in that way. It is a very remarkable fact that we are called upon, not only to take our place in the value of what Christ has done in this offering in Leviticus, but to act in that way; to have a thorough love for men in Christ. We are the only beings that God could call upon to do this. Angels could only obey. But we are alive with Him, and the life of the new man is like the life of Christ.

So that love is the fruit of the Spirit; and peace and joy are the fruit of the Spirit. It is not a command; it is fruit. You know there is nothing more exacting than a tree, with the sap running through it, and everything made for bearing fruit. So with the new man, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to lead us out.

What is the first fruit? Love. "And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." We have a very beautiful expression of that in Phil. iv. In the ministry of those dear Philippians to the apostle in person, he sees it as a savor of a sweet smell unto God. They had denied themselves to help him in his need. And thus it became a sweet savor unto God. This is very sweet to learn, that the Spirit has thus dignified the simple act of the believer, when it is done solely as to Christ, and for Christ's sake. So if we need to know what this means, we have that as an example. We have Christ's own life. He was ever ready at the call of any one. He never thought of Himself,

but was always thinking of the Father, and always having His mind, and always thinking of others. That was a sweet savor.

Ver. 3. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." These things that were forbidden in the ten commandments, not the first four, but the latter six; those that pertain to man; of them He now says, "Do not these things." But He does not say as in Ex. xx., "Thou shalt not." That puts it in a cold way, and man in the flesh could not do right. But having told us who we are, and that we are just like Christ before God, He forbids these things that are in the ten commandments, for it is still true that God does not like them. But He goes further: "Let them not be even so much as named among you!" To have to name them is defiling, involving that we would do them. God has so thoroughly taken us out of the old man, and associated us with the new, and made us like Christ, that He says, "Not so much as named among you." Conceive the idea of their being such a thing *named* as Christ committing one of these things! Why, you would shudder at the thought. Think of their being such a thing named as His not coveting, or not stealing, or not lying! The very naming of it is the awfulest thing. He would have us, then, so thoroughly immaculate in thought and conduct that we should not even name them. There is nothing that can express such perfect cleanness as that. You can see why, not being under the law, you are vastly above all this. What is the rule, the standard? "As becometh saints." That is more to you and me than the ten commandments with their thunderings; infinitely more. "As becometh saints." A saint is one separated unto God. It can never be made too high, or too clean, or too pure.

Ver. 4. "Neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks." He speaks of certain things not being convenient. It is not a question of consistency with our profession simply, but of what we are. They are of another life than ours. Is not that a marvelous way of putting it? How thoroughly the Holy Spirit has guarded believers against the necessity of bringing in the ten commandments. They are an offense, for the ten commandments have to name these things. The idea of children of God that are as near to God as Christ is having to have these things rung over their heads, and in their ears constantly! Why, you see, it is lowering the whole character of what we have, and what we are in Christ Jesus. It is an offense, in itself.

Therefore, He says, giving it force (Ver. 5): "For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." That is in the millennium, the kingdom of Christ, and then afterward, the kingdom of God. When God told David that He was going to set up a kingdom under him, He was looking forward to Christ reigning; and then when it is all to be given up to God.

Now in neither of these is anything allowed that is here prohibited. Now He says, "For you know that as to the principles of that, it was the law first; and then afterward in the millennial times on earth He is going to write the law in their hearts." But we are infinitely above that. There are no series of negatives in our case. It is just the opposite. Not only not to steal, but to labor with our hands, that we may have to give. We are not only not to fight men, but we are told to deal with them in love. That would hinder a child of God from going to law. We

cannot fight for right here ; we belong to heaven. So it goes all the way through—the whole character of it ; all that we have and are among men.

Ver. 6. “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Here we have another thought. Some may say, I am free from the law. As though they were going to take out a license to do wrong because they are not under the law. After all, no matter what it be, whether Judaism, which was under the law ; or the church, which is not under the law ; or the millennial glory, when Christ is reigning ; or the kingdom of God in the future ;—there is one thing—He will never allow these things that the law prohibited. The wrath of God came upon all those that were disobedient. Those under the law had something to disobey, and so they are called children of disobedience. Do not let anybody deceive you by saying, “You can do things of this kind ; you are not under the law.” God has always put these things under a ban. But in the new man He has put them further and further away. In Col. iii., without saying, Put away all things that come in under the ten commandments, He says, “Treat them as dead.” Then He tells us also to put away all these things not mentioned in the ten commandments. We cannot be satisfied with simply having the law. We must have all the others. That is life in Christ acting itself out.

Vers. 7, 8. “Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light.” It is not that we are only brought into the light. If we were brought into the light simply, we would have all these things exposed. But He says, “Now we are light in the Lord.” We are the very substance of light. We stand forth as an expression of

the righteousness of God through eternity. He has dealt with us righteously, and has raised us up anew in Christ, and we stand as the very expression of light. Why? Because we have been so thoroughly exposed. God has gone down to the very core of our nature and conduct, and put all away in Christ crucified and risen. We are not only in the light, but we are God's own light. It is not in ourselves, we are light "in the Lord." We are not to be under the Lord, as separated from Him, but we are actually in Him. We have the same life that He has, just as we had the same life that Adam had. We are linked with Him in the most intimate way. We ought, then, to be as much an expression of light down here in our walk as Christ was. How do we compare with that? We ought to be just like Christ, abhorring evil in every form, and showing out righteousness and grace and holiness in every act of life. We shall have plenty to confess. So it is, "Walk as children of light."

And then in the parenthesis He says (Ver. 9), "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Now the law said, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things." Giving it in its substance,—“Thou shalt love Jehovah, thy God, with all thy heart ;” never letting up on anything. And so this is in the Lord and in the light. How wonderfully different! But does it allow any evil? Does it for a moment allow sin? It is the cleanest thing that God has ever brought out, and brought out in these last times ; since He has raised up Christ from the dead. Here are cleanness and holiness at last.

Ver. 10. "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." That is, proving practically what is well-pleasing to the Lord ; learning and exhibiting it.

Vers. 11, 12. "And have no fellowship with the

unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." This takes us back to Chap. iv., Vers. 17, 18, telling how the Gentiles walked. It is a shame even to think of such. And in Ver. 4 of this chapter, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting;" the talking and jesting that had to do with uncleanness. It is the character of the ribald jest. I do not think that God in any place dislikes laughter. He means the unclean jesting.

What, then, are we to be occupied with? Giving thanks. We can do that with as bright a face as the sun has at noon-day; as cheerful as Abraham was in his feast at the weaning of Isaac; as the father was when he received home his son and had music and dancing and the feast. He means that we shall be happy. But not the foolish talking and jesting. To make a man happy, I would not send him to the theatre. I would get his conscience purged before God, and then his soul will light up and it will be a permanent thing.

Ver. 13. "But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." That is, brought out, exposed. That is what the courts are at when they are examining witnesses. If a man is guilty, it will bring it out. The light is that which makes manifest; the light is God's word coming in and bringing out what we are, and what we have done. "Whatever makes manifest is light." There never has been such an expression of light as Christ's own death down here, for it showed God's hatred of sin and love for us.

Ver. 14. "Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It is using this quotation to illus-

trate the point. Light has come, and now it is time to shine in the light all the time. It is not groping toward the light, but the light has come. Everything has been looked at thoroughly, and now stand in that judgment. Now it is for the heart to go out in its full liberty and delight in Christ. The Christian is a light in the world. The more we walk in Christ the more we shall be misapprehended. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God : and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Our life is a hidden thing. The more we walk in the light, the more we shall not be known. People can tell, of course, whether I am honest or kind. But as to the light, it is just total separation, in which I recognize that I have been cut off from the best things in the world,—those that are not sin. A multitude of people would give up the worst kind of things, but some of the nice things we would like to take. They would take those things that have to do with culture and refinement and wealth. They hope to improve man. They would enter into politics if they were clean. But that is not what God says. Christ says, "You are not of the world. Therefore the world hates you." This quotation is speaking of the time when Christ should come, but it is quoted for our benefit. It is to illustrate what we have. It is looking down to the millennial day for Judah, but comes to us and says, "Your light is come ; now, you shine !"

Ver. 15. "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as

fools, but as wise." The whole matter has been laid out before us in the preceding verses, and this is the word of wisdom. When one understands what wisdom is defined to be in First Cor., i. 30, even righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, one can see how we ought to walk in wisdom. It involves all these things; redemption going on, of course, to the deliverance of the body, when we shall be with Christ forever.

Now, knowing ourselves thus, and knowing that God has thus acted in Christ toward us, it becomes the standard, the appeal in regard to our walk. And you see what an appeal it is. Walk according to the righteousness that is shown in Christ Jesus in our being raised up from the dead. Walk according to that infinite redemption, which we are sharing and shall share. What tenderness, what sweetness and simplicity, and what thorough heartiness toward all that are about us! We see that there is nothing grasps us more closely than the truth that is given in Ephesians; and the higher the truth, the more does it demand, practically, in living. Those who are constantly talking about the wilderness and wilderness truth, but little apprehend the power of heavenly truth to make a walk and to form manners. Here we have it, then, in a general way.

Ver. 16. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Be wise, then, buying up opportunities. Why, it would make every child of God as rich in blessing as the sun is, carrying life and light and heat with us everywhere. How the world would be absolutely blessed were God's children taking up the word to act by it, instead of this Jewish position that they have taken, which has corrupted them so that they are not up to even the Jewish standard. When any get out of place, they always act the worst Angels which kept not their first estate,—what did

they become? The very worst in conduct. The church that drops down from its place becomes the lowest and meanest thing there is; going beyond Israel in its apostasy, and continually referring to the law, or to some wilderness truth. Our standard is heavenly truth. And that would exact from me more than religion could, in life and cleanness of conversation and habit.

Ver. 17. "Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." The more we walk in the truth, the more we shall come to understand what that will is. "If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." And in Col. i., "Fruitful to every good word and work," and then "increasing in the knowledge of God." We need never be in darkness, and need never appeal to the ten commandments, nor need any worldly methods of men. We have the highest ideal of life by having the highest truth in regard to our own place in the glory and for it.

Ver. 18. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." It is the Holy Spirit occupying us, and not the spirit of the world, which would be expressed by wine, because wine is the expression of joy, both of God and of men. It means here anything that is simply human joy,—the joy of the first man. Occupation with the things of the world would be to be drunken with wine. And literally, it would have us know that we are not to be drunken, but are to let the Holy Spirit permeate us everywhere as liquor permeates a man's body, just controlling a man, and making him to act in an unnatural way. So let the Holy Spirit direct us, and let Him have full place. Let us be full of Him, yielding to Him in everything.

Ver. 19. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making

melody in your heart to the Lord." Then, instead of all this foolish conversation or trifling and worldly wisdom and intercourse, speaking to each other in psalms and hymns. What a wonderful way that is ! The very language of heaven ! And speaking in that tone, the tone of worship and praise, the tone of delight in God, the tone of self-emptiness, because the worship would involve self-emptiness, and being filled with God. It is speaking in that tone. I need not sing to my brother, necessarily, but it is speaking in the tone of the psalm and hymn, the highest way of expression. We shall never find a weakness in the truth that God gives. We shall never find a failing there. It will always be unfolding. Let us but converse in the thoughts of God, and whither are we led ? I have seen dear children of God communicating to each other about Christ's coming, until their faces glowed with delight. This is psalms and hymns. Then, as the psalm and hymn are really the highest fruitage of literature, so we take the highest form of expression to communicate to each other the things of God and of Christ.

Then He adds : "Singing and making melody to the Lord." Of course we see how rich it would be in contrast with all that is going on that is called singing and worship ; singing simply to please the ear and to gratify man's taste. How much singing for man, and how little for God ! Here, it is singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord. It does not make any difference what kind of a voice we have, or whether we can keep time or tune. It is the occupation with Him who is the highest in the glory. It is the matchless fact for us that we are brought into all these things that are dearest to Him, and according to His own delight.

Q. Would it be wrong to sing some of those splendid passages in the Creation or Messiah ?

A. It is never meant for God. Why should we ever have any such thought? It has no more to do with God than singing Pinafore or the Mikado.

Q. But these are not based on a good thing.

A. God's good things are not man's good things. It is not quality of voice or tone. Let God measure and give the standard of the goodness, then. The standard is singing and making melody in your *hearts*. The standard of everything for God is Christ. The standard of our songs must be Christ in the glory. Now, there is no good thing short of that risen man. We can sing better when we sing in time, of course; I am a man, and it pleases me. But what has that to do with it? We could not sing *together* without time and tune. We must have a melody to sing; and there would be the harmony because there are different voices. But if it is done simply as a matter of taste, that is all there is of it. Man gets pleased, and God is left out of the case.

We have the Holy Spirit and God dwelling in us and everything given, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and we are to go on, and get more and more informed; yet it is the same book. We will see Him more and more as we see Him in this book. We do not get a single thing by ourselves; everything by the Holy Spirit. He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. First Cor. ii. is our legacy, a full revelation of the truth. There we have the Holy Spirit given us that we might know these things, and all the deep things of God. And further along in Cor., "All things are yours," "height, depth, and everything." And we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Then we must not refer these things to the future. The Holy Spirit associates the present with all the

future, the Holy Spirit making all true to us because it is all Christ's.

Q. Among the all things is death. What does it mean ?

A. We have conquered it and are overcomers there. In Rom. viii. we have, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The very first thing mentioned is death.

You would have to be very careful that you use words worthy of Him. Suppose you sing, "I am trying to climb up Zion's hill." Do you think there is any worship in that? The finest singing that I ever knew in any church was conducted by an infidel. That did not make them any the less fine singers. They do it better than those that are saved. Edwin Booth could read those things so that it would bring tears. These men make it the study of their lives to get the expression and tone. There was plenty of it last Sunday, doubtless, and the congregations were very greatly impressed and pleased, and probably some of the prayers were of the same kind ; but the impressiveness was for man.

"Unto the Lord!" That stands above us yet; and it is richer than anything we have said or have thought. It is a very sweet close of what we have had in these chapters ; for now we are going into a new subject altogether.

Ver. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is according to the tone of the whole book, "our God and Father." Let us speak a little more about giving thanks, because we have here the key to all. It is "In the name of the Lord

Jesus Christ." I question whether in the name of Händel and Haydn and all these that they have in their chants and their carols and their various songs—whether that means the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is giving thanks in the name of a man. But in the Lord Jesus Christ is away up there, according to what we are in Christ. If we were to admit this fleshly singing, it would lower the tone, and we would all feel it. But when we come to the end, it is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are standing before God just as He is. We are as near and as dear to God as He is. And now in that life and standing we get this. It has nothing to do with voices any more than it has to do with the violin or trombone or organ. You cannot make melody to the Lord with any instruments at all. If you do, you go back into Judaism. The organ and the violin and the harp and the instrument with ten strings belong back there.

Ver. 21. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." He that cometh from above is above all; and yet Christ, speaking of Himself, said, "I am among you as one who serves." We have in Phil. ii., "He that was in the form of God emptied Himself and took the form of a servant." He came to the lowest rank of all. In Eph., to correspond to this, we have our place in Christ Jesus in the heavenly places, and all the glories are before us and we are at home in that, and now for a recompense, be empty. "Subjecting yourselves one to another," corresponds with Christ's own doing. What we were as sinners is not in question; we do not empty ourselves of that. The cross has taken away all that we were. But now we come down, because we are so high in our place and belong in the glory and are ready for anything. Here, He begins with the natural, fixed relationships.

Ver. 22. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." It begins with the one that is the sweetest and the most precious, the nearest, the expression of the heart of God. In the beginning, in that which was pronounced upon Eve, we see how she was cast upon God in a peculiar way, and this is spoken of in 1 Tim. ii. 15, "She shall be saved in child-bearing." How sweet it is, and how He thinks of her! God never forgets these things. He never forgets what Eve brought into the world, and He never forgets Eve's condition, nor that of the daughters of Eve. He gives her the privilege of first of all being spoken to of the sweetest thing,—“Wives, be in subjection.” That is the highest thing there is, to be in subjection. He tells all of us to be subject. The wife is to be no more subject than every other relationship calls for, but she is specially in subjection to her husband. How? As unto the Lord. It does not make any difference what the husband is, for if it is unto the Lord, there is just the place for her to show it. Then the Holy Spirit enters into the fact that here there is a setting forth of the relationship of Christ to the church.

Vers. 23, 24. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything." The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. You see at once what an appeal that would be to the wife. Of course, these are all children of God. He is not addressing a wife that is unsaved. How the wife is exalted when she is told, You are occupying toward your husband a position that is parallel with the relationship that the church has with Christ; and as Christ is the Head of the church, your husband is your head. Be in subjec-

tion as the church is to Christ. He says, "In all things." Then, Christ being Head of the church, He is also the Saviour of the body. That means her body; the very thing that the wifely relationship is for. He will deliver her through her own distinctive trial as wife. Maternity is what is referred to here.

Then the address to the husbands. Ver. 25. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." The wife being cast thus into her relation to her husband, how must the husband take it up? If the wife is to be subject to him as the church is subject to Christ, he must act Christ. He must have no other model or principle in relation to her than just such as Christ has toward the church. "Husbands, love your wives, *even as Christ loved the church.*" Why, it makes him a servant. The woman being in subjection does not make her a servant. There is no such thought as that in Scripture. But I find that the highest servant in the universe is Christ Himself, serving the church. God serves. When Christ said, "My Father worketh and I work," He is telling about serving. Did He not give Himself up in order to get the church? And then when He gets it, He is serving it all the time. A man is therefore to serve his wife. Why, of course, that is his place; doing all for her. Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her. Is not that the most perfect service that can be named? Then, that He might set her apart to Himself.

Ver. 26. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." There is a daily and hourly service. Looking after her conduct, cleansing according to John xiii. and First John i. 6-ii. 2.

Ver. 27. "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any

such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." If He is looking after every spot and wrinkle, is not that a perpetual service ?

Now see what is the rule for the husband with relation to his wife. There is not a word about, Husbands, rule your wives, or command your wives, any more than there is, Strike your wives, or scold your wives. It is the most unspiritual and unnatural that these things should be. There is something higher and sweeter and richer than all these things. The Christian household is to be according to the pattern shown in the heavens. And the Lord discloses His own house and its exquisite intimacies as the model. If to us to live were Christ, how natural this would be. The marriage of the Lamb, Rev. xix., will disclose how glorious and without spot or wrinkle is the church through His love and service. So ought men to love their wives.

Then, to give it even more intimately, it says, Ver. 28, "So ought men to love their wives *as their own bodies*. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." A man carries his body with him always, and is always looking after it. It is not selfishness, it is self-protection. He must feed that body, and give it rest and labor and exercise. He must cleanse it daily. He must see to it in sickness and in health, and he is charged with it all the time. So ought the husband to love his wife.

Vers. 29-31. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church : For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Is there a sweeter section to be found in the book than this ? He has gone on in Chap. iv. to tell us not to steal and not to lie and all those things

that are not even to be named among us as becometh saints, and He has told us to be filled with the Spirit, but now He gives us the best—to be subject one to another. And the husband's subjection to the Lord Jesus is that he is acting the Lord Jesus toward his wife. Follow it step by step. It is most wondrously sweet. And now we get the thought that, after all, that peculiar symbol of love and tenderness and care actually represents Christ's care for the church. Why, it seems to me that it brings it home to us in the most tender way, in a way to command our hearts. Does Christ actually love us as one loves his wife? A man will cross the continent just to get a glimpse of her. Does Christ care for us that way? And a man's life is rounded up and filled up and made sweet by his wife. Is that the way Christ feels toward the church? Is it not precious?

There are seven things told: Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle; then He nourishes it and cherishes it. There we have the fullness of Christ's care for the church.

Q. Is that collectively?

A. Yes. Well, He does it individually, too. Of course washing the feet is individual. He cleanses by the word. But the love is toward the whole, as well.

Now how precious that makes every member of Christ's body to us; to look upon each member of Christ's body as an object of this intense love and constant care and this exquisite enjoyment on the part of Christ. A wonderful model we have in Solomon's Song. There the lover, Christ, is always seen looking at and talking to the beloved one, the one whom He calls His love. He never speaks to any-

body else. She is the one that talks to others, but He never does. There is progression on her part, first saying, "My Beloved is mine," and after a while, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." And in the end she says, as the result of all that she has gone through, "I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me." That was true in the beginning, but she did not learn it until the end. That is the progress in regard to hor. There is no progress in Him, because He is perfect from the beginning.

And so again also with reference to ourselves : "I am black but comely," as the curtains of Solomon were comely, and the tents of Kedar were black. Black in ourselves but comely to Him, because of His eyes that can see comeliness. He gathers us to Himself and makes us fair for Himself, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This is a very sweet thing to come in here. We have been talking so much about God's love. Ephesians occupies us with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with God's purposes and the carrying out of them, and then we have had the exceeding riches of His grace. We have had Him rich in mercy, and now after all is done, and the church is really seen perfected, she is seen as a bride, and there is a Bridegroom, and then they are looked at together ; and now we have love that is more tender and exquisite, —more a personal relationship than the other. Here is that which comes right along in living, we living together with Christ. The church is the object of His desire. He saw it, and His whole heart being set on it, God gave it to Him. As Adam came down to Eve's place, so Christ came down that He might have her, so entranced was He with her beauty ; just as the Bridegroom pleads in Solomon's Song, "Let me look upon thy face !"

It would be a very nice thing if husbands were

more occupied with telling their wives how precious they are to them, ever wooing them, instead of having it taken as a matter of course that they love them. You must have a selfish heart if you cannot tell her over and over again what she is to you. We have a model, at any rate.

Vers. 32, 33. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Lest we should think that the whole thing was only a figure of Christ and the church, He comes back to it and says, *You husbands, love your wives in that way.* And "*Wives, reverence your husbands.*" It has not said a word about the wife loving the husband, and yet it is the charge to the husband that he love his wife. It being a picture of the love of Christ to the church, the love of the church to Christ is not in question. The love of Christ to the church is the great thing. The whole dispensation in which we are is for telling out God's love. The former dispensation was, "*Thou shalt love God.*" The present one is, "*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed.*" It is a false thing to be saying, "*Thou shalt love God.*" It will not do to repeat it and say, "*Hear also what our Lord Jesus hath said: Thou shalt love God,*" etc. He has not said it to the church. He was repeating it in answer to the question of a Jew. God is taking time now to show out His love, and Christ's love is brought out. And it seems the Father is delighting, when He thus places Christ and the church together, to say, "*It was not good that He should be alone; I make one meet for Him, and to help Him.*" What a help the church is to Christ, that it should be the receptacle of all the love that He has in Him, and all the patience, and

all the service. I find no thought in Scripture of Christ devoting Himself to the sinner. It is not said that Christ loves the sinner or loves the world. He loves the church. "*God* so loved the world,"—but it does not say that Christ loved the world. It is His heart on His own. And thus they are shut up together, Christ and the church. How complete the household with husband and wife. They form a household of their own. We all know it. We retire and leave them. They do not need our company.

How complete this is! The glory shall unfold it, and the heart should take it up now. We little think how much we are valued; of what value to Christ! Christ would be bereaved without one of us. And when the church gets down from her place and gives herself to other loves, what an awful thing it is! When that which was so much loved by Him is spoken to on the ground that she has left her first love and has become the unchaste one, and is that one to be driven out of society, and will be, too, it becomes all the more alarming in its character.

Now there is no cold treatment of this husband to his wife. There is nothing cold or formal,—nothing as a matter of course. There is intense devotion. All that is in Him is at her behest. It is for her. A woman who has married a child of God, who is subject to the word, must know that she is as wealthy as it is possible to be in this universe. She can say, There is Christ loving the church, and giving Himself for it all the time, and my husband is said to be that! Then she would delight to put herself under that hand and say, I am subject; I am delighted to be subject to him, and he subject to the Head. It would come in as the most exquisite of delights always. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." We have Christ as the

model for that. Christ left the very heavens to get His wife. He left Israel, His natural mother on the earth, and said, "Who is my mother?" He denied her and turned to the church. He has come out from Israel as a man leaves his mother's house, and has gone and taken up the church. Now He says, "A man cleaves to his wife, and all other things are in subjection to that." Why? A man's wife is himself. He may owe allegiance to his father and mother, but he is really one with his wife. That is the reason the word about the unequal yoke (Second Cor. vi.) does not look at that. A yoke is to keep people together. If that is all there is between you and your wife, it is a strange thing. It took the two to make one. God formed Adam, and he was both male and female. He took out of him the woman. There they stood apart. But they are to be together, to complete the man. God might have kept them together as one, but He took them apart that they might show out what Christ is; that man having gotten away from God, Christ should come down and take form, and so take us up, and the sentence is now that the heart may have it as a matter of intelligence. Husband and wife can thus take it up in the intelligence of God's love. Instead of being necessarily one, they are one by being brought together heart to heart.

Now one other little thought. The more you and I are taught in the word, the more we shall find that the family is the place to show it in; the more precious the relationship becomes, the more the love will be renewed every morning. You are not living on anything stale. You are not wearing the love out if you learn from the word. There is not any true sweetness in the natural man or the natural woman; but there is everything when they are both children of God, and going on with everything with Christ. He is not talking to

the husband and wife outside of the Assembly. Poor things, they must do the best they can. He is talking to His own.

Then, let us take up this last verse in its fullness. "Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband." You cannot get too high a conception or impression of the relationship of Christ to the church. So, then, it is for us to keep up to it. If any husband ever snarls at his wife or says a cross word, let him confess it to God and to her right away, for that is not loving the wife as Christ loves the church. Let him bring God's word and not his word. And then, what is above, to cherish and bring her into the place, but not to man's will. That is not the model at all. The model is Christ's love, and not human love. Now see that you do it. And if a man never goes out and says a word for God, nor writes a letter to plead with some sinner to be saved, and if he never makes any display whatever, if he is acting toward his wife as Christ acted toward the church, he will do more than a great deal of the testimony that is going on in the churches. As children of God we will obey. We have nothing to do with won't or will when it comes to the things that God tells. We have had some very wonderful statements in this book of Ephesians, and it is a pity if when it comes home we say, But suppose you can and will not ?

Q. Are we not still in the flesh ?

A. No. The word says we are not. We are in the body but not in the flesh.

Q. Is there any man that lives that does not snarl once in a while ?

A. He has no business to do so. No man is acting at all as a Christian who will expose his wife or talk about her faults. Cover them a thousand miles deep.

Nobody has a right to know anything about a wife's failures except himself. It is not loving as Christ loved the church. Christ exposes the church to herself but not to the world. A man should marry a wife to serve her, to bless her, to enrich her, to free her, to glorify her. He may have little opportunity of other service, but this service, as unto the Lord, is ever grand and unique and wonderful. The true life of both man and woman, as such, comes out in this relationship when made one, and each has the choicest opportunity of adorning the doctrine of Christ. Let each take up home-life anew in the presence of this love of Christ.

“No man hates his own body, but nourishes it as Christ the church.” Christ does not expose the church. A man does not go into the street and expose his own body ; no more should he expose his wife. It may be that sometimes the wife may not be all that the husband would like her to be, but he has no business to expose her. That is not loving as Christ loves the church. Here we learn these two things, that the church is His Bride and His Body, and we have all these wonderful thoughts in regard to it. “I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

CHAPTER VI.

Now we come to the next relationship, parents and children. Ver. 1. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." "In the Lord." That is the key to it all. Suppose a parent is bad; he is to be obeyed then for the Lord's sake, because the relationship involves it. Anybody could obey a very excellent man, just as anybody could love a very lovable and excellent woman, but this is to come in where they are unlovely, and therefore He says, "In the Lord." Then He says, "it is right."

Vers. 2, 3. "Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Now right means righteousness. That takes us at once back to the legal code, and what it would be even in the legal code. It is as we had in Chap. iv., and refers to the law, as the law would not allow dishonesty and theft and murder, and of course, being in Christ, these are not even to be named. Some might say, We are not under the law, and therefore we are not bound to these things. So there is a reference to the law. The law is always the expression of righteousness for man; and therefore when He says it is right He is referring to the law, and adds, "It is the first commandment with promise." Are we then under the law by His putting this in? No. But He gives you the thought, and shows that the law even came in with a promise under such circumstances. We do not want the law in order to live under it, but it is to show how God put His seal on that obedience to parents. That is all. Just as it is in Chap. iv. on the other matters.

Just as it is in Col. iii. in regard to the law. You may not do a thing that the law would not allow you to do.

Ver. 4. "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It is the Lord all the time. We stand always as a token of what God has done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in Him. We represent Him. Let us be what we will, husband, wife, child, or father, we are to act thus in the Lord.

Now the parent, the father, is not to provoke the child. It is done very often. I was reading yesterday of a teacher that was complained against because she called her pupils blockheads and fools. Not very nice titles in school, of course, but parents have done it too, and worse names. And when parents say, If you do that again I will knock your head off,—that is surely one of the things forbidden here. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." How is that? To nourish and cherish your children as the Lord does you; His kind of admonition. He forbears threatenings, and He is always gracious. And as the principle is given elsewhere, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt;" that is the wholesome thing; but a wholesome word is a very different thing from provoking to wrath,—saying a thing to a child in anger, and raising anger. I remember years ago, as a school-teacher, when I wanted to get the children reduced to silence, I would speak in a whisper. You cannot speak in a whisper and have them keep a loud voice very long. There never was an ugly word that did not come from our own condition of heart; the circumstances never called for it. Nothing ever requires that we should be angry and speak sharply to the wife or child. Whether children are Christians

or not, the fathers are to act according to what He says. The father that is addressed here may not be the father of Christian children. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" His training and discipline.

The question is often asked when we speak of not being under the law, the ten commandments—what shall we teach our children? how shall we bring them up to know right and wrong, to observe the former and avoid the latter? The answer is here. The nurture and admonition of the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should they not be told of His death for sinners and their need of that death, as soon as they are able to understand love in their parents? Why should not the parents make that whole subject "familiar as household words," so that as the little ones grow up they take it in as naturally as any other narrative? Why should they not be told that they needed Him to die for them, and then when they believe this, accept it as a fact that they do believe and so are saved, not expecting more of them than the parents show? Is it not true of them that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God? Who hear more than they, and who retain more clearly what is told them? Let *this* be the thing told, this the theme, the joy of the family, the word of God on the matter of salvation, the authority that settles everything, giving perfect assurance and rest. Let the Lord Jesus be the nearest and dearest friend of all, in short the Chief One in the family and in our lives. I see no reason why our little children should not be all children of God, not by being ours by blood but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ from the earliest years, nurtured thus.

And then when naughtiness is exhibited, bring in the Lord Jesus as the standard, as the grieved One and the One through whom forgiveness comes upon

confession, the same as to ourselves. His love the grand incentive for all life, His life ours, His home ours, His coming for us our hope.

We know that children listen to Bible stories as they do to no other stories.

Ver. 5. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ." As it is everywhere else in Scripture, there is more said to servants than to any other class ; and more of what is sweet and precious, to lift up the heart and to comfort. A servant about whom I knew something some years ago could not understand that according to the flesh she had a mistress, and because she came to the Lord's table and sat with her mistress she did not understand how it was that she could not sit at the same table in the mistress' house. Now while she was her sister in the Lord, she was her servant, socially. I think she understood it after a little. I said to her, "It may be possible that in the course of time you will get married and become mistress of a house, and your mistress might be left destitute and become your servant. Then it would be her business to obey you and wait upon you at the table." The only way for a child of God to act is to take the place he is put into. If I am in the place of a child, I am not to be the father or assume anything paternal. If I am in a servant's place, I am to take it. I best honor the Lord Jesus there. Well then, obey. This is a very different word for the servant from the one used for the wife, be in subjection ; here it is obey, and the master must necessarily command. Everything that the master tells is a command. "I say to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." A servant is to do what he is told. He has nothing to do with thinking or planning, or changing the order that is given him.

It is what we are to Christ, servants ; we have no business to think or plan or project anything. You see a wonderful fact here, that every relationship is of such a character as we have to God and to Christ. Husband and wife,—it is Christ and the Church, father and son,—God is our Father, and we are His sons ; master and servant,—“ One is your Master,” and we are servants. We are the bride of Christ ; we are sons of God ; we are servants of the Lord. Now it is for Him to tell us what to do. We have no right to use our minds in regard to it. Take the word from His mouth. We are all related to Christ as a body-servant to a man, to attend Him ; and He tells us exactly what to do, and that is all we have to do. Bluster and intense activity do not show service. If I had a body-servant, there might be a few times that I should have to say to him, Now, stir around and do this ! But the ordinary way would be to do it with calmness and quietness. The less fuss and noise about it the better. Nowadays the servants are making a fuss, that is, the servants of the Lord. The word “ do ” gets in the way ; it hinders progress. What is enough for us ? Obey !

Then again, understand that the Holy Spirit is speaking here to those that are not only children of God, but all the freshness of Ephesians is in the case ; the truth that is here.

Q. Did the Ephesians apprehend this letter ?

A. I am not acquainted with them. If it was written to the church at Ephesus, we find not long after that they have such an address as this : “ I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.” I can only say that we have to do it. When we get the truth that is given in the beginning richly in our hearts, it will be easy to do the others. We are to be modeled after them ; we are to take the truth. People write biographies and tell stories about dif-

ferent men, in order to get us to do. It is not the way the Lord does. In James it says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," etc. He had to wait a while and the Lord brought it out. Then we have in Hebrews the great company of those that were examples of faith acting. He just mentions them, and then says, "Now you have been looking at all these witnesses, now look off unto Jesus." There is One that you are to follow. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith."

Q. We are not told impossibilities then ?

A. We dwell among impossibilities always. The whole of what we take in is of that character. Faith deals only with impossibilities. Walking by faith never says "try," but simply "do." "Whatsoever things you have heard and learned and received and seen in me, do !" Phil. iv. 9.

Now, that is a standard above all our heads. He said, "For me to live is Christ !" "Forgetting the things that are behind, I press forward to those that are before." He said, "Follow me, I follow Christ." He says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness." "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." We are told by Paul that God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are told to follow after holiness ; to be imitators of God. Why, the truth of Paul and the exhortations of Paul are marvelous. They reach above everything else that you get in Scripture. They deal in impossibilities. There is not a thing that we are not bound to do as new men. God has nothing for the flesh but death. The flesh never had anything for Him. So

we are told to do all these impossible things. He did not say, Keep your temper as well as you can ; do not murder more than a little. He never puts it in that form. How strange it would sound to allow anything. We are in the hands of a holy Father. We are in the righteous One. The sin is in not living up fully to the standard of what Christ is. There is nothing called for short of holiness ; absolute separation from everything that is defiling, of the flesh and the world, and separation unto God the Father and Christ and everything that is there. It is as total separation as there will be when we are caught up.

“With fear and trembling.” We find that word several times. It does not mean fear and trembling according to our idea. What kind of a servant would that be who would tremble all the time? There are three places where it is used. Paul’s first use of it may be the key of the whole matter. He tells the Corinthians that he was with them in fear and much trembling, but one has not the slightest idea that the apostle was afraid of any living man. But there was fear and trembling about himself. It just means the reducing himself to nothing. The only fear would be that self would be allowed.

The next use of it is in Phil. ii., where he says, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” There it is the self destroyed altogether ; as though I were knocked into a shivering mass. Here the servants are to act in that way. It would be to be afraid of himself, but not afraid of his master. The more he is afraid of himself, the less occasion he has to be afraid of his master. The boy who stands up in his class and gives his lesson with confidence shows that he has been afraid he would miss it. The servant that has not a thought of himself shows that that fear and trembling amount to something. His time and spirit and body are his master’s. That is the

way Paul was to the Corinthians. That is the way we act out our salvation. You have it, now act it out. You cannot work a thing out that you have not. When he says that God works in, and then you work out, that will do.

“In singleness of heart.” That is, having no self. It is unmixed. “As unto Christ.” O what a difference there would be in servants! Where would you get all these combinations of working-men, if every child of God even were acting that way. There are hundreds of children of God in these combinations, and see what they do. Just think of children of God keeping the world in agitation by their unitedness, instead of being separated unto God. “With singleness of heart as unto the Lord.” And that is the key to everything for the child of God. One could say, It is hard to meet their demands, but for the Lord’s sake I will do it. He that does a thing in such a way is higher than a king, and in a better place than the president.

Ver. 6. “Not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” “Not with eye service, as men-pleasers.” To do a thing when the master is about and give it up when he is gone. “Doing the will of God from the heart.”

Ver. 7. “With good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men.” If we have apprehended that when we were bad we were quickened with Christ, one would be a better husband or child or servant or master. If not, he had better go back and get that, as the way by which he can learn all these in their practical power.

Ver. 8. “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” I am serving my master, then, because I belong to the Lord.

Ver. 9. "And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." I may esteem myself very high because I have a servant, but He says, "There is no respect of persons with God." Here it is all right to be master and servant, and you have in this the kind of government for us. And inasmuch as there is nothing said about political position, citizenship, we will find no directions in regard to it. Our citizenship is in heaven; not here.

Ver. 10. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." This takes us back at once to the type of it in the book of Joshua. You recall that in the last of Deut. Moses spoke to Joshua,—“Be strong and of good courage.” Then when we open Joshua, we find that he is spoken to thus by Jehovah Himself. And those two and a half tribes to whom he has to speak regarding what they are to do, say, “Only be strong and be of good courage.” Then, too, the whole of the people reiterate that verse, “Be of good courage.” It is not said to another man, under any other circumstances in the history of Israel. You see why. They were entering upon the land actually to take possession of that which was then possessed by the adversary, filling the land full of the enemy’s gods. And now Jehovah’s people, Israel, have come in. After that Joshua sees the Captain of Jehovah’s hosts outside the walls of Jericho, and he asks, “Art thou with us or against us?” and he says, “I am captain of Jehovah’s hosts.” And Joshua at once withdraws his sandals, and stands before him as before God Himself. He has a sword in his hand, and he says, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours.” And then he is again told to be strong. There is an appropriateness in the

exhortation "be strong" when fighting is in order. They were now to fight for every foot of the land which was all theirs by the purpose and promise of Jehovah. And they were now in it with the enemy before them entrenched in their walled cities.

We get more when we come to look at the word, "Be strong," because we go back to Chap. i., where it says that the third thing that was asked for was that we might know the power of His might, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers. Those principalities and powers are spoken of directly as those against whom we contend. Christ has been raised up and seated above them. Satan is under His feet, and he is to be under our feet practically.

Then, as Joshua was to be of good courage,—and there was nothing said about it when the Israelites were in the wilderness,—so in the simple matter of salvation, and the simple fact of His coming to take us up to Himself, there is nothing said to us about strength, but here comes the place of practical action, in regard to the very thing to which we are called.

The whole of their history was linked with that land. They had no purpose without reference to it. We know it from the fact that they have no place in the history of the world now. They are not doing anything while they are out of the land. They are not giving testimony of any kind. The land and the people are married. When out of the land they are not counted. That is very marked when you look at the account given in 1 Kings, with regard to the building of Solomon's temple, where we are told of four hundred and eighty years since the time of the exodus of Israel from Egypt, while they were

six hundred, because the exact number of years that were not counted were the years that they were not in their place. You will find something kindred to that in the history of the church. Take the history of the church as the Holy Spirit gives it in Chaps. ii. and iii., of Rev. You will find that there is a time when Christ does not count the church at all. From Thyatira onward the church as a whole is not looked at at all.

Now having these elements, we come to understand what is here. Just as that was the time for fight, when they had come into the land, and the fighting went on until Solomon's time ; from the time of Joshua clear down to the time of David ; and that is our time down here. So, having learned that we are in heavenly places, we are now to contest it with Satan. Satan's purpose is always to defeat God's mind and God's purpose. When God would have Adam in the garden, Satan came in and spoiled it all, and Adam was driven out as the result, a sinner. When God restored things in the days of Noah, in principle making a new earth and putting man on a new ground altogether, Satan spoiled that by turning men away from God, and making idolaters of them, so that they worshiped demons. When God called out Abraham from that, then Satan at once comes in to spoil it all, and Abraham goes down into Egypt instead of staying in the land. When afterwards God takes Israel by the hand and leads them out of Egypt, Satan opposes in every way, so that if God, on the one side, causes the wheel of the chariots of Pharaoh's hosts to come off and stops their progress, Satan does the same thing with Israel, stopping them on every occasion. And now when God has a heavenly people Satan does not care about stopping the Jews from going into the land ; he cares for keeping God's people from occupying the

heavenly ground. He is just where we are. And so when people think that the fight against Satan means to put down the grog-shops, and to shut up the gambling hells, and to clean up the town, they are very greatly mistaken, and blinded; for those are the matter of the flesh and the world, and the flesh and the world are both crucified to us. Faith says, "I am dead to the world." Now faith cannot make the devil dead. He gets people to fight in the wrong field and not fight him.

Take an illustration,—in Gen. xiv. we find that there were four kings against five; the five, by their very names and everything, are types of the filthiness of the flesh, like the rum power and gambling and vices generally. The four kings, from the place that they were in, represent to us that which is trying to make everything decent, the religious power. It is really the city of Babylon. It is what the church comes to in the end. Now where was Abraham all that time? He did not touch one of them. But when his brother Lot was taken by these four kings, he fought against the four kings and got him out of it. And that is our fight to-day. There is no devil at all in the vices for us to fight. The devil is not in drunkenness, but the lust of the flesh. He is the religious one, with the full purpose of fighting against God. If the highest thought of God is, "I am going to bring my people into the land," then that is where Satan must be to keep them from it, and to block the wheels, and to make it just what it was, that they never did take possession of it. It is a very sad history to learn that there came a time in the reign of Saul—who was Satan's man clear through—that there were but two swords in Israel. Saul had one and Jonathan the other. They had to go to an enemy to grind an agricultural instrument. But they had no swords to sharpen. Just as afterwards in

Israel's history the word of God had been shut up for hundreds of years. Their king was to have the word of God fresh, and to have it before him all the time. But it was not so. And when a copy was found and brought out from amidst the rubbish, it condemned everything, and Josiah took his place in brokenness, and the truth was restored. Just so to-day; the multiplying of Bibles by the million, and the covering of the Bible with a veil that grows thicker every day. Now all that is just what it was in the day of Israel when the Bible was utterly hidden beneath rubbish. Here we have the rubbish of rationalism and the denial of the atonement, and the rubbish of ritualism and of worldliness. And they will be ready to come together directly and have a common religion in which Buddhism and Mormonism and Christianity can come in. Understand this, that while every one of these heathen religions will have a splendid showing; when Christianity is shown it will be a mere travesty of it. It will be the philosophy of Christianity. The anti-christ is not going to be filthy any more than the devil is. There was nothing filthy about him when he came to the woman in the beginning and said, "You shall be as gods." He is the religious one. Do you not know that one of the things about Satan is that he is the *god* of this age? He is the prince of the world. That is a pretty high place, politically and religiously, and it is not worth while to try to degrade Satan from his place as prince and god. There is where he deceives, making people believe that they are fighting the devil. This shows how he succeeds. We had better begin wrestling against the right one.

Vers. 11, 12. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against

the rulers of darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." Now let us go back to what we had in Chap. iii., that the purpose of the church during the present period was that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. To whom? Not to men, because they could not understand it. "Therefore the world knoweth us not," because we are sons of God. As soon as the church can be understood, it ceases to be for Christ at all. It is inhabited by the Holy Spirit, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. These are germinal principles. If we are that, the world cannot understand. What, therefore, have we to do with the world? But it says that we are to show to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God. If we are to show it to them, we are there to fight.

"Therefore, be strong in the Lord." How are you going to be strong? Strong in ritualism, and getting under the law, and building up a moral life? Strong in the formalities of certain denominations? Is that strength? Who said, "In union there is strength?" Did God ever say it? Now then remember that strength is not in man at all. It is not in numbers any more than it is in your right arm. "Strong in the Lord and the power of *His* might." What is the power of His might? Resurrection. In order to be strong we must apprehend resurrection. That takes us clear out of the whole thing. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." That is the place and that is the one power,—the power by which He raised up Jesus our Lord. That is the only power by which we can fight.

“Take up the whole armor . . . For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.” Israel did. You will all along have the contrast. Resurrection power that was spoken of in Chap. i. is like the power of God in bringing them through the Red Sea and through Jordan. The power of God for Israel was shown in opening the Red Sea and taking them through it. It is resurrection, in type. That generation died that had gone through the Red Sea; and now God must have them go through the water again. Then, instead of taking them up into the land which was presented to their fathers, He must lead them again and get them on the other side of Jordan, and open the Jordan as He opened the Red Sea forty years before. He gets them there when the Jordan is at its flood, and then He just as quietly opens with the power of His hand a passage through as He opened the Red Sea. It is the power of God. It destroyed the enemy in the Red Sea. There is no enemy to be destroyed in that way here.

Now look for a moment at the difference between those Philistines that were in the land and Israel that were going into the land. The Philistines had gone there without going through the Red Sea or Jordan. Their original home was in Egypt, and they had passed up into the land, and had actually given it its name. Palestine and Philistine are the same thing. The song of Moses even brings in the name of Palestine; not as a sweet name, but as the place of the enemy. Now God would have the people that were going into the land to be the real possessors of it pass through death and resurrection. You understand what the Philistines were relatively to Israel; they were the people of the world on heavenly ground. They represent the professing church to-day as clearly as anything can do. How many are there among believers that are appre-

hending that they are on heavenly ground? Did you learn it when you were told the gospel? I am sure I did not. I went on talking about the Lord Jesus, and yet not apprehending who I was at all, nor knowing what I was saved for.

You see the exceeding importance of these three things that are prayed for in Chap. iii. Now it is the common thing and a common heritage from our fathers, that they did not know anything about the place the church is in. Probably, the large proportion of Christendom is not saved. That is just the character of the Philistines that were to be driven out. They are connected with Satan, and he is the one that we are to oppose. We are to possess that all the time. How can we do it? By asserting our heavenly place; simply denying that we are under the law, for we are in Christ. Denying that we are associated with ritual, for we are already in the holiest as worshippers. This is our place. Denying that our business is to convert the world, but that we are to wait for the Son of God, and to be caught up to meet Him. There is not much ordinarily said in the professing church that we do not have to negative. They do not begin by letting a man know he is eternally saved, and they do not go on by telling him that he stands in a risen Christ. They do not go on and tell him that the Lord is coming, but they keep him in doubt in regard to everything. As a result, they make men infidels.

See, then, the necessity of this word, "Be strong." Not to be strong in our own resources but in the Lord. Remember, He gets His title as risen. Now we stand in resurrection only. Then we fight against Satan up there. The fight is to maintain the heavenly place all the time. It is just as Israel entered their land and there stood the walls of Jer-

icho. What is to meet it? Be strong, first of all, in the One that is strong.

Then we wrestle against wicked spirits, and we wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this age; that seems to be connected with politics. We are wrestling against politics, because the head of the world is Satan. We are wrestling against everything that man is telling about progress of the world. We are as definitely against all that as we are against Satan, because he is the head of it all. "The rulers of the darkness of this age." All that is against God and shuts out Christ. And in a little while, after these that are Christ's are caught up, there will be a darkening of everything that is heavenly. It will be simply darkness. There will be no light at all. What are we to do then? "Put on the whole armor of God." Not one piece of armor, only. There are some that are disposed to take one piece, and talk about faith simply; and people will run out on one principle, and they make foolishness of it. And there are some people that will get the word of God, but they do not know how to use it, for it has not used itself in them. They cannot say, "Thy word have I hid in my heart." So it will not do to take only one piece. "Take the panoply." It is a unit.

"Stand against the wiles of the devil." It is not immoral things, the lusts of the flesh; we have had that in the past chapters; those filthy things not even so much as named among you, any more than they would be in heaven. The thought ought not to come in. The idea of being told, not to steal and not to murder! You know that involves something, that such are not even to be named. The real fight is against him who is hindering us from being heavenly in our walk. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the

devil." "Devil" means accuser; as the serpent he is a deceiver. He has crafty ways; just such as I have already illustrated by telling you how he has succeeded in getting us to do something else than the things for which we are called.

Ver. 13. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Now this is the day of evil. This is the day in which we are told by Christ, "Now is the judgment of this world." The whole thing is under judgment. The prince of this world is ruling now; Satan is that prince. We are told, then, that we wrestle against wicked spirits in heavenly places, the rulers of the darkness of this age. It must therefore be the evil day now. It must be the whole time that we are here. And so we are always to be on the alert, and always to be fighting against him.

We notice that there are two characters of armor spoken of. We have first the defensive, including the girdle, the breast-plate, the sandals for the feet, the shield of faith, and the helmet; every one of them in front, as you notice, involving a fight with the enemy face to face. There is no armor for the back in this. He is not expecting us to turn our back upon the enemy. We are to withstand in this evil day. And then, "having done all, to stand." To stand just that way, ready. We withstand by means of defensive armor; we stand and use the offensive armor. Now let us look at the armor.

Ver. 14. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breast-plate of righteousness." The girdle was that which held together all the armor. It was then especially used with reference to the breast-plate, and it held all the armor, and was to brace up the man. We find in fighting even now, when men stand face to face and

fight with their fists, they always have a belt. It is to hold a man together. And the girdle here is truth. Now if we take it that we are called in order to be saved at last, that is not the truth. If it is simply a question of our being made Christians in order to do good, that is not the truth. We have had the truth. Chap. i. 3. gives it. The truth is that we are blessed according to that full title of God. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We are blessed in heavenly places, in contradistinction to the earthly. If we esteem ourselves as belonging to the earth, the truth is not holding us.

In Chap. ii. we are quickened together with Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace. That is the truth. We are builded together as a habitation for God by the Spirit. That is truth. We are eternally saved as believers in Christ. That is truth. If we, therefore, go halting and doubting whether we are saved, do you not see that we are not girded at all? The truth is not there.

In Chap. iii. we learn that we have a very distinctive character of truth that was not given to other ages and generations at all; not even given to the Twelve, but given to Paul; and that our present testimony is that we show to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God. Anything short of this would not be the truth. One would be without a girdle.

Now if we are not girded in this way, how can we fight? How could Israel fight the Amorites if they did not know who they themselves were as called of God, according to His purposes given to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; "and He has led us all this way Himself, and we are here in the land and it belongs to us. We are here by right and title of

Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth !” Why, they would have been as weak as water if they had not had that. It is necessary, therefore, for us. And that is the thing to hold us together. Everything must be held and bound closely to us.

“Having on the breast-plate of righteousness.” That would be maintaining a good conscience. You find Paul saying, “For this do I exercise myself, to have a good conscience toward God and toward man.” Moreover, it has to do with the affections and the heart. The breast-plate would seem to express that. What is it, then? Righteousness. Not only that we are standing in the righteousness of God, but we are always to maintain a good conscience, to act in perfect righteousness. In other words, that the word not only has settled us as to where we are, but it also has affected our conscience and heart. 1 Tim. i. 5: “Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned.” That is the purpose; to bring out the whole heart. See how we are equipped in Romans v., “The love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts.” That is the reason we know that “tribulation worketh patience.” Witness Chap. i. of 1 Thess.: “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.”

We get, then, the great thought of the breast-plate covering all the vital part of the man. All that is vital is to be shielded; all this matter of the heart going out toward God and toward man, and having everything clean before God as to conscience. Now it is a blessed thing that God has opened a way of restoring conscience if we sin. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us

from all unrighteousness." God cannot have us before Him otherwise than with a purged conscience, with a clear perception of our place in Him, and then walking in accordance with it. You see that this comes at the end of all that He has told us in regard to a moral walk. It comes after church walk. This is the very closing up.

So, then, having all the effect of all the exhortations,—every element that He takes up in regard to cleanness and honesty and kindness towards others and love going out toward every one and subjection of life all the time, and all the multitude of things;—after all that, these are the things that have to do with keeping a good conscience. We are to keep these very things that are written. We are not under the law, but we are to be infinitely better than those under the law.

Here then we see the value of the breast-plate; that we cannot be attacked in that way. Suppose Satan should attack me by saying, Well, you are a pretty Christian! See what you are. You failed there, and you have an accumulation of guilt on your conscience! Blessed be God, he cannot accuse me before my Advocate Himself makes it known to me through the word. As Christ said in John xvi., "I tell you beforehand." He will not let Satan accuse us in that way. He will first expose us to ourselves, and on confession we have it all put away.

The breastplate, therefore, was to defend the body against the weapons of the enemy. So the defense for us would be that good conscience restored and kept. It is a most thorough, sifting and searching thing. No man can use the word effectually that has not had it used on himself.

Ver. 15. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." We can stand before God unshod. Indeed, we must; (Exod. iii. 5, Josh.

v. 15.) It is an expression of weakness, of self-abasement, of nothingness ; (2 Sam. xv. 30, Isa. xx. 2-4, Ezek. xxiv. 17-23.) But before Satan we must be shod. We are strong in the strength of the Lord. And that strength is the peace which we have through the gospel. We stand in perfect peace, and that is our preparation. If we do not stand in perfect peace and rest confidently, where are we? How do we know but what Satan says is true? How do we know but that we will have to run into this avenue or that, to get peace? Suppose Satan sets us to work, as is his custom? He is willing that everybody should go to work and clean up this city. Suppose he tells us, as some say, that the way to get peace is to go to work. We *have* a peace that he cannot touch. We are standing in it. Men that fight do not fight barefooted. You would find that their shoes have nails in them to hold them to the ground, that they shall not recede. And when it is said that every place that your feet shall tread upon shall be yours, it is actually advancing. So we see the necessity of the shoes.

And now what is it? Perfect peace ; peace with God ; all settled. Then peace of heart and mind. We have in Phil. iv. perfect peace in regard to all circumstances ; so profound a peace that Satan cannot tell us anything. Take the case of Hezekiah. There was an enemy appeared at the gate of Jerusalem, and he told the truth when he said, "If I gave you ten thousand horses, you could not put horsemen on them. Do not let Hezekiah make you think that Jehovah will appear for you. Has not He punished you a great many times?" That is Satan's way. Those are the arrows that he throws ; the weapons of his warfare are just that kind. Now Hezekiah, when he received the letter, took it in quietly and laid it before Jehovah, as if he said, This is not my

conflict. And God did take it up, and next morning there were hundreds of thousands dead around the wall. Was there not peace there? How did he get it? He knew God.

And this is peace of heart and mind. And, again, there is another peace spoken of, Christ's own peace. He says, "My peace I give unto you." You see where it is,—peace of conscience and heart and mind; all found in Him. We do not ask anything of the world to contribute to our peace. Then what a defense that is! We are not to be ruffled by anything, or thrown off our balance. Our weaknesses have been so thoroughly met that we are perfectly at peace on that. Then, being despised down here is so absolutely met up yonder by the wondrous name of sons of God and the promise of the glory directly, that we have perfect and profound peace. There we can stand. We have taken in that good news so that Satan cannot win.

Some years ago, when speaking on John xiv. about peace, a man arose, after I had finished, and distinctly denied all I had been saying. He said, "The way to get peace is for every man to go to work!" I could, since then, have told him of one who went to her pastor and said that she had not peace, and he set her to work once and again; but she did not get peace.

Now in order to meet that, we must have peace to start on, because the great thing of Satan is to occupy us with ourselves, our state, or work; with spreading the kingdom, as it is called; with enlarging a "cause." There is a sincerity about it, but it is according to a wrong standard. We have never had that as the word of God in regard to us. He says we are infinitely above that. We are not contending against difficulties down here in earthly places. We are contending against infinitely more

subtle adversaries than that. Look at Israel for a moment. Satan was not very much troubled about Israel in the wilderness. When God said that He was going to keep them there thirty-eight years more, Satan did not need to be troubled. God had said, "I am going to take them out of Egypt, and plant them in the land of Canaan." Their being in the wilderness was not a part of God's counsels. So Satan could rest. When they got into the land, he would have been glad enough to have them go back into the wilderness. Satan cannot hinder your being saved, for the moment you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are eternally saved. What can he do? Why, he can cripple all our testimony. We are to testify to the heavenly places, and he will make us testify to earthly places. He will make us go into all these things and improve them. Everything is turned to falsehood in this case. Now, if we are planted absolutely on the ground, so that the ground and we stick fast to each other, we can fight. Our ground is the heavenly ground, as Israel's ground was Canaan.

Ver. 16. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Breastplate, girdle, shoes, and then taking up the shield of faith! That is held over head, over body, and over all,—wherever a dart comes. What is that shield of faith? Here it is not simply that I am saved. You will find in Romans not only that Abraham was justified when he believed God, but that is the way in which he walked all the way through. It is said of him as much in Gen. xxii. as it was in Chap. xv., because he is walking, simply believing what God says. When he does not believe Him, he is of course unfaithful. But the whole of his walk is simply believing what God says.

Now we go on to learn more and more about the

heavenly places. In each epistle that Paul gives we learn more and more pertaining to that ; how to live it and all its principles, and we come effectually to do so. What do we get then, in God ? We learn just what God is. See how full of God this one epistle is ! While Philippians is occupied with Christ Jesus, this is occupied with God, as the originator of everything. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are listening to Him and learning all about Him. Well then, it is faith, not simply faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which we are saved ; but faith that grows as we learn more and more about God ; everything in the word giving us more and more of God. Do we not know that Satan is the blasphemer of God as well as the accuser of the brethren ? How can a blasphemer give us any thoughts if we let God's thoughts fill us ? That is the word, is it not, in its use in our own lives ? The shield of faith is thus held up against everything. Let him say what he will against God ; we know God ! It meets every dart. God wants us to quench all the fiery darts. Let them stick in that shield. They cannot stick in us if the shield is held up. So you see that faith is the one thing that would correspond to such a shield.

I remember a brother coming to me some years ago and saying, "Now the hymn that I used to sing, 'A Little More Faith in Jesus,' is true. I feel like singing it." I said, That is hardly the thing ; you want a little more than that I guess. It is not faith in Jesus that is spoken of in the Scriptures ; it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; One who has died, and risen, and received the title of Lord and Christ, as the One who has filled up the whole matter in God's mind.

Faith in God is taking all that is given of Him, just as you eat and drink and breathe for your

living and for your strength ; taking more and more of the word of God. We eat when we are hungry. We can use the strength afterward for anybody. So then, we are eating that word ; we take more and more of God all the time to meet the demand ; and it does meet it by giving such a knowledge of God that Satan's shafts are nothing. A man that has God's word is never uncertain that he is saved, nor what he is, nor where he stands, nor what God is for him. A man that is uncertain, has not God's word at all. He is not reading it, because right before him is—"He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." It comes with much assurance.

Ver. 17. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This is looking at the whole matter of salvation, past, present, and future. In 1 Thess. v. we have the hope of salvation, because he is talking about the coming of the Lord all the time. In Phil. we have it a present thing, that we are to bring out in the actions ; and also a future thing in the glory with Christ. The soul is saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we go on in the old body with a new spirit, and are waiting and praying for the glory, and the whole matter is salvation.

Now, the helmet is on the head,—the seat of intelligence. Our intelligence should take up the grand scope of this salvation. How much importance there is in that ! There is one of the places where one can be most easily attacked. People get into a happy frame of mind, and sing that they are saved now. They say, "O, I am saved now !" That is not having the helmet. The helmet must grasp the whole matter of salvation. What are you saved for ? Who are you, as saved ? Is it a matter of our hoping to get to heaven to see our friends ? Or is it

that we are now really saved, and are waiting for the glory? The helmet is the full intelligence of what we have, and who we are. It takes the entire matter of salvation, itself, its scope and fruition; the work of the cross and the work of Christ now and the work of Christ coming for us; for us there, and for us now in the glory, and for us when He comes. Salvation has these three things: faith, love, and hope. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart now, and the coming of the Lord is the hope, the same Lord Jesus who was on the cross. Thus we have grasped the whole matter. The man that is simply hoping to be saved cannot fight Satan. He is not fit to fight. His head is uncovered!

You know that all truth was gone in the time of Thyatira. It was Rome, full-fledged. You know that Sardis was spoken of as having a name that she lived, and yet was dead. He says, "I have not found your works perfect, *i. e.*, complete." (See Col. i. 25.) Why? Because Luther recovered but one truth. He did not recover church truth and the coming of the Lord. He did not recover the full declaration of the Son of God, seated at the right hand of the Majesty. One truth was grand when there was none and everything was upside-down, and the church became teacher and lawgiver instead of Christ the Head. It lacked those very elements that make the church.

Now salvation involves those three things, and we cannot maintain a heavenly ground unless we know what we are raised for. We have this all as defensive armor. It is the word of God in its effect upon our hearts and consciences and lives and walk in every way. It corresponds with drill in modern warfare. We must be drilled in the truth, having the word in us, affecting and forming us, from head to feet. So that we shall be the standing, walking,

living word. We can fight only if we are girded with the truth, and helmeted with the knowledge of what this salvation is, and shielded by the faith that takes in what God is and His purposes in regard to us, and what He is in strength and righteousness and goodness and grace, for us. If we are not standing thoroughly and positively established in this good news that has given peace, we are not fit to take up the sword. That is the reason there is so little fighting done, because there is so little heavenly living according to our calling and the hope; because people are not listening to the word, "Go out to meet Him!" And people go on talking about fighting the good fight of faith, when they are simply trying to hold out faithful and to get to heaven at last. It is preposterous and false. Satan is just defeating the whole thing by getting us down to those things. When we are not fighting against him, we are fighting with him. He is the god of this age. If we have not been drilled by the Holy Spirit, we cannot use the sword against the enemy. We have only been trying to keep the enemy off from us thus far. You will see then that there will be no doubts and fears and hanging of heads and hearts, and then we shall not be occupied with making this world of Satan's a pleasant place, in simply improving it.

Ver. 17. "And take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God." All the former armor was, as we have seen, defensive. While we wrestle, Satan wrestles. He wrestles with wiles. You can see at once that the heart must be enlightened, and the mind informed, and the conscience formed, and the whole life conformed to the word of God, to meet wiles. No one ever met the subtleties of Satan with anything less than the word of God. Nothing else can answer all the blasphemy of Satan against God and all the untruth about Christ, but what God has given Himself, the

One who knows all about Christ and has delighted in Him. We must have it throughout ; not simply as a matter of intellect, but in every element of our life as new men. We must have that word forming us, to grow up into all that God gives us. This is the only way to meet the advances of Satan.

And now we are to attack. The sword is not simply a defensive weapon ; it is an offensive one ; and hence we have to make our thrusts with that sword to smite Satan. It is a blessed fact, then, that we are not left defenseless, nor are we left without the means of fighting. Christ said a great deal when He said, "I will not leave you orphans ; I will come to you." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide ⁱⁿ you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is the abiding in Him instead of abiding in what we were, either as in Adam or in Moses,—absolutely in Christ, new men in heaven, that we stand at all. And how do we know anything about that ? Solely by the word of God. There is not a principle nor a fact that holds us up, that informs us in regard to our position, or in regard to Christ, that comes from reason, or is the outflow from the natural man, or is caught up by our native intelligence or ability. It is simply the new man, and he cannot receive anything but the word. The Holy Spirit does not take the word of man but the word of God. He deals entirely with that. You are really shut up to the word then, but it is a bounteous thing in itself. Having the word of God, therefore, if it does exercise us vitally and thoroughly, so that we know we are crucified to everything here and risen out of everything here into association and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and know whither we are bound, and what we are as saved sons of God and fellows with Christ,—then we are ready for battle.

Then we begin the defense by parrying every stroke. And now let us glance at Israel in regard to this. Everything that pertained to Israel was according to God's purpose and mind, and then given out by His word. And therefore, let it be in starting out of Egypt, or being in the wilderness, or getting into the land, or fighting there, or afterwards having everything established under Solomon, and going on to live and expand in the life that was given, it must be absolutely in accordance with His word, and nothing else. It was the word that called out Israel; it was the word to Pharaoh that took them from all that was in Egypt; it was the word of God to Moses that brought all those plagues; it was the word of God that had them stay or go. There was not a thing about Israel that sprang from man's mind. It is quite contrary to the idea of man, of progression and development, of beginning in a rudimental way and then gradually growing up into something better. The whole idea of Israel was full-orbed from the mind of God. But we know that they failed all the time, and that they were cast out of the land and were broken down from everything in which they had been placed. They did not heed the word.

Now look at Christ, and He starts out, gathering in all the thoughts of that word. He says, according to Ps. xl., "I delight to do Thy will; Thy law is within my heart." And according to Psalm xvii., "By the words of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." He is formed by the word, filled with it, being its very expression Himself,—the Word of God. And Satan comes with his assault, and we see how subtle it is, and appealing even to His power as the Son of God. We find Him answering, "It is written!" And it meets that stroke of Satan completely. When He is appealed to as

though there were in Him any pride of life, taking Him up to the pinnacle of the temple, "Cast thyself down!"—the answer is, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt Jehovah thy God." And Satan is silenced on that subject. Then when a further trial is given,—"Here are the kingdoms of the world. You can have them at once. I will give them all to you if you will fall down and worship me." Man fails whenever each one of these is offered. What kept Him? "It is written!" He could not have met those things without valuing the word above all things. It was but taking what Psalm cxxxviii. gives: "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name." It was not calling on the name of Jehovah, nor speaking to Him. It was not looking back at past things. It was simply the word that God had written. It was taking up as an absolute fact, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Thou shalt worship Jehovah thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Now they were realities, and He stood and beat down Satan, and Satan fell.

What shall we use—our ingenuity, and make our plea with him and yield half way, or shall we stand perfectly on the word of God? What has the word of God told us? First, where and who we are: sons of God in the heavenly places. Now, shall we not hold to that, and assert it continually in confidence, in the midst of all that would destroy it and the tens of thousands that are going down into the world? The word of God is enough for us that we are in heavenly places and are heirs of all that is to come, and are to reign over the earth. Hold on to these things! Then the food that Satan would present to us will not do. He will present science and wealth and attachments here. It will not do for such as we are, heirs of the glory. It will not do for those who

are sons of God. It will not do for those who are risen and seated with Christ in heavenly places already. It will not do for those whom God has blessed with the richest blessings. We look out to the glory that is beyond, and find that it will not do for heirs of all that glory to take a single thing now.

Suppose he appeals to our pride, the pride of life; intellectual ability, or what one has gained of reputation in any form. It will not do for one who is infinitely higher than all that to listen for a moment to it. The dignity that is reserved for us will outrank all positions that can be offered here.

It is now the word, then, as it is actually written. We meet doubts of salvation by simply saying, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." We meet all his falsehoods in regard to the future by just learning what the word says about all that future. Past, present, and future are set before us, and faith, hope, and love take hold upon all these, and the way becomes plain.

Now, beloved, the specific word is in regard to the heavenly places and the calling on high, and there is not a word connected with Israel that will help us, except as a type. We cannot go to their Scriptures and find anything taken literally. Ours are the unsearchable things, which cannot be found in the Old Testament. It will not do, then, to go back into Old Testament methods of worship or of living or of occupation. We come against all this with the word of God and say, "We are not of this world, and therefore we are not going to help it along at all." God has not written behind a veil, and therefore we will not have a particle of ritual or ceremonial in worship. We are not of Israel, and therefore the ten commandments will not do for us. We are above everything, and therefore none but the very Christ can be our rule of life.

I am trying to bring out the practical thought of how the word is used as a sword—the only implement we can fight with. We are shut up to that word. We are cast into a scene where Satan is prince, and we have nothing but the word. Has not God shown His confidence in His word? Has He not shown us that He knows He has given us enough to make us capable of meeting everything? It is the word, and not thoughts of men. Hence I answer everyone who says, “Don’t you think?” with “The word says.” People reply to us, in regard to the literal word and ask why we do not use the literal words in Ex. xx. Simply because He has told us that all these things happened as types, and were written for our instruction and our learning, and are not written directly to us. Well, why not believe that the believer has a portion in this world,—that the rich man ought to be rich? Simply because the word has told us that all that Israel was blessed with is but a type for us. The word tells us that. Why make this distinction between Jew and Gentile? Just because the word does. And so it goes all the way through the word; the word defending the word; the word of God opening out the whole book to us, so that we know what belongs to us and what belongs to another people: and thus we are enriched and strengthened and filled up and started on our course and held to it, to be valiant and to fight the fight of faith.

See Paul, for instance. He comes to the end of his life and says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” That is, the truth that was told him. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me, and not to me only but to all those who love His appearing.” What had he done? He had endured every trial, all persecutions, and the worst treatment

from Jew and Gentile and church, false brethren ; he had encountered all the hate and malice and wrath of the Jew, in every form. And all that he had to show for anything that he did was that he had received a revelation of the word from the Lord Jesus Himself. "I have kept that revelation and that faith." He had fought his fight, then, having that before him. His sword was just that truth. And into your hands, beloved, that same sword is placed. That faith that Paul had given him is our sword. May God make us to see all the more clearly that nothing but the word of God means anything. Let us remember that the word says of itself that it is true from the beginning. (Ps. cxix. 160.) That is, from the first word, clear through. Let us remember that the word speaks of itself as being in itself sufficient for the man of God, that he may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and needs nothing else. Let us remember that the word says of itself that it is perfect, converting the soul ; that it is sure, making wise the simple ; that by it we are warned, and are kept from the evil one. Let us take it on its own assertions, and carry it in our hearts until it becomes the substance of every thought, of every act, and then Satan himself must needs be foiled. It is by the word that we know there is a Satan, and the method in which he will approach us. And so it is by the word that we meet him.

Ver. 18. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." It is but the expression of absolute dependence. Before we go into the fight and are fighting, we are expressing our dependence on Him all the time. "Praying with all prayer." It is simply leaning on Him. It is helplessness waiting on strength, find-

ing everything in Him ; and it is all the time the expression of helplessness, lest even the knowledge of the word give me pride and make me puffed up. The more I know God, it is only to get more from Him, and to say, "I am nothing."

"In the Spirit." We are told in Romans viii. that we know not what we should pray for, but the Holy Spirit in us prays with groanings that cannot be uttered ; beyond all our estimates and ways ; and that in accordance with God's mind. "Praying as saints ;" praying as beloved of God, sons by calling ; praying as worshipers ; praying as those introduced and established in the holiest ; praying as heirs of God ; praying just where He has placed us and keeping that ground. That is praying in the Spirit. Do not think that praying in the Spirit means getting into a heat and fervor. It is praying according to what the Holy Spirit has set forth ; praying according to all that we hope to be when Jesus comes, and glory dawns. Then there is watching thereunto. It is that the mind of God should go with our prayer ; acting with reference to the prayer ; according as we pray, so let us look to everything.

And then, "Praying for all saints." Here we are coming to the whole scope and sweetness of Ephesians. It is the book about the saints. It is not about Christ as Head ; we get that in Colossians ; it is not about our occupation with Him in the glory ; that we have in Hebrews. It is not about the coming of the Lord for each of us individually, and we going up to Him ; that we have in Thess. It is definitely about the saints, and telling us what they are. "Love unto all saints" was one of the things found in these believers. And thus, while we pray, we are to take in all the others, according to their standing and the purposes of God. A beautiful example has been given us in Chaps. i. and iii., and another ex-

ample is given in Col. i. 9-14. These are clearly examples of how to pray for saints ;—always according to what they are ; not according to their walk or their feelings, but according to where God has placed them, and then according to their need, of course ; and thus it is that we can always be confident that somebody is praying for us, if this is heeded.

Then we have one more matter in regard to prayer. Ver. 19 : “ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.” Paul is alive yet in every epistle he has written ! Moses was alive in the day of Christ, in all that he had given. So Paul is to-day in the word. And then as we have in Rev. xi. two witnesses spoken of that shall come at a certain time in the middle of that last period of seven years of Daniel, just before the three and a half years come, to testify as Moses did of everything in the beginning, and to hold that up afresh ; to testify as Elijah did when Israel had sunk down into worshipping Baal ; then Moses and Elijah, hand in hand, testifying in regard to Israel, and that in a time of infinite need ; so we, in this time, have need of a restoration of Paul. We go back to all the truth that Ephesians and Colossians give in regard to our Head ; that Hebrews gives in regard to our worship ; that Romans gives in regard to our righteousness ; that Thessalonians gives in regard to the coming of the Lord. It is all through Paul. We have but to recover it. It is again unfolding that which was lost for hundreds of years ; then, what shall we do ? Pray for people that are giving any truth with boldness, or pray for Paul, if he says, “ Pray for me.” Can I pray for Paul ? Most assuredly, for I can pray that his truth may be brought out and known to all the saints. Just as in the day of Jesus it would have been the proper prayer that Moses might be known

again ; just as down in that time that is spoken of in Rev. xi., it is Moses and Elijah ; God giving witnesses according to His own mind, at the different times.

And now ours is the recovery of Paul, and therefore pray that boldness may be given to speak it in confidence. What is given in Philadelphia,—“Behold, I have given you an open door,” corresponds to this, and so it shall go out.

“And for me, that I may speak boldly.” There is no other way but boldness. It is a bold ground that is given to us. It gives us perfect confidence in the presence of God in the glory. No apology for it; no cringing to power, or to general belief, no compromise with it; no saying, “I am not going to antagonize things.” Speak the truth, let it find what antagonists it will. We are praying that it will antagonize everything on earth. Brethren, there is no truth for us but this. Have we been at it? Have we been so full of ourselves that we have forgotten to pray for the saints? Then let us be at it now more and more. May God give us a heart for all these things.

Ver. 20. “For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that herein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Rather a peculiar way of treating an ambassador to put him in bonds. It would be considered the deepest insult. It was meant by Satan as an insult against the government that Paul belonged to as an ambassador of the good news, to get all out of the deep and terrible condition of death and of being under the wrath of God, and to bring into the heavens, in fellowship with God, in a new creation. And he was in chains for that very thing, because he would make known to the Gentiles the revelation that he had received from Christ Jesus the Son of God. He would stand to that heavenly truth. That is what is referred to in 2 Tim. iv. 9, “I have kept the faith.” As sons of God we cannot hold anything

else. It is in itself perfectly satisfying and absorbing, and including everything else, necessarily.

And because he had told that, that he must go to the Gentiles, he is sent to Rome and to prison ; a prisoner of the Lord, really ; but the word of God is not bound ; therefore he could send it out. He was a prisoner for the Lord's sake. An ambassador from another court, in bonds ! What realities there are in such statements as that ! How thoroughly it makes the truth stand out ! And then, that the bonds should not intimidate him. As it is said to the Philippians, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries ; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

So, in the midst of these wondrous things that we have learned in this epistle, we get the opposite. His treatment by man and Satan ; but it gives it a brighter setting, casts it up into the highest prominence, from the very treatment that he receives here. It is very evident that if we hold and walk in that truth we must separate from the world, because it is purely unworldly.

Q. This fight is in which of the heavens ?

A. It is in the heavenly places. It is in our position as above the world, and we are having no tie with the world at all according to what Christ said Himself, "You are not of the world ; I have chosen you out of the world." It is a complete separation from everything that is here, and it is spoken of as in the heavenlies. First of all, Christ is raised up and seated in the heavenlies. That is where the fight is going on. I could not say it is the heaven where God's throne is, but yet Christ is seated at the right hand of the Majesty, and that is certainly where Christ is. Then in Rev. xii. we find Michael and his

angels fighting against Satan and his angels in these heavenly places. Well, Michael is evidently Christ Himself. The very name means "like unto God." And we are with Him, because it is Michael and his hosts. There we notice, of course, the result of all the fight. Satan is cast down. The scene in Job, Chaps. i. and ii., does not refer to any fighting. It is the sons of God coming together to worship Him, and Satan appearing among them, and his field seems to have been down on the earth. That is perfectly in accordance with the character of things in the Old Testament, because God was having no heavenly truth to announce in the Old Testament; and hence, when he was asked where he had been, he said he had been going to and fro upon the earth. So we see how Satan works. He kept Abraham from taking the place that God would have had him in, and staying in the land, for almost immediately we find Abraham going out of it into Egypt. Then the grace of God brings Abraham back to the place where he was before, and he worships again at that altar, and is in his tent, again a stranger. But we see Satan's action there in making the world attractive. That is what he does now.

When God had Israel on the earth, Satan would not be acting in heaven, although that would be his place. The angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word, are represented in heaven. Satan is an angel; possibly the highest angel of all, the archangel. Certainly he had followers. He is the prince of the power of the air. That is above. So we find Christ raised up there, and we are raised up and seated there; and Satan is there and our fight is there, with wicked spirits in heavenly places. By reference to Job we find that it was in the presence of God that he appeared.

An illustration is given very beautifully in Chap. iii. of Zech. in regard to Judah and Jerusalem. Of course they had been banished for their iniquities, and there is Joshua, the high priest, representing them, and Satan standing there. He had done all that. He had kept poor Judah down there and got them into the filth. Now we see how beautiful that portion of Ezekiel, Chap. xxxvi., is,—“I will sprinkle clean water upon you.” There was Joshua standing there in filthy garments. Now put them together. God was going to cleanse them from idolatry, and the word comes, “Take away the filthy garments!” And then the prophet himself says, “Let them put a fair mitre upon his head.” There is the crown that belongs to the priest. All is restored, but Satan is the one that is rebuked. “Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?” Passed through the fire, is the idea. Now that is Satan coming down here and so he could say, “Going to and fro, and up and down the earth.” The church is seen, in the word, up there, and therefore it is a direct struggle.

Q. Then it has nothing to do with the Christian on the earth?

A. No, except to try to make us fond of it, and to go on with it; to cover the thing with a glamor and attractiveness, so that man will go on with it. To make him enter into all the worldly ways in accordance with man’s notions. But we really do not belong here. We must always see ourselves where the Scripture places us. Israel was counted as nothing if they were out of the land. We are not counted when we are not apprehending our place in heaven. Heb. iii. 6. We walk by faith, but in the last it shall be sight. Israel’s conquest was by faith until the day of Solomon.

Ver 21. “But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faith-

ful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." That is linking himself so closely with them, that he knew they would want to know all about him. The apostle stands, not only as the teacher and the apostle of the truth of the heavens to the church, but also as the representative, in many respects outlining in his own life the history and action of the church. As he says in 2 Tim. iii: "You have known my teaching, my manner of life, my persecutions." These are the three things connected with Paul: his teaching, and his way of life, and the persecutions that the church truth caused. If he had gone along with the world, there would have been no persecutions. If he had had no persecutions, the offense of the cross had ceased. How did he get into the heavenly places but by the cross? If we are not persecuted, then the offense of the cross has ceased. It would tell a bad story for us; for, all who *will* live godly must suffer persecution. Now it is not very severe, but it is ours to receive scorn and neglect and opposition, at home and in society. One may say he does not feel it. That is all very well. I might stand in the midst of flames, and be so filled with delight in Christ that I would not feel the flames. That is possible. It has been so. But the flame would be very real; it would kill me. So it may be persecutions that I am enduring, though by grace lifted above them.

Paul's life, therefore, was exceedingly important in regard to church truth and the whole walk of the church; the doctrine and administration of the church. So he says, "Concerning my affairs." In the book of Acts we find that Paul very decidedly represents the church; in its getting into Judaism, and getting into prison as a means of discipline. The church is no longer free when it gets off its ground. I am quite sure that nobody would say that the

church is where it was. Individuals are, but where is the power of former days? Where are the miracles and signs? Where are all the gifts of the early day? It is not worth while to try to imitate them in order to assert them. It is not a proper confession of the truth. We can build up nothing. We can appoint nothing. We just bow and confess that the whole thing, as far as profession is concerned, is ruined. But God is not ruined, and Christ is not ruined, and the real body of Christ is not ruined. If we can find it, it is not ruined. That is all perfect and complete. When the last one is gathered to it, we will be caught up. Thus we see the beautiful idea of the apostle's sending word about himself.

Ver. 22. "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts." Why should such a thing as that be put at the end of such an important epistle as we have here? It is important that they should know his life as an apostle, and they would want to know how it goes with him. Tychicus will tell them, for he is a faithful servant of the Lord. He proposes here to comfort their hearts. How delightful! To count on their having such fellowship with him that they would need to be comforted concerning him.

Ver. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Faith is what receives all these things. It is the simple, open heart to take in everything. "Peace and love from our God and Father." By faith, you see. And "From Christ Jesus our Lord." Keeping the dignity and title of both God and Christ. In connection with the church He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The truth about Christ is that He is Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ver. 24. "Grace be with all them that love our

Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." Love is not mere sentiment; as we had it in speaking about husbands loving their wives. Sentiment cannot always be commanded, but action can. So loving the Lord Jesus Christ is an action. 2 John says, "This is love, that we walk after His commandments." Love is never a thing that is merely expressed; as, "O, how I love the Lord Jesus!" There is no warrant for it in Scripture. There is an immense warrant for our telling how He loves us, and how He loves the church. This is love, that you do His commandments. That is the expression of love. And therefore He says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." It is the acting out in perfect righteousness Christ's own love.

Q. Are we not commanded to love Him with all our hearts?

A. No. Did you think you were?

Q. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God....."

A. Well, let us look at it. Christ was down here upon the earth among the Jews, and had not died yet; had not been made Lord and Christ, lifted up into the heavens; had not become the object of faith as the invisible One. He was down here among the Jews to establish a kingdom, and to be their king. Now a Jew comes to Him and says, "What is the first great commandment of the law?" And He says, "Jehovah thy God is one God, and thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength." Are you Israel? Does it say anything about loving the Lord Jesus in all this? You ask whether we are not commanded to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I say, No. The quotation is not about our Lord, but about Jehovah, the God of Israel. Jesus was down here, and was raised, and is seated in heaven. We have died. Now where are we? Coming out a new

man, you must have a new life, new principles, new rules, a new scene, and everything new ! “ If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation ; old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new ? ” “ But, if any man love God, the same is known of him ” (1 Cor. viii. 3). He need not be boasting of it, but rather let him glory in the Lord, in afflictions, that he is counted worthy to suffer persecutions for Christ’s sake.

May God use these simple words, meant to open this wonderful letter to our hearts and minds and consciences, to the honor of Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE END.

"UNLESS YE HAVE BELIEVED IN VAIN!"

1 COR. xv. 2.

KNOWING what I well know, what would it be
To find all false? To be bereft
Of Christ, my Life, of God, of certainty
Of sonship, fellowship?—What, then, to me
In the sad universe would there be left?

To suffer, in one awful hour, eclipse
Of all that has been truth and bliss?
Of all the glowing light that more than tips
The future scene? What horror that the lips
Could utter ever could be matched with this?

No Heart of love for me; no Mind to guide;
No purpose in the maze of life;
None to forgive me when I step aside
From right; no light on all that may betide;
No explanation of this wearying strife.

No meaning in affliction; none that cares
For what I do, of good or bad;
No spiritual or moral standard; prayers
And praises, faith and hope, delusive snares;
What would or could there be to make me glad?

O dread, chill lonesomeness! All in me set
And fitted for this One, these gifts,
And filled with longings—never to be met!
My birth, a mockery; and life, regret;
An ever deepening grief which nothing lifts!

I love the folly of believing all,
More than the wisdom that denies;
The learning that would make my earnest call
To Love, only the tossing of a ball
Into the air, that cannot reach the skies.

The whole vocabulary of delight
The whole of living, walk and fruit
Is in the grasp of faith; that makes it sight
To the new man and, clearing, too, the night,
Gives what will his exacting nature suit.

M T.